



progressio

**17th World Assembly of CLC
Buenos Aires 2018**

17TH WORLD ASSEMBLY OF CLC - BUENOS AIRES 2018

Publication of the **World Christian Life Community**

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17th World Assembly of the Christian Life Community

CLC, A gift for the Church and the World

‘How many loaves have you?...Go and see’
(Mk 6:38)

July 2018 Buenos Aires, Argentina

Progressio Supplement # 74

**Publication of the World Christian Life Community
Borgo Santo Spirito, 4 - 00193 Rome – Italy**

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The Long Conversation

Alwin Macalalad

The Mate Cup

In Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay (the national communities that hosted the Buenos Aires World Assembly) the mate cup is linked to culture and tradition. They fill the mate cup (a hollowed-out, mate gourd) with Yerba Mate, (shredded tea leaves that has a slightly bitter taste, produced in that area of Latin America), and pour hot water, sipping and passing the mate cup around in a group, while holding conversation. It signifies a connection.

At times it can even mean being part of a group - a community. You may have seen it in the Buenos Aires Assembly logo. It was a distinct symbol of the ARUPA's way of sharing friendship.



Alwin Macalalad
Progressio Editor

During the discernment days of the assembly, delegates were assigned into small groups for spiritual conversation. After their periods of individual prayer, they went into groupings to undertake the three rounds of sharing. Genuine spiritual conversation requires respect and attention to the one who speaks because, through that person, the Holy Spirit speaks to the heart of the listeners. To develop this attitude, the members of the small groups were asked to hold a mate cup during their turn. During those days, the mate cup became symbol of spiritual conversation. It was a signal for the coming of the Spirit, or a prelude to an ongoing story of discernment.

Progressio Supplement 74

You hold in your hands the post-Buenos Aires Assembly equivalent of the mate cup. When you hold this Progressio Supplement, it means that you are among good friends. It also means that there is a story being told. But the story is not in the cup. Nor is the story in this Progressio Supplement.

Instead, here you will find artifacts of the Assembly. They are the materials that provided the impetus for the assembly's experience, and for you, they are the footprints on the path. In this supplement, you will find the materials that nourished



the experience of the delegates who represented the world community.

In this Supplement, you will find the messages that opened the assembly (Day 1): the **message from Pope Francis**, and the **message from Cardinal Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life**. You will also get the **introductory address** of Mauricio Lopez.

You will need the community to tell you the unwritten parts: how hearing the pope's message on the very ground

where he spent close to 20 years of his life, wrapped the assembly in a kind of unity – with the person, and with the Church he serves. How Mauricio's address served a prophetic impetus for what was to come in the 10 days. How from arriving as discrete delegates, a united Assembly (the people, not the event) emerged, ready to serve the world community beyond the agenda of the different national communities.

You will find in this supplement the **Report of the World Executive Council** (Day 2) – fruits of our contemplation of, and service to the world community during the past term. You will need to ask yourself – is this true for my national community? Can I see myself in the report? How is the world community doing right now?

Pay attention to Austen Ivereigh's keynote for CLC in this publication: **The 'Francis Option': Evangelizing a World in Flux** (Day 3). It will invite you to reframe "mission" in this moment in the Church and the world. We hope it will help you get a sense of what we say, when we describe the kairos moment in our documents, and reflect on the part that CLC should be playing in it.

Still, you will need the community to tell you about the visit to the local parish, where the assembly shared in the life of the people, because no document will be able to capture it satisfactorily. It helped the assembly stand on a common solid ground as we entered further into discernment. To partake in this part of the Buenos Aires Assembly story, we invite you to be part of the challenge to continually be immersed in the world – deeply, and fully with all its calls and consequences.

We also share with you Magdalena Palencia's offering: **The Gift of 50 Years** (Day 4). In it, you will find this Supplement's closest equivalent to a story. It is the story of CLC as it has confirmed and reconfirmed its charism and commitment to God's call through all these years of subtle and not-so-subtle changes. It is the journey of a people, told through the eyes of one who has witnessed it. And as part of CLC, you are heirs to this story as well – bearers of a special history that God calls us to continue.

Fr. Arturo Sosa SJ reinforces these reflections in his address to the assembly: A Discerning Lay Community in the Service of Reconciliation (Day 5) by emphasizing our gifts and capacities in discernment, placing us in a unique position in the mission of integral unity in the personal, social, and ecological levels.

Throughout the assembly, we were accompanied by the ESDAC team (Exercises for Spiritual Discernment on Apostolate in Common). Together with the World ExCo, they paid great attention to the movements of the spirit during each session. They proposed exercises based on the needs during crucial moments, particularly the intensive discernment days (Days 6 to 8). In a section of this Supplement we've collected the various guides that the assembly used for their prayers and spiritual conversations.

At the end of this supplement you will find some initial fruits: the new communities that were welcomed, the amendment to the General Norms, the results of the Elections, and the Assembly Final Document. I say "initial fruits" because what you hold is a taste of the Buenos Aires Assembly. A sip from the mate cup, so to speak.

Completing the Story of the Assembly

Similar to an encounter while sharing the slightly bitter, warm, familiar mate, you need the community to complete the story. And you will also need to hear how the Spirit speaks to you through it.

And each story is unique. And each story is unfinished. Because when it reaches you, you would have been part of the story too. And afterwards, you would have to tell your story as well. It will be a long conversation, as with all words that would be made flesh. And it will be a CLC story of faith, of a living vocation, and an apostolic lifetime. By then, all the documents shared here would come to life for you, as they once did, during those 10 days in Buenos Aires, in the year of our Lord, 2018.

World Assembly Program Flow

Days 1-2: Becoming the Assembly & Recognizing the World Community and its Giftedness

Delegates are welcomed and are led through a gesture where they shift paradigm from distinct delegations into an Assembly. The President addresses the assembly. Messages from the Dicastery of the Laity and the Pope are read. Participants share about the themselves, their national communities their entry into the assembly. The World ExCo delivers a Contemplation of the World Community in the last 5 years (World ExCo Report). Group spiritual conversations begin.

Day 3: Witnessing the Kairos Moment / Touching Reality

Austen Ivereigh delivers a keynote on the Kairos of Pope Francis' Papacy. Participants visit the local parish for an encounter with the grassroots Church, and a celebration of the Eucharist together.

Days 4-7: CLC- Graced History, Community and Naming the Grace

Magdalena Palencia reflects on the Gift of 50 Years for CLC. The Assembly completes the history line and brings the experience into prayer and spiritual conversation. World EA Arturo Sosa SJ addresses the World Community. New national communities are welcomed and incorporated. The Assembly celebrates with the larger community during the Open Day. The assembly goes through some days of communal discernment (prayer and spiritual conversation).

Days 8-10: Paths Forward for CLC

Depending on the spiritual movements that emerge during the Assembly discernment days, the community may find synthesis and sensing paths forward. The assembly prepares for concrete elements in the governance of the World Community: amendments to the General Principles and Norms, budget approval, election of the new World ExCo. The Assembly ends with the St. Ignatius Mass, the sending of new leaders, and celebrations.



Letter from Pope Francis



**To Mr. Mauricio LOPEZ OROPEZA
President of the World Christian Life Community**

Vatican, June 9th 2018

Dear brother,

I have received your thoughtful letter letting me know about the forthcoming celebration of your 2018 World Assembly, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of your journeying as Christian Life Community. For this reason, you want to pray and reflect together so that the Lord may grant you a greater depth in the living out of your charism, and thus, by delving deeper into the received charism, you may continue to be a gift for the Church and for the world.

Note, the recognition of the gift and the grace that the Lord has given you over these years shall lead you, firstly, into a humble act of thanksgiving, because Jesus has looked at you beyond your qualities and virtues. At the same time, this entails a call to responsibility, to leave yourselves behind and go forth to encounter others, to nourish them with the only bread capable of satisfying the human heart: the love of Christ. That the "*gnostic illusion*" may not confuse you.

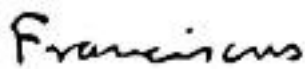
At the center of your Ignatian spirituality is this desire to be contemplatives in action. Contemplation and action, the two dimensions together: because we can only enter the heart of God through the wounds of Christ, and we know that Christ is wounded in the hungry, the uneducated, the discarded, the old, the sick, the imprisoned, in all the vulnerable human flesh.

To be guided by a Christian way of life, with a strong spiritual life and working for the Kingdom, means letting oneself be shaped by the love of Jesus, having his same sentiments (see Phil 2: 5), asking oneself continuously: *What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?* (see Sp. Ex. 53).

I thank you for your dedication and love for the Church and our brethren, and I encourage you to continue making Christ present in your surroundings, giving apostolic meaning to all your occupations.

And, please, do not stop praying for me. May Jesus bless you and may the Holy Virgin take care of you.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francis". The script is cursive and somewhat informal, with a soft shadow effect behind the text.

Original in Spanish

Message from Cardinal Kevin Farrell

Prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life

Prot. n. 2018/374-11/20

Vatican City, 2 July 2018



Cardinal Kevin Farrell

Dear friends

Cordial greetings to all of you gathered in Buenos Aires for the Seventeenth World Assembly of the Christian Life Community. This assembly also brings to a close a year of celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the Fourth World Assembly. That was the occasion when your association took on its present name, and so it was like a new beginning

By following the charism of St. Ignatius of Loyola and with the guidance of his Spiritual Exercises, you aim to harmonise your faith with daily life, and you place yourselves at the service of the pastoral, social and cultural needs that are felt most urgently wherever you live. Because of that, I would like to remind you of two simple pieces of advice that Pope Francis gave us in his Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exultate*.

The Pope reminds us that every Christian is called to live in union with Christ, and that this can “*entail reproducing in our own lives various aspects of Jesus’ earthly life*” (GE 20). None of us can manage on our own to reproduce in ourselves the infinite wealth that emanated from the divine person of God’s Son, but each of us is called to make present, wherever we live, a particular aspect of Jesus’ life like his words of truth, his hidden prayer, his closeness to the poor and the suffering, his travelling apostolate, etc. Therefore, each one of you must ask yourself what aspect of the life of Christ you can make present in the world today. Does the Lord call me to “*incarnate Christ*” in my life by speaking out and witnessing to the Truth? Am I called to do this through teaching and catechesis; by giving assistance to the poor; through political action; through a life

of prayer and sacrifice; through how I raise my children and remain faithful to my married vocation? To each of us God has given particular gifts and assigned us to specific places. The concrete circumstances in which we live guide us to an understanding of our mission. The role of prayer is crucial in this process of discernment. The Pope refers to the founder of the Jesuits when he tells us that *“the contemplation of these mysteries, as Saint Ignatius of Loyola pointed out, leads us to incarnate them in our choices and attitudes”* (ibid.). That is why you too should be guided by *“the contemplation of the mysteries of Christ”* in your individual and community prayer so that you will understand the mission that the Lord is entrusting to you in life.

A second indication that comes to us from the Pope is that of harmonising our whole life with the mission given to us by God. The Pope says: *“always ask the Spirit what Jesus expects from you at every moment of your life and in every decision you must make, so as to discern its place in the mission you have received”* (GE, 23). Therefore, we must always listen to the Spirit so that every attitude, every decision, every activity of ours will fit into the bigger picture of the *“life mission”* that has been assigned to us. We must recognise that our lives can be fragmented and that we suffer from a certain amount of internal disintegration. This is because some of our attitudes and choices are not in line with our baptismal identity or with the particular call we have received from God. We are all influenced by the dominant, unstable, superficial and relativistic mentality. Sometimes we can find ourselves in some *“official”* contexts in which we live fully in harmony with our mission, but in others our Christian identity and our call to holiness may seem to have been put aside. This damages our spiritual life and undermines our Christian witness from within. We gradually become lukewarm, formalistic and devoid of passion and true inner motivation. The Pope’s words are helpful here and they invite us to ask ourselves two simple questions: *“what does Jesus expect of me at all*



times?” and “*what place does my choice have in my mission?*” These are simple but important questions. They challenge us to avoid living absent-mindedly or with duplicity of heart, but with awareness and inner honesty. Our heavenly Father desires us to have that simplicity, transparency and deep interior unity that emanated from the person of his Son, because this is a source of great joy and inner peace for us too.

Dear friends, I sincerely hope that your journey of learning, witnessing, action and contemplation in the small Christian Life community to which you belong is helping you to make your whole life a path of holiness. May you be “*a message which the Holy Spirit takes from the riches of Jesus Christ and gives to his people*” (GE, 21).

I entrust the work of your congress and the apostolate of the Christian Life Community to the maternal intercession of Our Lady, and I assure you of my closeness in prayer and my blessing.

Kevin Card Farrell

Prefect

Kevin Card. Farrell



Address of the World CLC President to the Assembly of Buenos Aires 2018

“I don’t fear the emerging world. What I fear instead is that CLC may have little or nothing to offer this world, little to say or do, that would justify our existence. We have no desire to defend our mistakes, but neither do we want to commit the worst of them: to wait with crossed arms and not do anything for fear of making mistakes”.

Pedro Arrupe, S.J. (adaptation of the original)

I. The Gateway: Contemplation of the Incarnation

I would like to begin what I have to share with you today with this reflection from Pedro Arrupe, which I consider one of the quotes which has guided my service and mission on this beautiful journey of CLC. A clear, powerful and prophetic saying which asks us about ourselves, places us in the world, and calls us to respond with the best that has been given to us a grace in CLC.

We are a beautiful mosaic of diversity which has been burned in the heart and tattooed on the palm of the hand of the God of Life who loves us so much. He loves the breadth of colors, forms, traditions, ages, experiences, cultural identities, spiritual stages, and chooses us just as we are, part of His incarnational project.

Without a doubt, the center of our identity and source of our vocation in the world is in the CONTEMPLATION OF THE INCARNATION. Our decision to be CLC is fruit of the Spirit’s calling for us to walk the path of God’s project, a project to which we are called, but that does not belong to us. Therefore, we should take off our sandals in order to step on this sacred ground (Ex. 3, 5). In our CLC identity, the center of our existence is this acknowledgement of a God that for the sake of pure love becomes flesh and blood and invites us to participate in His project (GP No. 1).



Mauricio López Oropeza
World CLC President

I invite all of us to prepare ourselves internally to embrace this beautiful and challenging process that doesn't begin today, but rather has been part of God's magnificent process of ongoing revelation to CLC in these last 50 years, in coherence with the 450 years of lay Ignatian communities, and in the period of these last 5 years that we have journeyed from Lebanon to Buenos Aires. Let us close our eyes for a moment as we ask for internal knowledge of the grace of God's incarnation in CLC and let us remember the specific faces that give meaning to our existence as CLC today. Let us pray together as we enter through the gateway of our General Principles to this World Assembly:

“The Three Divine Persons, contemplating the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions, decide to give themselves completely to all men and women and liberate them from all their chains ... Inserted among the poor and sharing with them their condition, Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity within our human family... (God) challenges us to see our serious responsibilities and to seek constantly the answers to the needs of our times and to work together with the entire People of God and all those of good will for progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all people”.

(Excerpted from The Preamble to the CLC General Principles No. 1 to 3)

The only essential reason to be part of our community, just like any other believer who matures in faith, is so that we can live fully in order to go deeper into following Christ, collaborating with Him in the redemption of our humanity.

II. An expression of profound gratitude

What a marvelous grace it is to be able to be here together, in community, longing for and trusting that the good Spirit will storm into our hearts during these coming days. That's why it's necessary to begin by saying THANKS. There are so many hands and hearts that have been working tirelessly to make this gathering possible, providing everything necessary for this Assembly and for our discernment to be a success.

Our deepest acknowledgment to the ARUPÁ community (Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay) for so much that there just are no words to express thanks for all that they have done and will do for this community during these days. The preparation has been intense. The complex work of preparing, anticipating, arranging and, above all, giving fully of yourselves to this effort has been challenging. I would like to ask at this time for special recognition for you on behalf of this assembled world community of yours. May our gratitude will give you strength in

the coming days and accompany you on this mission. This tri-national expression is a sign of the strength of being in community.

Thanks to the Jesuit Province of Argentina and Uruguay for joining us as brothers in this task, taking it on as your own and accompanying us with each step, with special recognition to Fr. Rafa Velasco and the parish team who also welcome us in here in San Miguel, with whom we'll walk towards the concrete faces of a Church "which goes forth" here in the neighborhood. We recognize also all those here at the Loyola Center who have supported us and facilitated every necessary detail to make this Assembly happen.

I would like to take advantage of this occasion to offer thanks to God for the life of Cecilia Roselli (our dear Checha), who was unexpectedly called home, and although her departure was very painful for her family and friends, for CLC community members in Uruguay, as well as for those on the ARUPÁ and EXCO teams who were fortunate to have collaborated with her in preparation for this World Assembly, we are left with profound joy and the light of her presence, and what a light she gave us. We have her special presence seated beside our loving Father/Mother God who accompanies us here at this World Assembly, together with so many brothers and sisters from our community who have gone to their heavenly home having fulfilled their mission amongst us, and who have lived fully what it means to be CLC. We pray that they all might be our teachers in life on our journey as a community.

Special thanks also to the World CLC Secretariat who has worked so hard day after day (and many nights as well) to accompany this process of preparation in every detail and served as a bridge to bring unity to our diversity, and even in the midst of cultural and linguistic barriers, has been the sense that only as ONE COMMUNITY could we have been able to respond to this tremendous challenge. I also appreciate all of you who make up the EXCO for each one being an essential part of this diverse and beautiful mosaic that has worked on this World Assembly, and as part of this EXCO we thank our World Ecclesiastical Assistant, Fr. Arturo Sosa, who will be with us in the coming days.

We thank our special guests who are joining us to share their testimony and wisdom, and particularly the inspiring and competent ESDAC team (Françoise, José and Graziano) for accepting the challenge to serve as guides in this process of discernment, embracing our identity and communal moment. You will get to know them better a little later, as they lead us through key moments in our Assembly.

III. A beautiful and challenging moment of a true KAIRÓS in our Church

We are experiencing a genuine “kairós” as a Church and as CLC, that is, a propitious moment in which God is present in a special and undoubtable way to illumine our path. This special time goes beyond our achievements or good works, beyond our limitations and weaknesses. In fact, this “kairós” is an invitation to better respond to reality and respond with who we are and what we have, hopefully offering ourselves as a gift to the Church and the world with the best of our Lay Ignatian identity. This “kairós” has nothing to do with the chronological aspects of our lives and their limitations, and for that reason we should free ourselves from those disordered affections that make us want to control, calculate and manage everything. Let us give space for the Spirit’s wind to blow wherever it wishes amongst us.

This special moment that we are living as a Church and as humanity can only be understood through the eyes of a hope that believes, which can either be an opportunity for CLC or it be an event that slips through our hands if we try to take control of it and make it into our likeness, understanding it from our self-referential categories.

On one occasion after sharing passionately about this “kairós” from God, I was asked for greater clarity, greater detail, for a somewhat academic explanation.



And to respond to such an important question which I personally could not elaborate with words, I asked for some help from the best theologian I know, asking her to record a video with a clear systematic, doctrinal and eschatological explanation of what this “kairós” means. I’m sure that this presentation will clear up any uncertainty we might have. Let’s pay careful attention to the richness of this “kairotic” professor. (Video is presented)

This is the best way that I can explain to you this “kairós” moment. It is mystery. It is an experience of God. It is not being able to find the words to say what is moving inside of us, and at the same time express it with just a look. It is to feel for the first time the unstoppable force of God shaking up everything inside of us. To experience the beauty of simplicity. To desire to embrace it all and feel no room inside your heart for anything else. To feel an internal fire that moves us to more. This theologian presents an eloquent exposition of the “Magis” for those of us who live and vibrate with this Ignatian spirituality. It is to experience God in a way that only in love do we yearn to live. It is the experience of coming out of the Spiritual Exercises seeing everything with new eyes, even though everything is apparently the same. It is an internal ability to tune into the voice of God. If we don’t see what is happening in the world, in the Church, and in CLC itself that it is indeed a sign of the “kairós”, then we should examine our faith. It is to believe in the face of despair. It’s the hopeful dissatisfaction that leads us to work for the Kingdom which already is here, but not quite yet. It is to love CLC for being the source of life which pushes us to go out and encounter reality and to share the best of our spirituality at the peripheries, wherever they might be. It is



to vibrate with the hope we receive from what Pope Francis poses today, recognizing that it is our task to work for it every day so that it will become real. It is to become aware that the seed planted more than 50 years ago by the Spirit through the Vatican II Council and which has been the source of life for our own 50-year history as CLC, is today bearing fruit and, following that same logic sends us out, since we know that fresh water that stagnates in the end loses its purity. It is time to discern as a world community, amidst this “kairós” which is a continuation of our journey with CLC, and that’s why we are here today.

IV. Purifying our intention: Is CLC a gift for the Church and the world?

CLC is a grace in our lives, therefore, we believe that it is a gift from God. This should help us to confirm something which is very important to state explicitly and that we can easily lose sight of. It is that CLC is a means, not an end in itself. It is a propitious and splendid means which has represented many hopes and joys for us, including in times of great darkness or difficulties, but it is a means.

In the circumstances that our world finds itself in today, a world full of material and existential brokenness, it is not strange that due to the strength and richness of the communal and spiritual life of our CLC, some people have the need to create a mistaken idea that the community is an oasis that can rescue them from reality, and that there ends our journey. CLC, faithful in its Ignatian tradition in the Spiritual Exercises, desires that we remove disordered affections from our lives in order to seek and find the divine will for our lives. This journey culminates in the interior knowledge of the Lord Jesus and of His project, to better love, serve and follow Him on His path that leads to the margins, towards those that are excluded.

Permit me to present FOUR TRIPODS that might help us to respond to the call to be a gift to the Church and the world

1st Tripod:

3 temptations which we should confront as CLC

A. **SELF-REFERENCE.** To define our identity solely in terms of our own interpretations, only from our own particular experience, even though it might be of value, can make us unable to see our greatest calling to build the Kingdom, to feel with the Church, to respond to the cries of reality. Our communal experience

is reflected in the revelation of God and should invite us to always see from the standpoint of the Gospel the change which it presents us with. And therefore, we should use our documents and tools as means, as much as they may lead us to the greater good.

B. SELF-SUFFICIENCY. To believe that what we already have and already do is all that we can accomplish. To think that our way of living the Christ-centered journey is only for personal growth, for growth in my small group or to have a deeper faith that will fill us in an isolated manner. We should overcome the temptation to be communities that remain trapped in the dynamic of the 1st week of the Spiritual Exercises. It is necessary to move further and enter in the discernment of the 2nd week beginning with an internal knowledge of Christ and following the Lord of the 3rd week who is then put on the cross. Without this complete itinerary, we will not be able to live the abundance of our call in the 4th week, that leads us to the Contemplation to attain love.

C. SELF-COMPLACENCY. To feel that we are sufficient unto ourselves and that there is nothing beyond our own community. This is the great temptation, since it would prevent us from gazing at the face of Christ present and crucified in the world asking that we go out of ourselves in order to discover Him. Ours is fundamentally a spirituality of incarnation.

2nd Tripod:

3 attitudes to adopt the true sentiment in the Church

A. COLLEGIALITY. Knowing how to dialogue seriously to identify together the essential aspects of our mission. To identify together the NON-NEGOTIABLES. To respect the diversity of voices. To embrace different positions that enrich us, but to affirm communal discernment as the only way to define or common path.

B. SINODALITY. To walk together in the same direction. To find the necessary means, respecting the enormous diversity of realities, to find the proper rhythm that might allow us to move forward in a constant manner toward our greater end, toward that which God dreams for us.

C. COMMUNION. To live profoundly the experience of God in community. We can only dialogue and walk together with meaning when we experience the presence of the divine as an element that unites us, keeps us together, and allows us to overcome all of the difficulties experienced by a community as diverse as ours.



3rd Tripod:

3 Dispositions in the face of the world

A. **METANOIA.** A radical conversion of the heart. Only a person who is transformed from the inside can accept completely God's call. It is to go to the most intimate interior place and allow oneself to be transformed entirely at the root to prepare to respond to the will of God. In today's world, one needs to return to the root, find meaning, and embrace the Principle and Foundation in order for everything else to find its course.

B. **OTHERNESS-DISTINCTIVENESS.** To recognize that the mystery of life and the concrete presence of God can only be experienced through the eyes of the other. To discover that my call to abundance only makes sense in the company of others, never alone. The most profound aspect of what it means to be a community can be found in the saying that God can be experienced individually but can only be lived fully in the world in the company of others.

C. **PARRHESIA.** It is the gift of prophecy, of speaking words clearly and convincingly, and above all the capacity to step outside of ourselves to respond courageously to what God Himself calls us to do. A serious effort to follow Christ transformed into a love that is evident more in deeds than in words.

4th Tripod: 3 Keys to embrace the essential calls of Pope Francis

A. **MERCY.** To have a heart that allows itself to be touched and molded by the experience of the pain of others. It is the essence of the CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER that can only be attained through feeling deeply and totally the suffering that afflicts others, and assuming an attitude that embraces, accepts and creates a strong tie. *Bull of indiction “Misericordiae Vultus”*.

B. **PASTORAL CONVERSION.** It is the call to a true mission journey, to come out of ourselves to experience the joy of the Gospel that changes all of those who encounter Jesus. It is to allow joy, with Christ, to be born and re-born to give a face to a renewed missionary Church following this command to come out of itself and with a longing to be spirit-filled evangelizers. *Apostolic Exhortation “Evangelii Gaudium”*.

C. **SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL CONVERSION.** It is the definitive incorporation of the cry of sister- mother earth and the urgent call to the Church, and to all who inhabit the planet, to the care of our common home. It isn't an extra component, it is an essential call in the context of Social Doctrine that demands that we recognize our failure as a society regarding the environment. It calls us to see the need to recognize a singular social-environmental crisis and give life to Integral Ecology which consists of the social, political, human, environmental, cultural, of day- to-day life, and of the spirituality of caring dimensions. *Encyclical Letter “Laudato Si”*

All of them lived out in response to the call to Holiness in today's world, as an expression of our lay identity. *Apostolic Exhortation “Gaudete et Exsultate”*.

V. I attest to the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of the Lord amidst our community

One of the most beautiful gifts I have received as a member of CLC and of the opportunity to serve this community at the local, national, regional and world levels has been the possibility to be a witness. My eyes have seen, my ears have heard, my hands have touched and above all my heart has beat strongly before countless experiences of turning over of one's life, of testimony of the building of kingdom and of experiencing the sense of being CLC in the most complex situations in our world. Although tomorrow we will hear an accounting of our journey as a world community during these last 5 years, allow me to share a few expressions, amongst many others, of community experiences which may serve as examples of what our CLC is and desires to be.

I have felt in my own flesh the presence of Christ in the embraces by the CLC Community in the Congo and Rwanda for orphaned children of parents who died from AIDS, and of the young people and adults who are carriers of this terrible disease. Each member of CLC there embraced with all of their strength, being Christ Himself who embraced those hearts, making a world of difference in places where no one else wants to go, since they consider these persons despicable. I have seen Christ sitting patiently and smiling at Hope School in South Korea, listening to the stories of the pain of vulnerable young people who often are despised in many places for being children of immigrants or for having major educational challenges due to lack of support. I also encountered Christ taking on a CLC institutional mission directing a primary and secondary school in the most professional way possible at Marymount School in Hong Kong, sharing values of the Kingdom with children and promoting the care of creation.

I saw Christ setting aside all of His insecurities to enter into mission in the Amazon region and remain there while accompanying the youth promoting Ignatian spirituality as an alternative path in the face of diverse signs of death; I saw Him enter profoundly vulnerable and violent communities with CLC where He took on pastoral and educational work in a very fragile parish. I saw Him rowing a canoe visiting indigenous communities where He discovered the seeds of God in their cultures.

I have seen Christ incarnated in the Christian Life Communities of Chile, Paraguay, Mexico, Spain, Malta and other places, taking risks and speaking out courageously in support of excluded groups, embracing sexual diversity as an expression of reality and of life, and accompanying with the best of our resources the many broken and vulnerable hearts oftentimes rejected by their own Church.



There He endured criticism, even from His own community, but continues firm in the certainty that His Father has sent Him to walk amongst those most broken and rejected. He also continues strengthening the traditional nuclear families in countless places, insisting that it is necessary to see the reality of diverse families with acceptance, compassion and a welcoming attitude.

I also saw him in Europe leaving behind differences and recognizing the enormous strength of being Jesus in community, to go and put His life and heart in Ragusa welcoming people who arrive on those coasts from Africa with nothing. Without certainties, without resources, without hope, without knowing anyone, sometimes after losing family members in the crossing. And there, Christ has decided to stay and wait for these men and women. He is there with CLC embracing and listening, but above all changing his own life and vision before those who had previously been “strangers” and today become brothers and sisters.

I heard about the presence of Christ in CLC in the middle of the most difficult war situation in Syria, where there was no longer any hope

I heard about the presence of Christ in CLC in the middle of the most difficult war situation in Syria, where there was no longer any hope, and where with the help of the global community, and with support provided by Lebanon, its neighbor country, decided to survive and looked for ways to feed his family and others. Today, he wants to take the strength of Ignatian spirituality to try to make sense of a war that appears to have no end, to try to heal interior wounds.

I have also found Him in the United States and Canada trying to inspire a true love for all of creation, a love for a genuine call for the care of our common home. Even though it may be hard to believe, I found a Christ who had a CLC badge at the United Nations, fighting so that the cries of the most painful realities might be heard and searching for structural changes in the most insensitive governments in the world.

I know that He walks in numerous other places promoting communal life, formation, spirituality, social- political reflection, growth in faith, serving the Church in so many ways, and above all present in each daily expression of lay life, in which, as in CLC, He is present. I implore that when we find Him, we



might recognize Him, and that we will allow ourselves to be carried away and to follow Him so that He will always be of utmost importance in our CLC community. Regarding the question “*How many loaves have you? Go and see*” (Mark 6, 38), we trust that

He, as always, will make himself available amidst our Buenos Aires 2018 World Assembly to show us where else He needs and wants us to respond to His call.

Some tips to journey in this **KAIROS** and to offer our talent as a gift

In my travels throughout the Amazon region, an area where I spend much of my life as part of my CLC mission and as a believer, we visit diverse indigenous communities to which on many occasions we arrive with the expectations of outsiders, in other words, we have a workplan, objectives laid out, and a detailed schedule which reflects our own need for results according to our criteria. We realize how wrong we can be when these brothers and sisters teach us that the things that are essential are the encounter, the deep dialogue, and the sharing of life from the standpoint of what each one has to offer. In the interest of controlling time and managing the clock, we usually want to begin the formal sessions immediately, and upon asking if we can begin, the answer we receive is: we’ll begin when the time is right. In other words, when the rain stops, or after we’ve finished sharing about our lives, or after eating what there is to offer, or when relatives from other communities arrive ... and that can take an hour, or five, or perhaps until tomorrow. We are taught so much about the “kairós” and how essential it is to live fully, by those who define and weave their lives by the parameters of the spirit.

This is my invitation today, that we allow the presence of the Spirit of God to flood us and cause us to overflow, that the Spirit’s presence may determine everything, that we be able to abandon our predominantly rational expectations and

our preconceptions to allow the mystery of God to set the rhythm. That we be able, out of necessity, to sell everything we have because we have found the most precious treasure for our CLC. That great treasure which is to work with Him for His Kingdom of justice and dignity. This is our most profound grace, our gift offering to the Church and the world. It's about a *“love that consists of an interchange between the two parties; that is to say in the lover's giving and communicating to the beloved what he or she has or out of what one has or can have... and also reciprocally (...) to ask for interior knowledge of such great good received, so that, being moved to profound gratitude, I may be able in all to love and serve His Divine Majesty (...) and to bring to memory the benefits received, of Creation, Redemption, and particular gifts, pondering with much feeling how much God our Lord has done for me”* (Spiritual Exercises No. 231, 233 and 234)

Let us enter this Assembly recognizing that:

- Depth is more important than form.
- to build the Kingdom on a daily basis, in the simple things as well as the complex, is more important than speaking eloquently about it; in other words, it's about living fully our vocation in this world, and taking advantage of life lived in community.
- we are called to be a CLC that goes forth, recognizing and taking care of our essence, but with the conviction that Christ calls us from His irrevocable presence in those specific faces which are beyond ourselves. A Christ who inhabits the material and existential peripheries.

It is with this reflection that I want to invite all of us participants of this Assembly to ready ourselves with determination and interior freedom to cease being delegates from a national community, to see ourselves fully as a single CLC Body. And in so doing, the Lord of life and the Good Spirit might be favorable unto us during these coming days here in Buenos Aires. We desire this to be a genuine moment of communal discernment, with the resolute purpose of seeking together what the Spirit would like to reveal to us for the future of our world community. Allow me to invoke a few guidelines from our source of identity, the Spiritual Exercises, so that they might help us in our preparations:

1. In order to be able to seek and find the will of God in this discernment, it is essential to remove from our interior any disordered affections, in other words, anything that can distract, keep us at a distance, or disrupt our capacity to listen with clarity what God wants to ask of us (Spiritual Exercises No. 1).

2. We seek an attitude of profound interior and exterior willingness and freedom to live fully this beautiful and challenging moment. I ask us to enter the Assembly with great courage and generosity (Spiritual Exercises No. 5).
3. We ask that we allow the Spirit to act, in other words, that it be the Creator who has the first and last word for our CLC. Not to be influenced more towards one result than another nor to push the discernment towards a particular interest regardless of how genuine it might be (Spiritual Exercises No. 15).

I end my discourse with exactly the same words with which I began this splendid, complex and bittersweet service as president of World CLC in Lebanon, 2013:

“Nothing is more practical than finding God, than falling in Love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, whom you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in Love, stay in love, and it will decide everything”. Pedro Arrupe S.J.

Original in Spanish

Fall in love
 Stay in love
 it will decide
 everything.
 Fr. Pedro
 Arrupe, SJ

Contemplating the Journey of the World Community

World Executive Council Report 2013-2018

Introduction

As has been expressed at various times in this five-year cycle, between our Assembly in Lebanon 2013, and Buenos Aires 2018, we feel that we are in a special time: in a “KAIRÓS”¹: a time that can only be understood from the eyes of a believing hope. It needs to be viewed from a firm faith, which as CLC, is based on our vocation of following Christ through Ignatian Spirituality. It is a faith that desires to find God in everything and in everyone, as we participate in the building of the Kingdom. It makes sense only through discernment and response to the signs of the times.

In this KAIRÓS of the Church and of the world, we face the question that Christ asks us: “How many loaves have you? Go and see” (Mk 6:38). In the discovery of what has been given to us by Grace, we want to recognize ourselves and work to be: “CLC, a gift for the Church and for the world”. It is in this spirit that we want to share with you our journey as a World Executive Council, and what we



¹ See 4th Letter from the President to WCLC: Convocation to the Buenos Aires 2018 World Assembly and, 5th Letter from the President to the WCLC: Preparing the heart and purifying the intention towards the 2018 Buenos Aires World Assembly; see also Projects 168: Our next CLC World Assembly – “*CLC celebration, consolidation, renewal*” and Projects 169: World CLC Day 2018 – “*Caring for our gift, offering it more generously in joy*”

have seen, felt, heard, and lived in our world community in this period in which we were sent to a privileged service by the Lebanon World Assembly.

In order to make sense of the broad, challenging, and inspiring mandate that was given to us as a World Executive Council (ExCo) in the Lebanon document, we chose the pinwheel to help us organize ourselves so that the elements of the mandate would be present. It had a dynamism, as befits CLC, allowing a communal and collegial response to the great challenge of service for the world CLC. The pinwheel helped us to energize our own processes of communal discernment and organization. Thus, this pinwheel will also be the basis of this report of the last 5 years, even as some of its elements have changed, or have been subsumed, or merged during our term.



A pinwheel anchored to a center that is the “*project of God and the mission of Christ*” that makes possible its movement and its reason for existing. A center attached to the piece that holds it and moves to orient it in the best way to receive the wind. That piece is our ExCo and the world executive secretariat, without whose presence we could not respond to the daily service to serve the whole community.

In this report we describe our contemplation of the world community, from our particular (and many a time, limited) view as World ExCo. Here, we describe how we strove to fulfil our co-discerning role, and our efforts, responses, and initiatives to support the world community in its ongoing journey for greater and deeper response to Christ’s call. We also identify some challenges as well as

some possible ways forward that can be taken up by the assembly and the next World Executive Council. It does not aim to be complete or objective in all details. Rather, it offers our perspectives and efforts as a group sent by the world community to accompany and support it in its journey as a lay apostolic body.

We have divided the report into three main parts: **A. Our Work in the Frontiers, B. Our Being World Community, and C. Our Lay Ignatian Identity.** We conclude by highlighting some patterns, intuitions and invitations, that bring us to the grace of the Buenos Aires 2018 Assembly.

We invite each national and local community to find themselves in the aspects outlined in this report. Above all, that together we complement it with the life that the Spirit has revealed for the whole CLC according to its own times, places and people. Local, national and regional.

We thank God for the many gifts we have received, for the wealth of communal discernment that, as a World ExCo, has allowed us to face and overcome our many frailties. From this discernment we were able to keep the heart aligned with the essentials. We want to make a special recognition to all members who have worked tirelessly to serve the community in its various levels, through their gifts and limitations, therefore helping turn this “pinwheel” towards the wind.

A special recognition to the team of the World Executive Secretariat² for their daily commitment to the life of this world community. We thank those who have been part of this ExCo’s journey but because of the end of cycles or particular situations they do not end this term with us. Thanks to our dear Josephine, Fr. Luke, Franklin and Sofia; the mark of their lives is deeply present in this story.

We humbly present this as a document that describes our service — characterized by deep desires



² Alwin, Rojean, Herminio and Van Nguyen. Van celebrates her 25th year of service in the World Secretariat this year.

for service, generousities and frailties, and a continuing effort to read how the Spirit is moving in the world community. Our service was not a perfect service. But it constituted all the loaves that we could offer, when Christ asked.

A. Our Work in the Frontiers

The identification of the frontiers as apostolic areas of focus was confirmed during the 2013 Lebanon Assembly, based on the observations and emerging patterns that the previous ExCo has seen in the world community. Our work has been one of continued contemplation and support as the world community took to concrete action. One of the tools that helped us see what was out there was the Survey on the Frontiers³, which allowed us to see some more patterns: a) throughout the World CLC there has been various levels of engagement supported by communities – from individual to regional level network collaborations; b) Ignatian Spirituality and our own CLC formation have been used as tools to engage the frontiers. In many cases, the work and the identity are inseparable. We were called into the peripheries as CLC. In this section, we describe what we have seen and supported in the Frontiers.

Globalization & Poverty

In this frontier, as a World ExCo, we made progress in defining possible ways of accompanying the initiatives of the national communities, although we were able to develop little in terms of concrete actions.

The Orientations for Action (Assembly Final Document, Lebanon 2013. N.12) we received and could establish for the Globalization and Poverty frontier were:

- ◆ Develop spiritual tools to more adequately understand and address the challenges we are facing
- ◆ Network for sharing experiences and taking actions

Along with those orientations, we have also:

- ◆ helped to have a greater awareness regarding this frontier,
- ◆ generate financial support to promote more actions.

In this sense, the World ExCo continued to receive requests for support from the

³ Originally linked through Projects 165; Frontiers Survey Summary: <https://goo.gl/iPVvRI>

Apostolic Fund, which allowed strengthening various actions related to social action, attention to urgent needs, or encouraging apostolic initiatives within the framework of this frontier. We hope that the apostolic initiatives that respond to the frontier of globalization and poverty, among others, will grow in order to continue using this apostolic fund.

Efforts in the World Community

On this frontier we share some initiatives of the world community that have helped us to better understand our mission with respect to the issues of globalization and poverty.

At the regional level, CLC Europe, after a significant process of discernment, overcoming various challenges, and relying on existing experiences in the national communities, undertook the Volunteers in Frontiers project to assist people in search of refuge, especially from sub-Saharan Africa, to Ragusa, Italy. Other National CLC initiatives in Europe have also responded to this complex and painful situation.

Also at the regional level, the CLC in Latin America has continued with its formation process: The political dimension of the CLC social commitment in Latin America, which has trained three generations of CLC members and others from the Ignatian family, coming from various countries in the region. The objective has been to encourage and enrich the reflection of CLC in Latin America in order to promote and consolidate the commitment in the socio-political dimension of our lay vocation. This course has helped promote socio-political reflection groups in different national communities.

In the particular case of Syria, international solidarity has been very intense, and with this help has been a work of humanitarian assistance, social and economic promotion, and then spiritual animation before the dramatic situation of the war that has affected this country and its CLC communities during all these years. In this regard, the support of CLC Lebanon has been fundamental, as has the continuous effort of the members of CLC Syria. On this frontier, the support of various countries in Europe and North America has been fundamental for members of the CLC Syria that have required timely support in their migration processes.

There is so much more: CLC works actively in various community and institutional initiatives of formal and informal education, assistance to children of immigrants, care for orphans, or children and adults carrying the HIV-AIDS virus,

among many others who respond to the Globalization and Poverty frontier. Even without being accompanied by the ExCo, the many unseen efforts and initiatives are living signs of the apostolic profile of our community.

Ecology

The Ecology Frontier and Laudato Si

During the term 2013 - 2018, we heard loud and clear the call for us, as CLC, to care for our common home. Pope Francis issued this very call in his Encyclical *Laudato Si'* which, as part of the Social Doctrine of the Church, is an essential responsibility for every believer. This encyclical became the foundational reference for our actions as CLC on this frontier:

“The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change ... Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home”. (May, 2015. No. 13).

Before this encyclical, CLC had already experienced a firm ecological call of the Spirit in the Lebanon Assembly. The Lebanon document of 2013 posed the following challenges and responsibilities:

- ◆ Develop sensitivity towards respect for creation in our attitudes and actions;
- ◆ Establish and develop networks to share experiences and practices such as the Amazon Project.

Over the last five years, we have witnessed how this ecological priority has grown



in the heart of our world community, and in the members of CLC. Initiatives have been generated in many national communities. Various local communities have made efforts to disseminate the Laudato Si Encyclical, participate in local efforts and advocacy, as well as make lifestyle changes. At a global level, CLC has participated in strategic networking to help in the social and political discussion of the issue, such as:

- ◆ on the Steering Committee of the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM);
- ◆ in COP21, which resulted in the Paris Agreement;
- ◆ on committees and at conferences at the United Nations;
- ◆ in the promotion and coordination of the Synod for the Amazon.

To encourage commitment to this frontier, ExCo established a special Ecology Commission with representation of CLC members with varied expertise and experience on ecological issues⁴. We also had the support of Fr. Luke Rodrigues, SJ, when he served as our vice-ecclesiastical assistant. Likewise, the commission has incorporated issues associated with the “*Globalization and Poverty*” frontier, given that we are talking about a single crisis: social and environmental, not two separate crises. “*We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*”. LS#49

Progressio Supplement 72

The Ecology Commission worked intensely to produce a document containing inspiring articles and meeting plans that offered opportunities for social analysis, education in environmental issues, and Ignatian tools so that CLC groups throughout the world might enter into this process of awareness, conversion, and commitment to action. Progressio Supplement No. 72 “*Caring for Creation*”⁵ is an essential instrument for the continued growth of CLC in its commitment to this ecology frontier.

Amazon Project

A concrete expression of our existential commitment, the CLC Amazon Project

⁴ Mauricio Lopez (ExCo), Ann Marie Brennan (ExCo), Chris Gardner (Australia), Allen Ottaro (Kenya), Luis and Kuruvila Zachariah (English Canada), David Escandon (Ecuador), Estelle Grenon (France), Luis Fernando Krieger (Brazil)

⁵ Progressio Supplement 72: Caring for Creation



realized our yearning for a greater incarnation in the midst of the most urgent realities of this ecological frontier. We have done this by accompanying CLC volunteers in the Amazon and in collaboration with the Society of Jesus. This process has been a great learning experience for CLC and has confirmed

the essential value of insertion experiences, both in the Amazon and in other places of significance and vulnerability. World CLC accompanied, with the regional support of Latin America, three volunteers: Carmen Amaya and Jairo Forero (Year 1), a couple from CLC Colombia who worked for one year in the Amazon of Brazil, doing intense pastoral work, citizen training, and educational work for vulnerable populations, and Lorena Pérez of CLC Ecuador (Year 2) who worked for one year with indigenous Amazonian communities and in the formation of ecclesial and local leaders within the Pan-Amazonian Jesuit Service. Additionally, CLC Brazil has missioned and accompanied a CLC member in the Brazilian Amazon to promote Ignatian spirituality, the accompaniment of young people, and pastoral work on initiatives with the Society of Jesus.

Involvement in the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM)

Like an answer to our prayer in Lebanon, the network of GCCM was founded in 2015 and has grown to include over 600 organizations, of which a CLC member, Ann Marie Brennan, serves on the steering committee. With the GCCM, CLC members have joined with others worldwide in prayer, educational awareness, campaigns for action and advocacy, Season of Creation, and more.

Family

Feeling with the Church in the Family Frontier

Even before the Lebanon 2013 World Assembly, the world community has been becoming increasingly aware of the need to develop a robust Family Pastoral Framework. Lebanon 2013 called on the community to intensify considerations on the issues facing families today and on how to reach out to them in their different realities.

CLC's thirst to more effectively respond to family needs received a major impetus from the duo-session Synod on the Family. The world community lived the grace of 'feeling with the Church' in a very particular way through this synodal process. It helped us much to rally into the Church process articulating the challenges of families and finding from the treasures, old and new, of our faith and spirituality, sources with which to respond to these challenges. Thus the publication of *Amoris Laetitia*, which urges a discerning spirit in living and ministering to family, has given us all much encouragement and challenge. These have given greater freshness if also greater urgency still to Family Pastoral in CLC and in the Church today. The World ExCo made modest and not always successful efforts, to support the community in rallying with the Synodal and auxiliary processes; but it is the overwhelming response of the Community to the call of the Pope that has occasioned remarkable growth in CLC family pastoral.

An early effort of the World ExCo to set up a commission on Family across the world community did not succeed due to coordination deficiency on our part. This may, regrettably, have caused some frustration to those who were invited to work on this commission. Fortunately, the energy and commitment of the World community on the Family frontier surpassed this deficiency.

The International Formation Encounter on Family

A special mention must be made of the International Formation Encounter on Family⁶ that CLC held in Madrid in July 2017. The IFE was organized by the World ExCo in partnership with the Comillas Pontifical University through Fernando Vidal (CLC Spain), Director of the university's Family Institute. We received memorable support from the new Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life⁷ in Rome as well. It was a remarkable encounter of about 70 CLC members who, though coming from 28 national communities all over the world, found themselves walking a common path of discernment and dedication to families. The participants of the IFE felt a strong and resounding sense of the call to CLC to go to the Family frontier embodying our Ignatian identity and tools. There was no doubt that this sense is experienced throughout the body of CLC Worldwide, and the IFE became both a celebration/confirmation and a call to cultivate this

⁶ See Progressio Supplement 73: The International Formation Encounter on Family, and Progressio 2017.2

⁷ A new dicastery merging the Pontifical Council for the Laity, the Pontifical Council on the Family, Pontifical Academy of Life.

gift of Ignatian tools in service of the family. From this perspective of our identity and tools, there is ample scope to be creative and responsive to all the realities that characterize and challenge families in the world today.

Responses within the World Community⁸



The last five years since the Assembly have shown how the family pastoral is at the core of CLC ministry. Ministry to families has increased, and sharing across the world community of various resources that CLC members have developed has characterized a very active response to family situations in every region of the world community. Joyfully, there is strong response to the

‘*traditional family*’ as well as communion with and service to new family realities. The ExCo has had the joy to find occasions to support these efforts and to encourage sharing of resources across the world. No doubt, there is scope for much more such sharing.

For several years now, the CLC community in Chile, Malta, as well as some other national communities, have been responding to the call to care for families ‘*on the peripheries*’ of the mainstream understanding of families. It is the experience in many parts of the world that these families are a part of our communities in CLC, and in the Church. Some CLC members themselves feel that they live afar from mainstream family reality; yet just as Jesus calls and send persons from the margins, these CLC members feel called to be on mission in and from the very family frontiers where they find themselves. The creative fidelity of CLC communities in response to these special ministries is a gift for all the community, an enrichment and a challenge. World ExCo was able to make modest efforts to support and encourage these ministries and we hope that they continue to be a sign and a model of our openness to prophetic ministry when we are called to it.

A particular development of the last few years has been the emphasis of the use

⁸ Progressio Supplement 73 and Progressio 2017.2 for some examples

of Ignatian spirituality for family life and family pastoral. It is clear that the community around the world has labored to develop and share Ignatian tools to grow families. Because of these accelerating efforts, *Amoris Laetitia* has been a great ‘AHA!’ moment. Many CLC members around the world felt confirmed in their ministry and encouraged to move even deeper.

We realized in the journey of the past years, that family peripheries are everywhere. A deep and sustained spirit of discernment, both individual and communal, will need to be our on-going mission orientation on this frontier. By returning to our roots, we are able to share life with others more deeply and to hold out both promise and hope.

Youth

The youth issue has always been a special area of concern for CLC. This is true for any institution or community that is aware of the need for continuity, vitality, and how to offer its gifts to others, and to be open to receive young people’s contribution for its evolution.

The youth issue has always been a special area of concern for CLC. This is true for any institution or community that is aware of the need for continuity, vitality, and how to offer its gifts to others...

Our Efforts in the Youth Frontier

As recommended in our previous Assembly in Lebanon, the World ExCo set up a commission on Youth, composed of ExCo members and members from different countries⁹. The members of this commission met in virtual meetings and exchanged their experiences and opinions, as well as some materials. The reflections on youth have been shared in Projects 165: “*Youth, heirs of the past, pioneers of the future*”. Other regions set up youth commissions as well, such in Asia Pacific and Latin America and organized encounters or formation activities for the youth, including one in Europe through the initiative of the EuroTeam¹⁰. The Survey on the Frontiers showed the efforts of many national communities

⁹ Najat Sayegh (Lebanon), Cristina Barredo (Ecuador), Catherine Trottier (France), Loïc Michaud (France), Giovanna De La Mora Gomez (Mexico), Tinnah Dela Rosa (Philippines), Jennifer Coito (Usa), Clare Chinyama (Zambia) And Fabian Majena (Zimbabwe)

¹⁰ The regional team in Europe

also with youth: eg. through giving of the Spiritual Exercises, volunteer encouragement, extending invitations to conferences and workshops on various topics, encouraging program development for training commitment in the parish, attending camps, providing guidance, and organizing other activities, according to the context and reality of each country.

During our mandate, we responded to invitations from the Youth Office in the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life by participating in the Church events such as the World Youth Day and the Pre-Synod Meeting on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment.

The CLC Vocation and Youth

We were reminded that CLC is a vocation and that we may encourage this vocation by working especially with certain categories of persons: children of CLC families, the Eucharistic Youth Movement, young parishioners and university students.

The World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland was a beautiful and successful experience in which many young CLC members from various countries met each



other and sensed the world dimension of our community. Some of them were invited to represent CLC in the main eucharistic celebrations. Our young members were also ‘missionaries’ in the Vocation Center, where they had the opportunity to introduce CLC and Ignatian Spirituality to hundreds of youth worldwide. This allowed CLC to be known and visible: “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Mt 5:16). Similarly, many CLC Asian youth attended and helped facilitate the Asian Youth Day held in Indonesia. Their accounts and testimonies were published in *Progressio*¹¹.

In Stride with the Church

The Spirit is moving the Church and our Community in the same direction. After the Papal encyclical *Laudato Si’* and the apostolic exhortation on Family, *Amoris Laetitia*, the Vatican announced the convening of a Synod of Bishops in October 2018 on the subject of “*Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment*”. With this topic, the Church has decided to examine herself on how she can lead young people to recognize and accept the call to the fullness of life and love, and to ask young people to help her in identifying the most effective ways to announce the Good News today. This connects to our conviction that CLC is a vocation. In fact, following exchanges and discussions in CLC, we feel that the most important thing would be to share our CLC Charism and Ignatian spirituality with young people, wherever they are committed in the Church and in society, without necessarily adhering to CLC. While we would like to have youth as members, our main focus is to help youth find the right path in life. Our focus is to help them seek and find God. In that process, some of them will also discover a vocation to CLC.

So, we participated in the different steps of the Synod on Youth: after having received the preparatory document, we invited our young members to be involved in the preparation of the Synod by responding on a questionnaire launched by the Church to allow youth express their opinion on different matters; we were then represented in the Pre-Synodal meeting by one young CLC member, and awaiting now for the Synod in October 2018.

The participation in the special moments of the life of the Church is so important. It allows us to feel that we are part of the Mystical Body of Christ and gives us the responsibility to be joyful witnesses of God’s love around us.

¹¹ See *Progressio* 2016.1-2, for World Youth Day testimonies from CLC members, and *Progressio* 2018.1, for an account and reflection on the CLC Participation in the Asian Youth Day (Theme: “Joyful Asian Youth: Living the Gospel in Multicultural Asia!”)

B. Our Being World Community

Growth in the Community

As members of the worldwide ExCo we have been privileged witnesses of growth in the community, as well as its challenges. This growth, beyond the quantitative, has visible signs in terms of deepening our lifestyle as CLC, and in a greater depth as regards our Ignatian identity.

Struggles and Signs of Growth

During our service to the world community, we have seen how in different regions of the world, new dynamisms appear in the interest of belonging and being part of this CLC lifestyle. Always, these has been accompanied by struggles in their respective realities.

- ◆ Even in regions where apparently participation in formal religious spaces decreases, CLC becomes an alternative space for the search for mystery and experience of God's presence, as it is in some countries in Europe where CLC processes are beginning or are being revived. It has been a cause of joy, for example, to see the CLC in Netherlands as alive after years of seeming inactivity.
- ◆ In some regions of Africa, where there are signs of exclusion, instability, and even war, new processes emerge around the life of the CLC lifestyle that represent spaces that help to live with greater meaning the faith in Christ in these circumstances.
- ◆ Other regions of our world community, although they do not grow significantly in numbers, experience processes of maturity and consolidation such as Latin America and North America.
- ◆ In the Asia Pacific region, where the Christian religion is a minority, we see inspiring signs where new CLC national communities emerge as a result of the inspiration and accompaniment of members of other nearby CLC communities. Even in places where it would seem impossible for this to happen due to various limitations or restrictions, the dynamism of CLC as a response to the reality of today's world continues to represent a possibility of encounter with God and with the following of Christ.
- ◆ In the Middle East, where Christians are also a minority, we have seen deeper response and a sense of fraternity in the accompaniment of war situations, as our members are called to be witnesses of tolerance and forgiveness and love.

Regional Processes

An evident growth in our community is present in the regional processes that, without being formally recognized structures in World CLC governance, have become true spaces of communion, exchange of experience, joint formation, common action in frontier issues.

In the past five years we have witnessed various regions convene for fellowship, governance, service & collaboration, and formation.

An African Assembly was held in Rwanda in 2016, where they lived a profound sense of solidarity with the 1994 genocide victims; it was a hope-filled sense of solidarity and compassion that continues to be much needed in the world today. Apart from their regional assemblies, the EuroTeam also organized a regional Youth Encounter in Malta. The Latin American region continues to implement region-wide apostolic formation courses (i.e. MAGIS, Sociopolitical formation). The Asia Team organized participation in the Asian Youth Day and its own program for youth formation.

Regional connections have become paths of deep growth according to the reality of each region. We continue to see these platforms/ structures/ teams accompany the richness of being a world community with particular regional expressions that make its a Lay Apostolic Body more evident.



All Africa Assembly 2016

Challenges in Generational Growth

As a community in a journey through history, we also look towards the survival of our community through the next generations. If God indeed calls us to continue, we would like to care for the World Community's growth. We are concerned about the uneven growth in young members in various sections of the world community, where we find that although the number of members is stable, it does not spread to other people, especially the youth. In many communities, we find the original members continuing as a community, with very limited growth in membership coming from succeeding generations. They face the possibility of fading away in the next generation. There are national communities that are succeeding in this challenge, where there are continuing processes of invitation, formation, and leadership handover in place. We need to learn from them.

Caring for and Supporting New and Fragile Communities

The World ExCo has also encountered challenges regarding our care for national communities throughout the world community membership process. The practice of godparenting is in place, to help the new members go through the emerging→observer →incorporation phases. Support has been less clear after incorporation into the world community. We have relied on regional contacts, visits, and direct communication from the national communities. However, we have also observed that in cases when national communities have become fragile to the point of near-disappearance (or complete lack of contact), we might not have proper means for support (or adequate knowledge prior). In these cases, it might benefit the next World ExCo to evaluate the continuous process (emergence – incorporation – continuing membership) and roles (e.g. godparent communities, ExCo links) from an overarching perspective, and chart improvements for monitoring and supporting national communities in their CLC way of life.

Partnerships and Collaboration

It is impossible to recount the numerous linkages and relationships that CLC, at every level, has engaged with (some have already been mentioned in this report). As individuals and as a body, engagement is a feature of our way of proceeding. Each facet of our identity is an interface for relationship. In this section we mention two: a) Our relationship with the Jesuits, complex and having ecclesial, traditional and personal layers and b) our link with the UN as a recognized NGO. Both relationships need care and evaluation, as realities continue to change.

Relationship with the Society of Jesus

We remain grateful for the various partnerships, cooperations and friendships that exist between CLC and the Society of Jesus all over the world. Whereas challenges exist in the continued reflection and reclarification of collaboration's meaning in practice, we remain linked as parallel traditions: apostolic bodies living out Ignatian Spirituality.

During this term, we have witnessed two major changes in our institutional linkage with the Society: the appointment of Fr. Herminio Rico SJ as Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant for World CLC, followed by the Holy See's appointment of Fr. Arturo Sosa SJ as our new World CLC Ecclesiastical Assistant. We are grateful for their openness to this service. At the same time, we are thankful for the lightheartedness, depth and wisdom that characterized the past service of Fr. Adolfo Nicolas SJ as our World EA.

CLC Working Group in the United Nations

An important function of the UN Working group is the two-way exchange of stories between the grassroots apostolic experiences of World CLC and the UN advocacies aligned to our values and directions. It is both a bridge for voices and a platform for change for the world community.

We continue to have a CLC UN Working Group in New York which participates on committees and attend conferences on topics related to our frontiers such as environmental sustainability, forced migration, indigenous peoples, families, and oceans. Joan Woods (CLC USA) continues to be our main representative to the UN¹².

In 2014, the UN working group co-hosted two workshops at the New York NGO conference during which the Sustainable Development Goals were introduced. In 2016, the NGO conference was held in Korea, where our local CLC members led a workshop on inclusion of marginalized groups¹³. In 2017, the UN working group joined with over 1400 organizations worldwide by creating an Oceans Plastic Project, encouraging CLC members to raise awareness of environmental issues raised in *Laudato Si*, reduce use of plastic, and share stories in Progressio or Facebook¹⁴.

¹² Other members of the working group include Nicholas Kim, Ann Marie Brennan, Marcelito Custodio+ and Marie Schimelfening.

¹³ Progressio 2016.1-2

¹⁴ www.facebook.com/groups/cvxclceology/

On Clarifying Membership and Commitment

This section refers to parts of point 14 of the Lebanon final document, i.e.

We recommend that ExCo set up commissions on (...) the General Principles and General Norms. In continuity with Fatima 2008, we recommend that ExCo continue to facilitate our world community's self-understanding concerning (...) commitment, (...). The Assembly also feels that we need to further clarify the issue of membership.

The ExCo set up a commission on the General Principles and General Norms. Their mission was to draw perspectives and provide advice with regard to membership, commitment and the way to articulate these two realities. The commission was comprised of José Reyes (CVX Chile, former ExSec and ExCo member), Rita El Ramy (Lebanon, former ExCo member), Enrique de Alava (Spain), Anne Fauquignon (France), Ingrid Kao (Taiwan) and Denis Dobbstein (current ExCo). The commission worked from June 2016 until March 2017.

Reflections and Paths for Further Clarity and Depth

At risk of caricaturing the richness of the commission's reflections, these are the key points that founded the World ExCo's decision of delaying a concrete proposal for the revision of the GP's:

- ◆ Commitment is a real challenge in most of the national communities. What's more, there's a large variety of interpretations, sensibilities and practices regarding both membership and commitment.
- ◆ The GP's are a radical but joyful invitation to pilgrimage. GP10 gives a perspective to all those who join a local CLC.
- ◆ The formal commitment is rather the expression of a reality that is already present (although not yet accomplished), than the door to pass through to acquire membership. A legal reading of GP10 would necessarily mislead us.
- ◆ The revision of GP10 might be part of the pedagogical effort to be achieved worldwide in order to avoid the impression of an upwards progression, and rather promote a deepening of commitment to Christ, through a chosen community, inspired by the Ignatian spirituality.
- ◆ Some leads to follow up:
 - Let the General Principles refer to members rather than membership, leaving the latter, more objective concept, for the General Norms.

- Find a way to avoid the comparison with religious vows, which the words “permanent” and “temporary” seem to refer to.
- Considering CLC is a personal vocation, the GN’s could either mention a “suitable time” or refer to a timeframe that proved adequate in many communities, rather than give the impression that the process of growth is linear and the rhythm compulsory.

The ExCo Decision

The World ExCo decided not to rush the process of clarification ahead.

As a matter of fact, it would be possible to improve the current wording. Nevertheless, a too focused attempt of rewording would likely increase the risk of a legal reading rather than help building a common understanding of the actual stakes of commitment.

Hence, considering that

- ♦ the GP’s should and actually can already be read in the light of more explicit foundational documents, i.e. CLC Charism and Process of Growth.
- ♦ the GP’s are not supposed to be updated too often, being the most important referential text of the World CLC,
- ♦ the fact that a fundamental revision might be advisable sooner or later, when a World Assembly recommends to refer to recently acknowledged and yet fundamental features of a Lay Ignatian Apostolic Body,
- ♦ any revision of the GP’s implies a heavy procedure (accurate preparation of amendments, approval by the GA with a 2/3 voting quorum and approval by the Holy See),

the World ExCo felt it would be wise to wait until a World Assembly acknowledges that time is ripe for a revision of the GP’s and GN’s, possibly including but not focusing on membership and commitment.

Financial Co-Responsibility

The five-year report of our financial status (2013-2017) is a continuing story of our World Community’s efforts towards financial co-responsibility, which took a good turn in Nairobi 2003. For several years, we had to operate on lack-of-financial-resources; our dreams and discerned actions were much larger than our financial capacity. We endeavored to stay faithful in supporting the mandates of each assemblies amidst great financial difficulty.



Our financial challenges have been highlighted in the past assemblies. Thus, in Nairobi 2003 the smoothing process¹⁵ was presented and undertaken by the world community; this provided a concrete way for each national community to help meet the minimum budget of the world community and to eventually reach a better financial health. The action taken was highly dependent on the commitment and generosity of national communities. Now, we look back with deep joy and humility- because the world community responded positively.

These past five years have given us time to breath: beginning 2013 we closed our yearly accounts with a surplus and finally, in the year 2014 –our past debts have been eliminated; the positive year-end balance continued thus far. This is a definite message of a mature community that share responsibility for each other. Thanks to the concerted efforts of the national communities, past and present World Executive Councils, and many individuals who help us plan, implement, and reach this breakthrough.

We share this news with gladness and with fervent hope that this is only a beginning of the world community’s financial co-responsibility. We still have a long way to go, to finally be financially sustainable / (“in the pink of health”). The challenge remains, and so we must be steadfast.

¹⁵ Smoothing process was first introduced in Nairobi 2003. The objective was to help share responsibility for our world community, in varying degrees depending each local reality.

Five-Year Highlights¹⁶ (2013- 2017)

2013

Due to many late dues payments, the World ExCo could not afford all the operating expenses budgeted. Thus, it was decided to fund its World Assembly expenses of €10.600,00 from the assembly accounts instead of the operating budget to avoid a new deficit. As a net result, in 2013 we achieved an operating surplus of €6.902,00 but we must be aware of the negative effect of late payments and avoid these in the future.

During this year, two of the special funds had positive activities. First, the Assembly Fund received the surplus of the Lebanon Assembly accounts, and this would allow the ExCo to implement the next Assembly with a better financial contribution. Second, the Apostolic Fund (created as a recommendation of the Fatima Assembly) funded the production of medals to commemorate the 450 anniversary and to support CLC Syria. Special donations have arrived to support CLC Syria.

2014

This year's operational budget had allocated €12,000.00 to the Apostolic Fund (from €10.000,00 in the previous year) and had also made allocation to provisions for the world secretariat needs. The Apostolic Initiatives fund was able to support 1) formation in South Sudan, 2) formation in Brazil for its Amar y Servir formation course.

2015

The coordinated effort of the World Community had helped us maintain a positive balance in our financial position. In 2015 we realised a 92,81% total dues payment. Although the late payments put us under pressure with regard to the cash flow, we highly appreciate the efforts achieved by the National Communities to pay their arrears, which raised the collection rate to nearly 99,21%.

The availability of resources also gives life to our lay apostolic body. We have assisted socio-political and spiritual formation programs in parts of Latin America and Africa, helped the Asia Pacific assembly, and made a contribution to the Global Catholic Climate Movement. We also sent €12.000,00 to Syria, which was

¹⁶ A more detailed financial report can be found as a separate attachment.

used to finance a Relief Project for household aliment manufactures; and was also distributed to three areas in Syria (Aleppo, Horns, and Damascus) to aid CLC members in their basic, spiritual and psychological needs.

The contributions have enabled a continued allocation of €12.000,00 to the Apostolic fund and also provided for the world secretariat operations.

2016

The national communities' commitment to the Dues computation¹⁷ in 2013 World Assembly resulted to a ninety-seven percent (97%) outcome of dues contributions in 2016. This had enabled faithful allocation to the Apostolic Initiatives Fund (€12.000,00); sent support for formation activities for vulnerable CLC members in Wau and Juba in South Sudan, and for youth members in Brazil; it also helped the All African Assembly; and had assisted the involvement of World CLC during the World Youth Day in Poland.

In the first quarter of 2016, we had sent the remaining balance (€5.872,15) of Syria fund to aid CLC members affected in the Syria crises. At the end of 2016, Syria fund remains open due to the continuous flow of donations from different national communities and individuals. Last year, we also received support from Missio Procur of Germany for our involvement in the Amazon Volunteer Project.

2017

While we have had to respond differently to those communities facing extraordinary difficulties by cancelling their dues (e.g. Syria), the percentage of dues collected ranged from 90% to 97% the past 4 years.

In addition to maintaining a positive balance, last year we continue to allocate €12.000,00 to the Apostolic Initiatives fund. This fund had been able to a) support our International Formation Encounter on Family held in Madrid last July 2017; b) ensure our representation in the global Church's gathering in Latin America (Latin American Episcopal Council "CELAM") and in Asia Pacific (Asia Youth Day); and c) provide assistance for a youth encounter in Peru. We have also supported various formation and regional meetings. A decision has also been made by the World ExCo to allocate provisions in anticipation of immediate needs, this included an allocation of €7.000,00 to the Solidarity fund in preparation for our upcoming World Assembly.

¹⁷ 4-year cycle smoothing process.

C. Our Lay Ignatian Identity

CLC Formation

Diversity in Formation Processes

Throughout the world, CLC has been implementing formation programs to help local communities and its members to move through various stages of growth in the CLC vocation. During ExCo visits (to national communities, regional assemblies and formation encounters), CLC leaders and members have described various ways and means through which CLC formation is being delivered. The processes and stages described in Supplement 64, seem to have been used, deepened, developed, adapted in different circumstances (taking into consideration factors such as ages, group sizes, member capacities, guide competence, culture and interpretation). As such, there is a sense that CLC Formation has taken diverse forms in the world today.

Diversity in the delivery & programming of formation in itself has not been identified as a concern. Rather, it tends to demonstrate a richness in the way that the Spirit is able to manifest in each unique circumstance. However, a concern has also been emerging regarding the integrity of CLC Formation, as a whole. Questions about the consistency of the quality of formation and support for member and guides' growth in the various levels (local, national, regional, world level) are being raised.

Diversity in the delivery & programming of formation in itself has not been identified as a concern. Rather, it tends to demonstrate a richness in the way that the Spirit is able to manifest in each unique circumstance

Formation Structures, Mechanisms and Materials

We know that there are national communities who implement strong and internally consistent formation programs in the various regions. They are communities that have been able to develop, adapt, evaluate and evolve formation programs according to the varying needs (communal, spiritual, apostolic) of its members. In many instances, national communities have members and teams who are focused on formation. They may also have some capacity for sharing their practices

to other national communities, whether through platforms of publishing or sharing materials, the godparenting process, or participation in regional or international CLC meetings.

We have also heard a strong need for formation materials in national communities that are new, growing, or those who have experienced leadership shifts, or loss of institutional memory. We have seen this need as ever present throughout the past years. It is also important to note that the clamor for formation materials may be an indication of a more profound need to grasp the underpinnings of the CLC Formation process.

Formation as Characteristic Response

Another pattern that we have seen, particularly in the survey on the frontiers, is the significant number of communities that used the delivery of formation (e.g. Spiritual Exercises, Ignatian methodologies, training and education using Ignatian pedagogies or concepts) to various groups as a response. This gives good indication that— along with project-type responses, advocacies, and direct-to-ground assistance— formation itself is a characteristic response of CLC to apostolic callings.

World ExCo Support and Future Considerations

While the abovementioned observations have been noted, this ExCo has not succeeded in formulating and implementing an adequate support response or strategy for the world community during this term. We regret that we have not done enough in this area, and it is only by grace and the continued action of the various communities that we continue to live out our CLC way of life. However, this does not discount the concern of a possible dissolution of formation quality and/ or integrity. This is a challenge that needs to be addressed more urgently. We would like to offer the Assembly and the next ExCo some of the considerations when planning regarding support for formation in the future, based on our experience during this term:

- ♦ Evaluation of Supplement 64 (Process of Growth) and integrating current learning, practices and questions in CLC formation
- ♦ Supporting opportunities for developing capacities of formation teams and CLC guides
- ♦ Supporting sharing (inter-community, in regional and world levels) and access to formation materials through digital and physical platforms.
- ♦ Studying the need and feasibility of a more permanent formation structure

(e.g. formation desk or institute) to ensure more consistent support to the world community.

Our CLC Charism

The CLC Charism is one among many, many charisms that the Holy Spirit has gifted the world with. CLC has been called to live it, and through it, we see how the Spirit works in the world. And in this world, CLC faces constantly changing challenges on all the fronts where its members find themselves.

CLC members have identified areas of great need in our world among youth, in families, in our environment, in those facing extreme poverty due to famine, drought, war and conflict, forced migration. Challenges abound in expressing the gospel, and in reasserting the meaning of holiness in daily life. In all levels, members of the world community are challenged to express their way of life and their response to mission in very specific ways, according to their own circumstances. In all cases, our responses have been specific, but the path to that response is the life we live through our being CLC.

In many respects, the paths that we have opened in Lebanon 2013 have been affirmed by Pope Francis' papacy. He describes many of these same challenges in *his encyclicals and apostolic exhortations: Evangelii Gaudium, Laudato Si', Amoris Laetitia, Gaudete et Exsultate*, plus opening Synods on Family, Youth and the Amazon. As we discern ways forward, we put some illumination on some distinct aspects that continue to be sources of consolation and mature response in our Charism.

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius

The Spiritual Exercises continues to be the “*specific source and the characteristic instrument of our spirituality*”¹⁸. It continues to be a path for a deeply felt sense of being loved by God, an ongoing personal conversion, and of uniting with Christ in his mission to bring salvation to all of creation. During the past years, our life and affinity with the Exercises has been a unique window to the heart of Pope Francis, especially when he talks about mercy, discernment, conversion and a personal relationship with Christ. Many CLC members have drawn inspiration and affirmation in this connection, and the contribution of Ignatian Spirituality in the Church today. In the past years, many have often asked: How are

¹⁸ General Principles n.5

we being called to contribute within the context of Francis' papacy?

The Awareness Examen & Personal Discernment

The Awareness Examen & Personal Discernment are inseparable practices that have helped us to see and to be attentive to the lifegiving movements and invitations of the Holy Spirit, as well as to recognize movements that draw us away from God's life and love. For us, they are cornerstones to the authenticity of our way of life, and to our being contemplatives in action in daily life, outside of our small local groups. Fidelity to these can be a challenge, because deeply personal practices do not tend to be inquired upon, but we are invited to bring the fruits of these to our local communities.

Our Being Laity

Our being Laity and our responsibility to take leadership in the Church¹⁹ was reaffirmed when the World ExCo visited the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. We know that there is no line between our life and our mission. We are the Church, alive in our families, among friends and neighbors, in the workplace, in the political arena. We make immediate impacts in personal interactions, and we can work to make changes in oppressive structures, ones that limit the freedom and integrity of others. This keen awareness of our being laity is a gift, as well as an assertion especially in places where clericalism dominates.

Being Community

As small groups we are able to access a space for concretely living a meaningful way of being Church. Meeting in small groups offers pathways for dialogue, greater intimacy, friendship, support, and apostolic maturity. As a world community, we participate in prayer, support and solidarity with one another, to share resources, and to form working teams on areas of shared interest and ex-

¹⁹ Projects 167: An (extra)ordinary meeting of the W-ExCo



perience such as formation, the frontiers, and fellowship. A global awareness offers a way to help concretize the Trinitarian view of our world as well as deepen our understanding and living the mystical dimension of being a lay apostolic body. An awareness of the gift of community has its place especially in what can tend to be a fragmented world.

The DSSE Process

DSSE is one of the most concrete blossoms of the CLC Charism in the past two decades. For us to be gifted with it, the Spirit has had to lead the world community²⁰ through an awareness of being deeply in community, solidarity in a common mission, and sharing responsibility in its local expressions. It has been a still-ripening development – one that is still being learned by the world community through practice, inquiry and experiment. The process of discerning, sending, supporting, and evaluating captures the meeting point of the elements of our Charism and has been integrated into practice in at least two levels (i.e. local group, national community) in the world community. It has also given birth to some diverse implementations. Our learnings in this area are still in need for consolidation. However, having it as a gift has put CLC in a position where it might be able contribute in the discourse regarding the renewed need and interest regarding communal apostolic discernment.

We recognize the gift of being a Christian Life Community. We hear from many persons how their lives have been beautifully and deeply impacted—in over 70 countries. Illuminating these lights in our Charism point to the tension between consistent practice and constant development of what CLC is within the world today. The challenge seems to be both living with fidelity to the fundamentals of our Charism and giving careful attention to how the Spirit is guiding the world community.

Conclusion: What we have Seen, What we have Shared Working as World ExCo

The service that we have lived as World ExCo in the past 5 years was fraught with struggle and grace. We have struggled with our roles, with what actions to promote, with which initiatives to pursue. Our desires for greater service were always challenged with our capacities and interactions.

²⁰ Recall the graces of the past assemblies.

We have mentioned in Projects 163²¹ that we saw the pinwheel move effortlessly when someone moves it to face the wind. Our term has been that: searching the Spirit's breeze, finding it, moving our efforts towards it. Finding the patterns, and learning from them. It has not been easy to be a diverse and passionate community of service. In the end, we are drawn to prayer by Fr. Pedro Arrupe's words: "More than ever I find myself in the hands of God. This is what I have wanted all my life from my youth. But now there is a difference; the initiative is entirely with God. It is indeed a profound spiritual experience to know and feel myself so totally in God's hands".

The Joy and Consolation of the World Community

We need to reiterate that in each of the past ExCo meetings, it has always been a consolation to witness you, the world community. When we get lost in our attempts for relevance, we have always found our way by contemplating you—the national communities, the regional efforts, the way you have taken the grace of Lebanon to heart, and the way you have responded to the callings in your own particular realities. In this report you have found that we take to heart your life, your efforts and we found success when we follow the promptings of the Spirit seen through your action. Through you we have seen that indeed, our lay apostolic body brims with life in the Spirit. We have found that by encouraging and supporting your efforts we have come closer to who we are, and what we are supposed to do as World ExCo.

Over the past 5 years, the sense of being a Lay Ignatian Apostolic Body was driven by great desires for apostolic relevance. Many segments of world community was able to show this, as apostolic projects have shown various results. As well, questions of integrity in the way of life, depth, continued generativity amidst changing global realities have been emerging. It seems that 50 years, post-renewal, creation and revelation in the community continues with vibrance, especially in moments where we are in solidarity.

Sentire Cum Ecclesia: an affirmation and realization

Throughout this report we have described a sense of synchronicity with the Church. For us, this has been a strong affirmation not only of our discernment, but of our BEING Church. This has been especially apparent during our 2016

²¹ Projects 163: Breathing Space.

ExCo meeting when, during our evaluation, we found that initiatives that were prospering were those that were in sync with the rhythm of the Church. The question about who was following who has become irrelevant—we are experiencing a sense of union. It is a union that moves ever deeper and forward. We have sensed this as one of the greater confirmations and invitations in the past term.

The Future of the Frontiers

With our work in the frontiers, we need to emphasize two things: 1) The frontiers are a response to reality based on the experiences of the world community and 2) Our useful response to the frontiers draw from our identity.

a. Identifying the Frontiers as Response to Reality

Our work in the frontiers continue. It has been important for the World ExCo to see that the frontiers do not define CLC, but rather are shaped by the discerned calls on the ground. They have consistent links to our General Principles. The Lebanon Assembly gave shape to the apostolic categories, and the world community continued responding to them. In many cases, the frontiers encouraged reflection, focused response and networked opportunities. National communities who felt called to other peripheries responded according to their own discernment. This too indicated depth in perceiving particular realities.

b. Drawing from our Identity for responding to the Frontiers

We mentioned that an important response that national communities (and members) have reported were the use of elements of our identity (e.g. Ignatian Spirituality and its elements, CLC Formation, small group tools) to deliver programs, both educational and formative. It is not always mentioned that we have seen lives and professions being dedicated to this calling.

In the cases of the Family and Youth Frontiers, we needed to clarify that there were areas of a) ministry/ pastoral, where we look towards responding to the needs of others, and b) ourselves – the CLC Vocation as involving very distinctly our life in family and our life with and as youth. Both needed our attention, but it is important to draw these distinctions.

Looking forward

These peripheries will not cease to exist in the near future. We invite the world community to look with depth to its responses – to balance the local and the glo-

bal apostolic involvements. It is difficult to separate the frontiers from each other, and there is an integration that is happening in the hierarchical Church's focus and responses.

The Grace we Ask For

In our hearts, we have pondered what all these meant to us, as CLC. As a World Community. For almost two years we have tried to make sense about where the Lord might be leading our community at this point in time, more than 450 years after its inception, 50 years after its renewal²². We sense that it is a special time for us, and the Church. We sense that there is an invitation to reach out from the heart of our identity, our charism, and to offer it once again (after we have done again and again over the years, faithful that each moment is an invitation). But this is what it is: a sense, an intuition.

We end our term with a bold trust that the world community and the Spirit can shape the pieces of our individual, national, and regional desires into one that the World CLC can carry forward throughout the next 5 years, or even throughout a dreamed future for our lay apostolic body.

It was a journey of trying to capture what has been echoing in the heart of the world community, 50 years since we initially said that we were going to become the Christian Life Community: We desire greater depth and integration in the living out of our CLC charism in the world today.



²² Again, we invite you to refer to Projects 168 and 169 for deeper elucidation

The ‘Francis Option’: Evangelizing a World in Flux

Austen Ivereigh

Dear friends,

How wonderful to celebrate your 50th anniversary assembly with you here, in what was for most of his Jesuit life Francis’s workshop. I have prayed on my week’s retreat here that what I give you today will help you to offer yourselves for mission in today’s turbulent world; specifically in the Church led at this time by Francis, who is convinced that the Lord is asking us in particular, at this time, to evangelize. That is my theme. How is the pope calling on us to evangelize at this time of flux, of uprooting, of exculturation of Christianity?



Austen Ivereigh

Keynotes

Some of you have asked why I speak Spanish with a papal accent. I am British, with no Argentine connections or blood but over 25 years ago I came here often to research here for Master’s and later a D. Phil. at Oxford, taking as my subject the Church and politics in early twentieth-century Argentina. I learned to like mate amargo and understand why happy cows make the best dulce de leche. So I’m proof that sometimes doctorates can be useful. And that God, in His providence, can later make use of things we do in our lives. In my early 30s, I was for a time a Jesuit novice, in England, long enough to do the long retreat and to be changed by it, and finally to embrace a calling as a journalist and writer. And those two gifts from my past — my knowledge of Argentina, and my experience of Ignatian spirituality — gave me the confidence in 2013, to dare, as a Catholic journalist and commentator on the Church, to write a biography of Francis.

The last two or three years I have been working on a new book on Francis, a follow-up (continuación) to *The Great Reformer*, which will come out next year.

Part of my research has been to understand the Latin-American Church thinking that lies behind the pontificate. That's how I met Mauricio, one day, in Quito.

One strong theme of the new book is Francis's conviction that the Lord at this time wants the Church to evangelize; and for this the Church has to change, a change for which the Second Vatican Council has prepared us, but which we have not yet fully embraced.

With the cardinals prior to the conclave, he imagined Jesus not on the outside knocking to be let in, but on the inside, asking to be let out. He spoke of how the Church is paralyzed by introversion, when it lives from its own light, becoming sick and self-referential, bent over like the woman in Luke 13:10. He contrasted this with an evangelizing Church that puts Christ at its center, and goes out of itself to the peripheries, to places of need. The next pope, Bergoglio told the cardinals, should help the Church to be a fruitful mother who lives from the joy of evangelizing. From crippled paralytic turned in on herself to a fruitful mother, joyfully evangelizing — this is the journey summed up in the phrase “a pastoral and missionary conversion”.

This is in three parts. In the first, I want to explain the origins of his discernment of the signs of the times that led him to that diagnosis: what is the cause of the paralysis? Second, I will summarize what pastoral conversion implies: what it means to be a fruitful mother. In the final part, I have four concrete suggestions to help move us in that direction.

I. Mission in response to a change of era

The discernment behind the Francis pontificate is not just his own but is the fruit of the Latin American Church's in the years prior to the great continental gathering of its bishops in Aparecida, Brazil, in May 2007. It was the first such meeting of CELAM in 25 years, which ended with a document whose primary author was the man who is now pope.

When we speak of discernment, there are two kinds: the Ignatian discernment of spirits, but also the ‘discernment of the signs of the times’ which *Gaudium et Spes* asked to make. The Church in the north has never done this very well, but it has been well developed in Latin America. Aparecida was fruit of the most sophisticated signs-of-the-times discernment happening in the Church anywhere



at that time in the world. In many studies and meetings prior to that meeting CELAM's discernment showed how the forces of technocracy and globalization were sweeping away the weak belonging of cultural Christianity, while bringing a new pluralism together with new forms of social and economic exclusion alongside concentrations of wealth. It showed the need for a "returning to the sources" of Christian faith.¹

Aparecida described this shift in terms of a change of era — un cambio de época, not una época de cambio — in which this new turbulence was bringing opportunities and advantages for the well-educated and mobile, but its overall effect was to produce great anguish, because it was dissolving the bonds of belonging. CELAM saw rising inequality, the decline of states, mass migrations, ecological disaster, neo-Darwinist worship of power, technocracy — all the things we are very familiar with.

The change of era, combined with the option for the poor, demanded that the Latin American Church stand with those crucified by the new global economy, embracing not just those who were materially poor but victims of exclusion and solitude in its many new forms — the migrants, the elderly, and so on. The new context of cultural and religious pluralism meanwhile demanded that the Body of Christ work to build unity out of a reconciled diversity in dialogue and shared witness.

¹ Carlos Aguiar Retes, '*Globalización y nueva evangelización en América Latina y el Caribe*', Reflexiones del CELAM 1999-2003, Secretaría General, Doc CELAM no. 165. , March 3, 2003

But the change of era also has implications for evangelization, because the dissolution of the bonds of belonging was doing away with traditional mechanisms of faith transmission from generation to generation.² The Gospel was being ex-cultured — expelled — from culture, and the Church’s traditional means of evangelization were being swept away by those same forces of liquidity.

Cardinal Bergoglio told his priests that “*What happens in a change of era is that things are not longer in their place ... What seemed to us normal about family, Church, society and the world, will no longer apparently be that way*”. Cultural Catholicism — a collection of rules and prohibitions, occasional devotional practices, etc. — would not survive. The Catholic faith of the future would depend on a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and the experience God’s transforming mercy.

What Aparecida expressed was a desire to return to “*that attitude that planted the faith in the beginnings of the Church*”. What was needed now was to embrace the idea of mission as not so much an activity or a program as a way of being: “*permanent*” and “*paradigmatic*”... Nor was it just ad extra, but ad intra at the same time. In going out on mission, the Church is converted and evangelized. The challenge was to enable a “*personal and community encounter with Jesus Christ that raises up disciples and missionaries*”, which Bergoglio described as the encuentro fundante de nuestra fe, “*the foundational encounter of our faith*”. He said this would require spiritual, pastoral and also institutional reforms “*to make the Church visibly present as a mother who reaches out, a welcoming home, a constant school of missionary communion*”.³

What Aparecida saw was that the traditional distinction between Christian countries and mission territories no longer applied. Evangelii Gaudium wants us to grasp this point. If the Church is not missionary, it cannot evangelize; and if it does not evangelize, it ceases to be. That is the challenge; it is also the invitation, the kairós. Hence Francis’s famous phrase from Evangelii Gaudium: “*I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation*”.⁴

² Documento de Aparecida [DA] 37

³ See addresses in JMB, in A. Spadaro (ed.) *En Tus Ojos Está Mi Palabra: Homilias y Discursos de Buenos Aires, 1999-2013* (Madrid: Claretianas, 2018) esp ‘*Volver a las raíces de la fe: la misión como propuesta y desafío*’ (2008), ‘*El mensaje de Aparecida a los presbíteros*’ (2008) & ‘*La misión de los discípulos al servicio de la vida plena*’ (2009).

⁴ EG 27

I want you to notice something important in this story: faced with the tribulation of secularization the Latin-American Church's answer is not to lament and condemn but to discern and reform. The question was not, how do we resist or combat this attack on our way of life and our values, but: What is the Holy Spirit asking of us, in this time of rapid change and liquidity? How do we change in order to evangelize?

You see here a pedagogy of reform for the sake of mission in response to secularization, very different from the north-Atlantic Catholic world, with its various reactions in response to modernity: a defensive, ethical response; a retreat into traditionalism and nostalgia; a seeking of new Constantines — Putin, Trump, Salvini — or an ostrich-like resignation, even cynicism.

Seen through the Exercises, Bergoglio perceived these defensive reactions as signs of giving into temptations characteristic of desolation, a desolation triggered by post-1968 relativism and secularism. His acute perception of this was shaped by a series of his own writings in the 1980s on religious bodies in a time of tribulation.⁵ These temptations were essentially why the missionary, evangelizing vision of the Second Vatican Council was not being fulfilled. Rather than focus on Christ, the Church, like Peter stepping out of the boat at the invitation of Jesus, focussed on the waves. Rather than discern what the HS was saying to the Church, the Church focussed on defending itself. This was one form of paralysis.

In focussing on the defence of its threatened spaces, rather than attending primarily to the needs of the people of God, the result was to reinforce the juridical, pre-conciliar notion of faith as a moral code. Rather than a source of life and love, an expert in humanity, an oasis of mercy identified by its compassion and care for the poorest, the Church has come to be seen as a self-interested corporation, a political lobby, harsh, moralistic, dogmatic, etc. It is the view of the Church and of Christianity that we, as Catholics in today's world, meet every day.

What is the Holy Spirit asking of us, in this time of rapid change and liquidity? How do we change in order to evangelize?

⁵ The three texts are: *Sobre la Acusación de sí mismo* (1984) Prologue to *Las Cartas de la Tribulación* (1987) and 'Silencio y Palabra' in *Reflexiones en Esperanza* (1992). See Diego Fares SJ, 'Contro lo spirito dell'Accanimento', *La Civiltà Cattolica* 2018 II 216-230, #4029 (5/19 maggio 2018)

Benedict XVI shared this discernment of where contemporary Catholicism had gone wrong, which is why right at the start of his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, he pointed out that “*being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction*”. The quote appears in the *Aparecida* document and again in *Evangelii Gaudium*, where Francis says he never tires of repeating these words, “*which take us to the very heart of the Gospel*”. The absolute truth, Francis has said elsewhere, is the love of God for us in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the truth is a relationship. When we evangelize, we communicate that relationship — Jesus’s ‘*Abba*’ relationship with the Father.⁶



To reduce the Christian offer to some kind of knowledge — ethical or spiritual — is a particular temptation for educated Catholics. In his message to this assembly, Francis warns us of this “*gnostic illusion*”. (It may be worth reading the second chapter of *Gaudete et Exultate* to see what exactly he is warning us about when he refers there to a “*disincarnate spirituality*”. Is there a temptation here, which, when it is resisted, becomes a source of

grace for you?) When we offer what is true and good, we have to remember the third transcendental, beauty. Only the beauty of God can attract; when we are attracted, fascinated by that beauty, we want others to share that beauty, that experience. Hence — as Francis told the Brazilian bishops, recalling *Aparecida* — “*Mission starts precisely from that divine enchantment, the amazement of the encounter*”. The Church loses people when it imports a rationality that is alien to people, forgetting the “*grammar of simplicity*”.⁷

⁶ Francis, “*Lettera a chi non crede. Papa Francesco risponde al giornalista Eugenio Scalfari*”, *La Repubblica*, Sept 4, 2013.

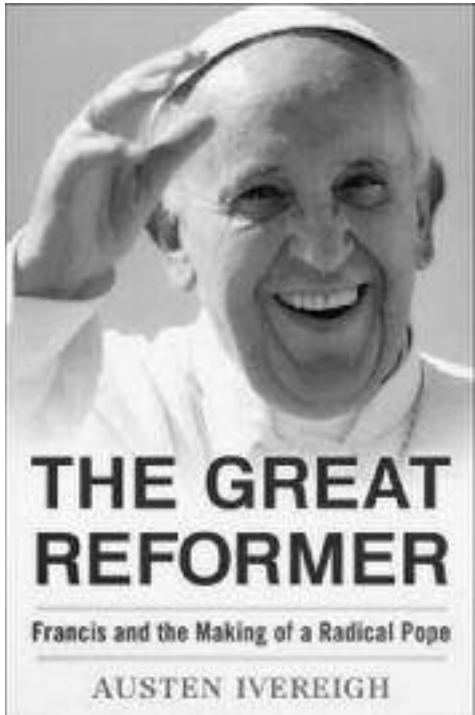
⁷ Almuerzo con los Cardenales de Brasil, la Presidencia CNBB y los Obispos de la Región, Palacio arzobispal São Joaquim, Rio de Janeiro, July 27, 2013.

In sum: The beauty of God is the experience of His grace and mercy, incarnate in the person of Christ, available to all, and more easily available to the poor.

This is especially true when we speak of morality and ethics. In a 2004 talk on the anniversary of Veritatis Splendor, Bergoglio said Jesus doesn't simply give us a moral code, or a series of rules and rituals to live by; living the love to which Christ calls us is impossible by our own efforts, but was only possible, said Bergoglio, quoting the encyclical, "*by virtue of a gift received*" — that is, His grace. Quoting St Augustine, he noted how it was not the keeping of the commandments that earns God's love but the other way round: God's mercy and love enable us to be moral and holy, merciful and loving also.⁸ (He made this point simply in a retreat he gave in 2012. The Gospel does not tell us if the adulterous woman whom Jesus forgave in John 8 returned to her sinful, promiscuous life, but you could be sure that she didn't, "*because whoever encounters such great mercy cannot depart from the law, it's the result*".⁹)

Bergoglio asked an important question: was it because Christian morality was so often reduced to a lofty precept in western nations that contemporary humanity had succumbed to relativism? If morality is a kind of judicial code, imposed from the outside, rather than a free response of the heart to the experience of God's mercy, it becomes an ideology which is then vulnerable to manipulation in service of political or other interests. In that case, relativism becomes an assertion of freedom, an affirmation of autonomy against an imposition.

Hence his criticism, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, of *eticismo sin bondad*.¹⁰ By eti-



⁸ '*Es posible ser santos*', en Spadaro (ed) *En Tus Ojos ...* pp 406-413

⁹ See Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, ch 6

¹⁰ Badly rendered in the official English translation as "ethical systems bereft of kindness". He is not referring to "systems" but an ideology.

cismo Francis means reducing everything to ethics. The document critiques “doctrines that are more philosophical than evangelical”, those who speak more of law than grace, more of the Church than Christ; or who imply that Christianity is a form of stoicism or self-denial or a moral code. Before all else, he tells us, *“the Gospel invites us to respond to the God of love who saves us, to see God in others and to go forth from ourselves to seek the good of others. ... If this invitation does not radiate forcefully and attractively, the edifice of the Church’s moral teaching risks becoming a house of cards, and this is our greatest risk”*.¹¹

Bergoglio once told his catechists that Aparecida’s great insight was to see that greatest danger to the Church came not from without but from within, *“from the eternal and subtle temptation of enclosing ourselves and putting on armour [abroquelarnos] in order to be protected and secure”*.¹² The word he uses there, abroquelamiento, is the same as he used recently in a letter to Chile’s bishops in which he called them to Rome to discuss the terrible clerical sex abuse crisis there. He wrote that how at times of tribulation, when we are *“frightened and armour-plated in our comfortable ‘winter palaces’, the love of God comes out to meet us and purifies our intentions so we can love as free, mature and critical men”*.¹³ This is a powerful description of a fearful defensive Church that does not evangelize: *“armour-plated in its comfortable winter palaces”*. And it is a reason to hope that through tribulation and failure — which the Church is clearly suffering — God is coming out to meet us, so we can change, so we too can experience a missionary and pastoral conversion. As in our lives, our moments of defeat are opportunities for conversion and growth.

II. A missionary evangelization is close and concrete

So what must our missionary evangelization look like? To some extent that question is unanswerable, because as we move out of our winter palaces we have to abandon our preconceptions and be guided by the Spirit, as Mauricio said on Sunday.¹⁴ But clearly there is a pedagogy of reform here. Bergoglio pointed out

¹¹ EG 39

¹² ‘Él llama a cada una por su nombre y las hace salir’, in Spadaro (ed) *En Tus Ojos ...* pp 691696

¹³ Lettera del S. Padre Francesco ai vescovi di Cile a seguito del report consegnato da S.E. Mons Charles J. Scicluna, April 8., 2018 published by Vatican April 11, 2018.

¹⁴ Mauricio López Oropeza, *‘Mensaje del presidente de la CVX Mundial a la Asamblea de Buenos Aires 2018’*

after Aparecida that a Church with evangelizing audacity, offering the encounter with Christ's mercy, needs concrete changes and a transformation in mindset. He even drew up a list for his priests and catechists of what he saw as the new attitudes now needed, which he would later develop in *Evangelii Gaudium*. It is an interesting list, which I've given you in a handout for you to reflect on.¹⁵

One of these was “*pastoral action with a Samaritan heart*”. Like the Holy Trinity in the Exercises responding with love to a suffering and sinful world, Bergoglio saw the need for the Church to respond to the anguish caused by liquid modernity. The symbol of that anguish is the migrant — whether the refugee, or the trafficked person, or the family fleeing war and poverty — who for Francis is the icon of the suffering Christ in today's world: in embracing the migrant, we create a new future.

In 2001, he gave a meditation in which he invited people to imagine themselves as a migrant arriving from the interior to Buenos Aires. You have only one thing in your heart and mind: will I be safe, welcome, find shelter, be warm? Will I find hospitality? It is the question asked by contemporary human beings suffering desocialization and deracination. And it is asked in three main ways: affectively, in the sense that the dissolution of the bonds of belonging of family, communities and institutions is producing a deep emotional and psychological anguish; existentially, in the sense that it is harder to have a clear identity and sense of self, to make plans, and to build a future; and spiritually, in the loss of transcendence, of signs and symbols that connect the present with eternal that secularization is bringing.¹⁶

As a Good Samaritan, the Church's response to this woundedness is also three-fold: First, to help people reconnect with creation and the world as creatures of God, who is “*working and labouring*” on their behalf. Second, to experience family and community, the bonds of trust and unconditional love that will build resilience, character, and self-esteem. Third, to help people find sanctuary — places of peace, privacy and prayer safe from the relentless pressures of the technocratic paradigm, places where they can recognize their intrinsic worth and discover holiness. You can see the basis here of his priorities as pope: to rebuild and restore the human environment damaged by technocracy, reflected in his

¹⁵ HANDOUT 1. ‘Volver a las raíces de la fe: la misión como propuesta y desafío’ (2008) in Spadaro, *En Tus Ojos ...* 745-754

¹⁶ ‘*Acerquémonos a las diferencias*’ (2001), in Spadaro (ed) *En Tus Ojos...* pp 165 et seq

apostolic exhortations — *Evangelii Gaudium, Amoris Laetitia, Gaudete et Exsultate* — and of course *Laudato Si'*. The word oikos, our shared home, is where we get the word ‘ecology’. Francis is an ecological pope, rebuilding our environments — natural, ecclesial, familial — so that they reflect the hospitality and mercy of God.



This capacity for welcoming is key to evangelization. In Asunción, Paraguay, in July 2015 Francis said a Christian is someone who has learned to welcome others, to show hospitality. *“How many times do we see evangelization as involving any number of strategies, tactics, maneuvers, techniques, as if we could convert people on the basis of our own arguments. Today the Lord says to us quite clearly: in the mentality of the Gospel, you do not convince people with arguments, strategies or tactics. You convince them by learning how to welcome them”*.¹⁷

But this is missionary hospitality and welcome. We have to go out to welcome. Francis constantly insists that the Church must be close and concrete, because this is how God saves humanity. The Incarnation is close and concrete. In a liquid, technocratic society, the Church’s besetting temptations – the problem with all institutions – is to become abstract and remote, to recoil, to take refuge in ideas (gnosis) or functionalism (Pelagianism). If people are angry today with their leaders and their institutions, it is because liquidity has made them seem distant and uncaring.

The Church has to go in the opposite direction. It must imitate God’s *synktàka-basis*, his abasement; it must show a God who attends to the particular, to the per-

¹⁷ Homily, Campo grande de Ñu Guazú, Asunción, 12 de julio de 2015

son, to realities rather than ideas. Attention is mercy. It is the time we spend with people, one by one. Faced with a lack of hope, the Lord is moved, comes down, and gets close. Our task, Francis says, is to rediscover His way of coming near in order to evangelize. The key word is ‘proximity’. As he put it in one of the synods he attended as bishop: “*Encounter, conversion, communion and solidarity are the categories that express the proximity... that opens the way to hope*”.¹⁸

The shift from the abstract to the ‘close’ and ‘concrete’ of pastoral conversion is beautifully captured in *Amoris Laetitia* Chapter 2. As he says there: “*We have long thought that simply by stressing doctrinal, bioethical and moral issues, without encouraging openness to grace, we were providing sufficient support to families, strengthening the marriage bond and giving meaning to marital life*”.¹⁹ But it didn’t work. Marriage collapsed, in the Catholic world as much as anywhere else. In a liquid, postmodern world, an idea is just an idea; it’s a narrative; it has no power to change or save. In a Christian society yes, the Church telling you that marriage is permanent is an order that can be obeyed or rejected; but in a liquid society, a commitment to permanency must be a conviction of the heart. You do not help people marry and stay married simply by opposing divorce laws or defending the principle of indissolubility, but enabling people to commit and love and stay together. A Church that is close and concrete recognizes that it is harder for people to be good, to live ordered lives, to be in community, to stay together. That’s why *Amoris Laetitia* doesn’t teach the truth about marriage — although it reaffirms it on every page; rather, it shows how God’s grace enables us to live that truth, however apparently irregular or far from the Church.

In being merciful — close and concrete — we have **credibility**. As Francis says in *Misericordiae Vultus*, Jesus has shown that mercy is the criterion of credibility of our faith.²⁰ The Church is credible when it is merciful, because it communicates who and how God is. And nothing better communicates the being of God than being merciful and acting mercifully — which is why, in *Guadete et Exsultate*, Francis insists that the heart of the Gospel is Matthew 25 and the Beatitudes. Mercy is always expressed in action: misericordiar. Mercy never stands outside, shaking fingers or lecturing you; it gets in with you. In the words of James Keenan SJ, mercy is the “*willingness to enter into the chaos of another*” — that is the Incarnation.²¹

¹⁸ Ref to come

¹⁹ AL 37

²⁰ MV 9

²¹ James Keenan, ‘The scandal of mercy excludes no one’, *Thinking Faith*, Dec 4, 2015.

When Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* refers to the “*hierarchy of truths and Catholic doctrine*” he is referring to a missionary priority. All revealed truths are important, but some give direct expression to the heart of the Gospel and are what people need to hear before anything else”. *In this basic core, what shines forth is the beauty of the saving love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead*”. That is why he says, in the following paragraph, “*works of love directed to one’s neighbour are the most perfect external manifestation of the interior grace of the Spirit*”. People may be convinced by the truth,

People may be convinced by the truth, or inspired by goodness, but only if they have first been captivated by beauty; and the beauty of God is His mercy.

or inspired by goodness, but only if they have first been captivated by beauty; and the beauty of God is His mercy. Without that beauty, as he said in 2010, “*truth grows cold, even pitiless and arrogant*”. In a retreat he once gave, he spoke of truth being like a precious stone in a person’s hand: if it is offered, it seduces; if it is thrown, it wounds.

Mercy captivates because it reflects **gratuity**, which communicates who and how God is — the gift of life, freely given, freely received. In the early Church, the disinterested love shown by the Christians towards those who were suffering — which flowed from their direct experience of God’s love in Christ — amazed and scandalized the communities around them, whether Jewish or pagan.²² That is what Francis wants the missionary Church of today to recapture — the gratuity of mercy. Jesus tells his disciples: “*you received without charge; give without charge*”. So the first task of a missionary disciple is to enable, through his or her mercy, an encounter with the gratuity of God (his mercy, his forgiveness, his grace). The ethical transformation follows.

This is one of the reasons Francis doesn’t constantly lament secularization: he has discerned in it an opportunity to recover gratuity.²³ This is what Francis means by saying this is a time, a *kairós*, of mercy. Secularization, the triumph of techno-

²² Rodney Stark, *The Triumph of Christianity: How the Jesus Movement Became the World’s Largest Religion* (HarperOne 2012)

²³ Christoph Theobald SJ, *Urgences Pastorales: Comprendre, Partager, Réformer* (Bayard, 2017) pp 68-69

crazy, the exculturation of Christianity from western law and culture, the Church's institutional failure — it is as if everything is now geared to revisit the birth of the Church itself, to return to its sources, to its missionary vigour based on a direct experience of God's merciful love. This is what Francis is inviting the Chilean Church to see this year, beginning with his address in Santiago cathedral in January, his two powerful letters to the Chilean bishops, and finally his May 31 letter to the people of God in Chile, which I've also asked to be shared with you: (it's published by the Vatican only in Spanish, but I have found two unofficial translations in English and French).²⁴

It's really worth reading these letters to see what Francis is helping the Church to do in the west, in place where once it was strong and is now weak. His model is the transformation of Peter from disciple to apostle as a result of being forgiven by the risen Jesus for his abandonment and betrayal at the Crucifixion. Forgiveness changes Peter from an inward focus, ruminating on his desolation and on his persecutors, to a focus on Jesus, and from there an outward focus — to mission and evangelization. *“A wounded Church does not make herself the center of things, does not believe that she is perfect, but puts at the center the one who can heal those wounds, whose name is Jesus Christ ... To know both Peter disheartened and Peter transfigured is an invitation to pass from being a Church of the unhappy and disheartened to a Church that serves all those people who are unhappy and disheartened in our midst”*. That is the conversion he is mapping out for them — and indirectly, for us.²⁵

In his letter to the people of God in Chile Francis shows how abandoning an abusive culture means reconnecting with the people of God, and recognizing them as subjects and objects of evangelization, as missionary disciples. As he said to the Jesuits in Colombia — and Jesuits here will remember him saying the same in the 1980s — that *“sadly we are often tempted to evangelize for the people, toward the people, but without the people of God. Everything for the people, but nothing with the people”*.²⁶ *“The People of God does not have first, second or*

²⁴ That response is to be found, firstly, in his address to clergy and religious in Santiago's cathedral on January 16; and then in three letters: the first, to Chile's bishops after receiving Archbishop Scicluna's report, on April 8; the second, which he handed to Chile's bishops on the first day of their emergency summit with him in Rome, on 15 May, which was private but leaked; and thirdly, his letter to the People of God in Chile of 31 May.

²⁵ Discurso del Santo Padre, Catedral de Santiago, 16 de enero 2018. On Francis's guiding the Chilean Church, see Austen Ivereigh, *‘Discernment in a time of tribulation: Pope Francis and the Church in Chile’*, Thinking Faith, May 8, 2018.

²⁶ Encuentro privado del Papa con los jesuitas, <http://www.jesuitas.org.co/docs/809.pdf>

third-class Christians”, Francis tells Chile’s faithful. “*Their participation is not a question of goodwill, concessions, rather it is constitutive of the nature of the Church. It is impossible to imagine a future without this anointing operating in each one of you, which certainly demands and requires new forms of participation*”.²⁷ If we do not hear these words directed at us, we are not with this papacy.

Finally, the shift behind Francis’s call for a missionary and pastoral conversion in response to the change of era involves asking for the grace of consolation and joy. When St Ignatius spoke of “*consolation*” in the Exercises he referred to “*every increase in hope, faith and charity, to all interior happiness*”²⁸ — the Spanish word is *leticia* — “*which calls and attracts to heavenly things*”. Look at the titles of his three apostolic exhortations, *Evangelii Gaudium*, *Amoris Laetitia*, and *Gaudete et Exsultate* — and it is clear he thinks there is something missing, something that he is trying to put back. Francis told the Jesuits in 2016 — but it applies to all evangelizers — that their “*true work*” was “*to console the faithful people and through discernment help them so that the enemy of human nature does not rob us of our joy: the joy of evangelizing, the joy of the family, the joy of the Church, the joy of creation ...*” It is a joy, of course, that comes from the grateful acceptance that all is gift.

Part III: Four suggestions for embracing mission

I’ve used a number of words and terms that are particularly meaningful in capturing this transition:

- missionary transformation
- pastoral conversion
- close and concrete
- mercy
- grace
- hospitality
- gratuity
- credibility
- People of God
- consolation
- joy

²⁷ Francisco, ‘*Al pueblo de Dios que peregrina en Chile*’, May 31, 2018.

²⁸ EE 336

Perhaps one or two of these words will have struck you, because of what you are doing, and what you might be invited to do. I want to end with four suggestions that might help stimulate that sense of mission.

1. Read AD GENTES

My first suggestion is to read the Vatican II's decree on the mission of the Church, *Ad Gentes*. It's short, and exactly describes the west now — “*circumstances are sometime such that, for the time being, there is no possibility of expounding the Gospel directly and forthwith ...*” (#6) — and helps think about evangelization in contexts of hostility, misunderstanding or simply ignorance.

The future of the Church is described in *Ad Gentes*, because that is the context of the change of era. A missionary Church cannot afford to be clerical: it requires a mature Christian laity to act as missionaries with proper apostolic training. It has to be a mindset / approach will be the one described here. But we are in a Church that is caught between these two models, moving from a Christendom to a missionary paradigm, which Francis is seeking to precipitate. What's needed is a mission that takes place in a kind of vanguard space to be occupied by small, adaptable groups with a missionary *eros*.

Is this the moment for CLC to see itself as having the freedom and mobility to help show the way, to create spaces where the Church in a context of secularism recovers its missionary dynamic? Is this why CLC has prospered especially in France and Uruguay, the capitals of *laïcité*?

In his address to you in 1979, Fr Arrupe spoke of CLC as “*an essentially lay spiritual movement, with the limits, yes, but also the apostolic opportunities that this implies*”.²⁹ If you put this with what Francis says about the People of God now being essential to mission and evangelization, it seems to me you have a

²⁹P. Pedro Arrupe SJ, ‘*Una comunidad al servicio de un solo mundo*’, Discurso a la asamblea general de la CVX, September 13, 1979

Is this the moment for CLC to see itself as having the freedom and mobility to help show the way, to create spaces where the Church in a context of secularism recovers its missionary dynamic?

way of rediscovering and activating your God-given identity as lay missionary disciples. Read *Ad Gentes*, my friends, and perhaps you will see yourselves there.

2. Embrace the threefold dynamic of mercy

My second suggestion is to read *Amoris Laetitia*, because there you see Francis seeking to move the Church into a missionary key in the vital area of marriage and family. I mentioned Chapter 2, which is essential, but I'd also invite you to reflect on the threefold dynamic of Chapter 8: accompaniment, discernment and integration. These three steps reflect the movement of mercy, which can be expressed as

- (a) to sense need (to be aware of suffering and anguish),
- (b) to respond concretely (the Works of Mercy, responding to all kinds of needs), and
- (c) a third stage of integrating, incorporating, saving, which involves a careful attention to the workings of grace in people's broken lives.

In these three steps of mercy we experience, literally, the saving love of God. To be saved by Christ is to be saved this way; and to evangelize is to offer this experience. Does my community offer that three-part dynamic in what we do? How well do we do each of them?

It is an offer and an experience always accompanied by joy, because it arises from grateful remembrance of God's action in us — which is why Francis is so insistent that we make the effort to recall that action in our lives and in the histories of our nations.

3. Water diviners

I owe this third suggestion to the French Jesuit theologian, Christoph Théobald, in his book *Urgences Pastorales*, who talks of le charisme des sourciers, meaning people who go to the sources, or water-diviners. He means people in our communities, who spontaneously earn the confidence of others; who are known as sympathetic listeners, and who have the art of spiritual conversation. To discover and acknowledge this listening ministry, this charism, is key for missionary communities in a highly mobile, liquid society, where people are constantly arriving and leaving.³⁰

³⁰ Theobald, *Urgences Pastorales*, pp 315-6.

Sourciers makes me think of Jesus with the Samaritan woman at the well, it is a ministry of attentiveness to what oppresses and liberates people. It offers a getaway into the hospitality that we, as Church, can offer contemporary society.

4. Reconcilers

Finally, I'd invite you to ponder the famous four principles in *Evangelii Gaudium* (217-237), which Francis proposes for people to advance in peace, justice and fraternity. When I first read EG, I didn't understand why he included them in a document on evangelization, but the more I have understood his discernment of modernity, I've come to see why the construction of fraternity is a clear sign of the Gospel in a polarized world. Just to give a recent example, his address to the Catholic university in Santiago de Chile in January, in which he spoke of the loss of the sense of a people, family and nation; and warned that life would become more and more fragmented, conflictual, and violent. I think we are seeing this now — in the world, and in the Church.

I would invite you to re-read that section in the light of a book which came out last year in Italian, and will shortly be out in English, and surely soon in French and Spanish: an intellectual biography of Francis by Massimo Borghesi, which was written with his cooperation. (It is called *The Mind of Pope Francis* in English; in Italian: *Jorge Mario Bergoglio: Una biografia intellettuale*). You will see there just how powerful is Francis's thinking, especially about the Church as a coincidentia oppositorum, a place where things in polar tension can be held together, and become chains in a new process, as Francis describes it in *Evangelii Gaudium*.

Modernity is dominated, as we know, by the great triad of the French Revolution: liberty, equality, fraternity. The first two have been promoted with great vigour, especially recently the second: equality. But they have advanced at the expense of fraternity. Liberty and equality are both legal values, that can be advanced by politics and law; but fraternity is a moral and spiritual matter.

There are many forces seeking to polarize us, forcing us to choose identities, to take up positions in a series of false polarities. In this context, to evangelize is also to show that it is possible to have and be a culture of encounter, a reconciled diversity, a capacity of transcending polarizations and creating a new culture, of encounter and inclusion and reconciled diversity.

To be able to discern the difference between a true contradiction, good versus evil, while not allow ourselves to be polarized over contrasts that are not truly in

opposition. This is the work of the Incarnation, which is strong and active in our world whenever we read the times in the light of the Gospel and our prayer, and become active peacemakers and reconcilers in our workplaces, and families, in our civic life and in the Church — and can show and teach others how to do that too, as signs of God’s presence in our turbulent world.

I want to leave you with what Francis told Catholic Action in 2017: that “*mission is not one task among others: it is the task*”. And he gave them this advice:

Avoid falling into the temptation of “perfectionism”, endlessly preparing for the mission with interminable analyses that, once finished, are already obsolete. Jesus, with his apostles, gives us the best example: he sent them out with what they had. Then he met with them and helped them to discern what they had experienced.

Let reality dictate times and places, and let the Holy Spirit guide you. He is the inner teacher who illumines our work once we are free of preconceptions and conditionings. We learn how to evangelize by evangelizing, just as we learn how to pray by praying, provided we have a good disposition.³¹

Original in English and Spanish



³¹ To Congress of the International Forum of Catholic Action (IFCA), Synod Hall, April 27, 2017

The gift of 50 years

Maria Magdalena Palencia - CLC Mexico

I begin by sharing a specially treasured memory, one very close to my heart, which has accompanied me, amazingly, for more than thirty-seven years, and which became very vivid to me when I was invited to be here today.

I'm referring to the last time I had the opportunity of seeing Father Pedro Arrupe during Holy Week, 1981. As we had done before, we arrived for our ExCo meeting at Villa Cavalletti, and there we shared a common space for several days with a group of recently appointed Jesuit provincials. They were celebrating, in the company of the Superior General (Fr. Arrupe) and his assistants, a service that greatly resembled an initiation ceremony. On this occasion, the ceremony was in English and all the provincials were from Asia. Also, as on other occasions, we had had a formal meeting in which we exchanged ideas with the provincials regarding the World CLC / CVX Community and its close relationship with the Society of Jesus. We also shared several informal gatherings and discussions after meals or coffee breaks. That week, they finished their meeting before we finished ours, and then they invited us to celebrate the Eucharist together before they departed.



Maria Magdalena Palencia

The assigned reading, according to the liturgy of the time, was the story from the book of Genesis (Chapter 17) that refers to the passage in which God establishes a covenant with Abraham, confirms his calling and mission as the father of a multitude of peoples and promises him “*all the land he can see*”. And God, promising divine faithfulness, asks for the same faith-

fulness from Abraham and all future generations. This covenant between Abraham and God is marked (made permanent) by the rite of circumcision and a *change of name*: from that moment on, the name of the patriarch would be Abraham.

The Mass was presided over by the Jesuit Provincial of Korea, who shared his insights and comments about the profound meaning - even today - of a *change of name* in Asian cultures. He also mentioned what this has meant to religious sisters and priests for many years, emphasizing how a name not only identifies a person but also her or his mission. This powerful change implies relinquishing a previous identity and accepting a new or renewed identity. After this homily, we were invited to share our prayers of petition to the Lord.

Just as the Lord did for Abraham, the Lord gave these communities a new name: “Christian Life Communities”, which implies, in itself, the mission to which these communities are called

Some petitions had already been shared when Father Arrupe made the following reflection. (I cannot assure these were exactly his words, but I am sure of at least some of them, and I have never forgotten their content.) *“A few years ago, the Marian Congregations were called by God to a change of identity, to a new way of being. As with Abraham, they responded generously, leaving behind all their comfort and security and even accepting this “death”, which changing their very own name signified. Just as the Lord did for Abraham, the Lord gave these communities a new name: “Christian Life Communities”, which implies, in itself, the mission to which these communities are called. And then Fr. Arrupe prayed, on behalf of the World CLC/CVX Community, “for its growth and consolidation, for its faithfulness to The Mission, and for its service to the world and to the church, to be always the best service”.*

After saying good bye to those who were leaving after the meal, I moved closer to Father Arrupe, and we were able to talk for a few minutes. And while having coffee, I personally thanked him for the petition he had shared and for

everything he had expressed in the petition about who we are (the essence of) and what we do (the mission of) in CLC / CVX. He responded to me, “*que así sea*” - or in other words, “*that’s how the Lord has meant it to be*”.

As I said earlier, that Tuesday of Holy Week, 1981 was the last time I had the chance to talk to Father Arrupe. A few months later, we got the news of his serious illness upon return from his last trip to the Philippines, always faithful to The Mission, and in service to the world and to the church. I have always kept this little story in my heart, and I have been able to share it on other occasions - even in a publication of *Progressio* - and for me, it demonstrates the power of his legacy to CLC / CVX.

And it is my memory of this encounter and legacy (of Fr. Arrupe) that brought me, one more time, to reread the story of Abraham, so that from there, I would also reread, compare, and illuminate the journey of our Christian Life Community.

Every itinerary, every discernment in search of the will of God, begins with a dream. And this dream is an ideal utopia, at times pulling away, out of our reach for a few steps, and for every step that we take, the dream-utopia invites us to pursue the way to the dream, to not give up the search. What is this which compels and attracts us, other than the Principle and Foundation, with which we nourish our dream or confirm our utopia, each time we begin our Spiritual Exercises?

Every itinerary, every discernment in search of the will of God, begins with a dream.

The dream of Abraham is that God’s promise would be fulfilled: descendants so numerous that no one would be able to count them, and a homeland that they could call their own. The ten chapters of Genesis (12-22) take us from the mention of Abraham’s ancestors and the land where Abraham was living all the way to the sacrifice of Isaac. Traveling through these chapters introduces us once again to the story of the calling and the leaving behind of their lands ... the blessing of God that extends to all nations; the dangers that they encounter ... ; the temptations ...; the many times of falling down and getting up...; the inevitable separations or apparent divisions, the im-

possibilities of accompanying each other ... (Ch. 15) the renewal of the promise, Agar and Ismael, ... then, by the oaks of Mamre (Ch. 18), "Lord, do not pass by your servant without stopping".... the encounter with God in the Holy Trinity, as three foreigners whom he receives, welcomes, and serves ... and from whom he receives once again the covenant, this time renewed from antiquity, the apparent barrenness of Sara and her lack of faith ... the birth of Isaac ... then the sacrifice of Isaac (Ch. 22)... everything that he could offer up, just letting it go; his trust in and total surrender to the covenant, in God who suggests unfamiliar paths for us to travel, new ways which are not our ways (of doing things), but roads which lead us to freedom from disordered affections, without attachments, and with indifference, until the point of Abraham's story where "God will provide.".. and, to our one and only God, as the center of life; God who is everything.

The Marian Congregations begin their communal process in search of the will of God, just as Abraham began his search, without knowing where they are headed, living for a while as homeless foreigners, residing in tents, disoriented and unsettled in their day to day lives, but not in their spirit. With an itinerant, unpredictable lifestyle, they wait for a strong, solid city built out of stone and mortar. But more than a city, they wait for a road, a path, for they would be pilgrims, just like the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all their progeny, on the move, listening, paying attention to God's promises and covenants.



Their calling begins to be heard in 1948, when on the 27th of September Pope Pius XII promulgated the Apostolic Constitution “*Bis Saeculari*”, in which he extolled in a grand way the Marian Congregations and invited them to look closely at themselves (a self- reflection) ... and out of this self-reflection, the Lord enabled the birth of a MOVEMENT OF THE SPIRIT. They were called to renew themselves, to return to their roots, to be available for and to carry out The Mission, of serving the Church in diverse settings and cultures around the world - and this carrying out of mission and service would be on the (nearly) four hundredth anniversary of the Marian Congregations. And their first steps would lead to the first international gatherings, a new way of articulating who they are, and the constitution of the World Federation, which is officially approved by the Holy See in July of 1953.

These first steps, halting at first and then stronger and surer in time, tell us of their response to this FIRST MOVEMENT OF THE SPIRIT. The first ExCo elected in **Rome '54** would quickly formulate the directive received (understood) as: “*the Rome Congress should be from its outset a universal renewal*”. And in **Newark '59**, they would decide to begin without delay on an elaboration of the new rules, thus taking the first steps toward the General Principles. For the first time, they spoke of an international apostolate, and they insisted on the promotion of the Spiritual Exercises, to be “*integrated into daily life, or, at least, to be done (lived out) by members, for the maximum time possible*”.

Upon finishing these first ten years, the World Federation believes that it has clarity in its understanding of its calling, but the “*how to's*” would take longer and make them wait. They still need to discern, and so they would have to wait, because “*the Lord's time is not always our time*”. The celebration of the World Council (ExCo), which would renew the life of the Church, requests that we - in faithfulness to the Church - not try to spell out our next steps without a more careful, precise orientation. In the **Bombay '64** World Assembly, they already are talking about changing the name of the Marian Congregations, but there still is a small minority that rejects it. Still more discernment is needed.

Fr. Paulusen once described the **Rome '67** Assembly as “*almost a new association*”. Not only have the Marian Congregations renounced their secu-

rities or privileges, but previously, Father Janssens had also renounced - in favor of the authority of the laity. That is, he argued that the laity had the right to limit the Superior General's power "*to establish new rules or change established rules of the Marian Congregations*". And Paulusen had pushed and influenced such a large following so that - because of the older ways of postal mail that could often take weeks or months for every exchange that went through the Secretariat in Rome - it became recognized, for the first time in our history, that a "*world assembly of lay constituents*", had formulated its own documents! In brief, the CLC/CVX record states: "...[It was] a full meeting with a great, thoroughly dynamic spirit, of inspiring testimonies, illustrating a growing unity in diversity and, above all else, an unmistakable expression of great love; days full of spirit and action".

With Abraham, the "*big moment*" was the apparition of the Lord in which God made a covenant with Abraham, and so with CLC/CVX, "*the big moment*" was the **Rome Assembly of 1967**, which is seen as CLC's jubilee or "*birthday*". Rome was the moment of a Covenant and a new point of departure for CLC/CVX: *New Principles and Foundation, new rules, a new organizational structure, a new name, and a new common mission: "to struggle against poverty and injustice"*.

It is not my intention here and now to make lengthy comments about every single World General Assembly, about which there is ample documentation. Rather, I am going to focus on some of the MOVEMENTS of the SPIRIT,



the ones I consider the most RECURRING, the ones with which the Lord has shown us his faithfulness, renewing his call to us and illuminating our path, our communal journey. So now I will recall from our collective memory, one by one, the CLC/CVX World Assemblies up to the present, with only brief comments about each one.

From the “*laying-a-foundation*” great enthusiasm of *Rome ‘67*, we move on to the “*test of fire*”. Our *Santo Domingo ‘70* assembly made us understand the necessity of preparing ourselves so that, as we had been saying in our documents, **communal discernment really would be our specific method for discovering the will of God**. There, we were confronted by the “*TRETA*” or “*MOVEMENT OF THE FALSE SPIRIT*”. The proposed theme of “*The crisis in the Church*” had repercussions in our very own crisis, which we experienced and felt profoundly and painfully. The entire Assembly was at the point of dissolving completely due to personal differences, to the withdrawal of several national federations, to the tensions and hesitations when looking for solutions, and to the extreme, unplanned changes made to the established program.

It was a healthy crisis, nevertheless, which made us become aware of our vulnerability and which led the ExCo, finally elected, to face the consequences (of the crisis) and to put in writing, in no uncertain terms, the reactions to Santo Domingo in the following points: “*the Spiritual Exercises as our common foundation, and the absolute and necessary application of the General Principles as our COMMON MISSION*”.

The acceptance of the necessity to better prepare ourselves for the new reality and the acknowledgement of OUR CALLING, these led us to different kinds of essays and meetings which moved our leadership to propose a new kind of world meeting. The experiences first in Rome-Augsburg in 1973 and then in Manila in 1976, were a response to the lived experience of Santo Domingo. These assemblies remained marked by the Spiritual Exercises and the Formation Courses, and these experiences stretched themselves out in every direction, having a multiplying effect with the parallel journeys of “**movement of the spirit and the method of communal discernment**”, at national, regional, and international levels. The meeting format of our Assemblies changed, as we were **always looking for sufficient time for**

personal prayer and reflection and for communal, small group discernment; and the meeting time allotted for ‘*business matters*’ was reduced.

In **Augsburg ’73**, we outlined our service/mission as “*liberating every man and woman, and all peoples*”. Soon, we felt moved to commit ourselves to the international apostolate including a request in advance for us to establish membership and our presence in some specific United Nations’ NGO meetings and initiatives. And in **Manila ’76**, when reaffirming our lifestyle as “*poor as Christ is poor*”, we emphasized once again our option “*to be better, more humble servants in mission*”, thereby underscoring CLC/CVX’s vocation and its role in the mission of the Church. In **Rome ’79**, we became aware of the gift of community, recognizing also that we are “*One Worldwide Community at the service of our One World*”. This was confirmed in **Providence ’82** as we reiterated “*One Community in Mission to promote Justice*”, which renewed our “**preferential option for the poor and marginalized**”, and emphasized the importance of the study of social analysis.

Loyola ’86 was an assembly focused completely on The Mission, contemplating “*Mary as Mother and Model of our Mission*”. **Guadalajara ’90** identified certain emphases for “*Better Service to the Kingdom of God*”, approved new General Principles and sent us out to the world to bear fruit as one apostolic body.

In **Hong Kong ’94**, we establish that our graced communal response must be “*the best response to the call of Christ from the world in which we live*”. We desire to share the fire that is already burning within us, to share it with the world, with all, from our circles and places of grace to the persons and places we are sent to serve. In **Itaici ’98**, in the context of a world awaiting the change to a new millennium, we discovered three areas of a Common Mission and a set of methods we needed to get there.

For the first time in Africa, in **Nairobi 2003**, we shared our feelings and spiritual movements, desiring to mature as an Apostolic Community, sent by Christ and by all members of ONE BODY. And with this desire “*to advance as one apostolic body*”, in **Fatima 2008**, in the presence of Mary, gathered and united around Jesus to tell Him what we have done, taught, and learned, we received the challenge “**to live as one prophetic community**”.

Finally, only five years ago (2013), the Assembly took place in *Lebanon*, not only to broaden our pilgrimage around the world, and as a presence in the Middle East, but also to show our solidarity with those that suffer in this biblical land, crossing four “*frontiers at which we needed to arrive, from our roots*”.

In each Assembly, each meeting of the World ExCo, every international and national gathering, the Lord, faithful in his love, has confirmed to us our calling, our mission, and our identity. The MOVEMENTS OF THE SPIRIT, with which He gently touches our hearts, continue to nourish the dream, guiding our steps. But the road to the Kingdom of God always suffers from the violence of the FALSE SPIRITS (TRETAS). These spirits always desire to divide us, to make us doubt, to make us fearful, and in more than one occasion, to make us hesitate and delay our response.

Ever since Pope Pius XII’s *Apostolic Constitution* and in every one of our assemblies, we have felt called - MOVED BY THE SPIRIT - to replenish our sources of life; to recognize Ignatian Spirituality for lay persons as a charism and a gift which we have been given, and to consider the Spiritual Exercises as a specific tool of our spirituality. But, the FALSE SPIRITS (TRETAS) would always intrude. In our first years, certain objections became evident: there were those who considered that the Exercises were “*inconvenient restrictions*”, and others who showed their resistance using the argument that now that CLC/CVX was a publicly and officially recognized lay association, it would result in division or discord if there were a requirement of some kind.

Still others felt that the Exercises had belonged to and should continue to be reserved for those who chose the religious life - for sisters, clergy, priests, and pastors. And criticisms also came spiritual guides and directors of the Exer-



cises, who believed that the majority of lay persons were not “*appropriate subjects*” for making the Exercises, except for the most basic, elementary experiences that Ignatius suggests for humble and common persons.

Today, thank God, the recognition of the importance and the fruit of the Spiritual Exercises in our personal lives and in the entire CLC/CVX Community, is present and widely felt in many places and in the most unique circumstances. All so, the members of or worldwide Community search for THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES and promote them. In fact, more and more every day, lay women and men prepare to guide others in experiencing the Spiritual Exercises. Quite clearly, in the “*life*” of small groups and in the entire larger CLC/CVX Community, there is a belief in and dedication to learning how to discern and to finding “*true interior freedom*” when ordering our lives - all that we are and all that we do, in service of the Kingdom of God.

Our celebration of the World Congress in Manila, situated in a context of scarcity of resources, exposed us in a special manner to the simplicity that should characterize our CLC life style. The experiences shared with our sisters and brothers in the barrios of Manila, as well as several years later in the Kibera sector of Nairobi, have led us to give voice to the MOVEMENT OF THE SPIRIT, which is our ardent desire to imitate Christ, humble and poor, by living a simple life style that imitates Him, and the way that He lived. We have vivid and edifying recollections of total surrender and actions of solidarity with the sick, the migrants, some peasants, and with other excluded communities; as well as with decisive and radical commitments in defense of the natural environment. I believe, nonetheless, that the action of “*la TRETA*” / FALSE SPIRIT makes its presence felt even here. Many times our actions are expressed as “*for*” or “*for the sake of*” the poor without ever arriving at “*with and together with the poor united in their struggles and dreams*”. Other times, there is a certain elitism within our community, that often, interrupts our desire to step forward to imitate and follow Jesus, and interrupts our manifestation of true solidarity with the most vulnerable, not only to act in favor of the most vulnerable, but better actually, to share their lot as closely as possible, welcoming them among us. Above all, we must recognize that when the Lord calls our most vulnerable sisters and brothers to be part of our Community, such a call is actually a special blessing and gift from God.

I identify, as the most often RECURRING MOVEMENT OF THE SPIRIT, the MOVEMENT OF THE SPIRIT TO SERVE. This movement is expressed in diverse ways and perhaps, in just as diverse ways, the call that we hear, the call to service. The call to service is a MOVEMENT OF THE SPIRIT that has been confirmed also by the authority of the Church. In his contribution to the World Congress in Rome 1979, Father Arrupe referred to a quote that I want to cite completely because, one more time, it makes reference to the anniversary that we are celebrating in CLC/CVX:

I quote: *“When in 1967 the Holy See was asked to make the change from Marian Congregations to Christian Life Communities, together with the approval of the General Principles to replace the Common Rules of 1910, the justification made for the petition was none other than this: ‘the best of service’ for the Church and the renewal of the Church, in accordance with the spirit and norms of the Second Vatican Council. It stated that the transformation that was petitioned would allow the members of new Communities ‘to consecrate themselves with more simplicity and efficacy to the service of God and of the women and men in today’s world’”*. (Letter of approval from Cardinal Cicoganani, 23.03.68). *“And”*, Father Arrupe emphatically added, *“...because the Church understood that this promise was sincere and realistic, the Church gave its approval”*.

Under various names, SERVICE, as a manifestation of our Mission, has always been identified as a MOVEMENT OF THE SPIRIT in our World Congresses. I am not enumerating the various themes, texts, or conclusions of the MOVEMENT OF THE SPIRIT already mentioned previously and of which there is abundant documentation. To carry out our SERVICE, we have undertaken to create commissions, to establish working groups, and to develop various methodologies, such as DSSE /DEAE (discern, share, send, evaluate) that to this day help us in a privileged manner to discern our apostolic activities. We recognize that as a World Community our responsibility is to attend to the great conflicts or confrontations with international significance, and because of our roles as lay persons, we must not overlook those tasks that through our economic, political, and ideological orientations and activities lead us towards the transformation of social structures, those which support the dignity and equality of all of God’s sons and daughters.

As a criteria born from our Ignatian Charism, we must always respond to the most urgent needs and prefer the most universal and definitive services, without losing sight (awareness) of the importance and basic reality of our day to day lives.

I do not want to be lengthy describing other qualities or expressions of our SERVICE. Instead, I point out that the action of the FALSE SPIRIT (la TRETÀ) can on occasions distract us from carrying out SERVICE itself or making it to be truly ‘the best service. The false spirit (la TRETÀ) appears when we do not “read again” and/or “discern anew” in light of our results, accomplishments, or difficulties, and also when we do not deliberate communally on how to proceed and so determine what to re-do, change, revise, or leave out. There are SERVICE initiatives abandoned in their planning stages or while awaiting approval by an assembly and which are never implemented. Others are interrupted without an evaluation or review of what has taken place. And it is the action of the false spirit (la TRETÀ) that causes us not to continue our journey and not recognize the presence of GOD in our journey. We must remember that Israel was also led by the FALSE SPIRIT, pulling away from God!

**The new name that the Lord gave us fifty years ago implies vocation, mission, and identity:
Christian Life
Community (CLC)**

And when we lose sight of the fact that our SERVICE is a consequence of THE MISSION *and not of our own initiative*, we also lose the immense gift, *the divine Trinitarian Gift*: The Gift where the Father shares with us his creative power in forming and conserving our world and common home. The Gift where the Son invites us to walk with him as companion women and men. The Gift where we carry out service judiciously only if we allow ourselves to be openly guided by the Holy Spirit, through a process of ‘incarnation’ leading to redemption. SERVICE is then realized, discerned, and evaluated with the freedom of the third binary... and with the deep desire to live our daily struggles in the third path of love and humility.

The new name that the Lord gave us fifty years ago implies vocation, mission, and identity: **Christian Life Community (CLC).**

Community is what unites us as a body, not as a personal whim or a desire to group ourselves arbitrarily. What makes an Ignatian community is sharing personal vocations that have taken each one of us to be a woman or man who is a friend of Jesus. Such a personal relation with Jesus is what brings us together—as was the case with the companions of Paris—as women and men friends in Christ the Lord. It is a Community of Life because in it we share TRUE LIFE, the one that God communicates to us through his Holy Spirit.

“*Christian Life Community*” means that we share our Christian life, the one that Jesus communicates to us and that takes us joyfully to Holy Communion in the Church, a communion which we want to truly savor. “*Christians*” was the name given to the first women and men disciples, committed to a life style that announces the Good News to all —Jews or not—Good News with social consequences (Acts 11: 26). In becoming conscious and aware that the ties among us were, and are, a lot more profound than those found in a Federation, we turned to the MOVEMENT OF THE SPIRIT to understand the essence of our community, not alone in our small groups, but also at the world level. We discovered, with joy and gratitude, that he Lord has called us to form a unique lay community ROOTED in the EXERCISES that God gifted to the Church through Ignatius of Loyola. In our lay community, like Jesus, we recognize Mary as our holy mother, and we accompany each other warmly and caringly, respecting each other’s uniqueness. We share the TRUE LIFE, searching for new answers for new situations, and we are sent as disciples to continue the universal mission of Christ, sent by the Father as his servants at the service of all. We take the Good News to the poor and freedom to the oppressed, and we commit our life to His cause, until our death.

The FALSE SPIRIT, on occasions, tempts us to think of the community as a goal (an end in itself) and not as a privileged instrument gifted to us by our Lord. And I believe that this is something we should pay close attention to, without wavering and without neglecting our communal deliberation. We need to tend to and assist in the personal processes of those who come to our communities with a need to love and grow in discerning their personal vocation, so that they, in time, can commit themselves before God, to become members of the World Christian Life Community (CLC/CVX)) and commit to the lifestyle clearly implied by CLC/CVX.

In CLC/CVX we are not only aware that we share in the life of God, but also in the sin of the world, which we have freely recognized in ourselves. We want to experience conversion, so that as we journey on our conversion process, we also re-affirm our ideals: trusting in the Grace of God and knowing that Christ and Mary, each in a real but different way, have conquered the world. So for these reasons, we preserve the name of our community, a name, which is at once a gift, a challenge, and a defining statement: **“Christian Life Community”**.



A characteristic of our spirituality that especially enriches our community is the graced companionship. In CLC, we acknowledge each other: women and men companions of Jesus. Today as I review and contemplate our life, my contemplation gratefully evokes an image of the inseparable history of apostolic companionship that CLC/CVX has with the Society of Jesus for the greater service and glory of God (AMDG).

As OUR CHARISM document states: *”we share with our Jesuit brothers a common heritage in the Spiritual Exercises, the richness of a long tradition and the desire to commit our life to mission, in the service of others”*. After listening to Father Kolvenbach say that it is the Company of Jesus that has chosen to serve CLC/CVX, the Congress in Nairobi added an appendix to its proceedings document with an expression of gratitude to the Company

of Jesus for all the leadership service and accompaniment they have provided during CLC/CVX's founding and developmental years. The appendix included an expression of our hope to continue journeying in their graced company, sharing the same spirituality and potentially the same mission. This mission, which we share and understand is deeply rooted and blossoming, and is formed from the desire to discern from our roots to Love and Serve God in all that we do.

On the day of his election, Pope Francis commented that the cardinals had to go to *'the ends of the world'* to find him. Francis, like Abraham, also heard a call: *'leave your country, leave your way of life, leave you security.'* Pope Francis, like Abraham, also received a **new name** confirming his vocation, his identity, and his mission. The name "*Francis*" tells us "*opt for the poor and humble, an austere way of life, speak about the care of the natural world, our common home; joy and mercy*", two great phrases that traverse and permeate all his messages and documents: *The Joy of the Gospel, The Joy of Love, Rejoice and Praise, and The Face of Mercy.*

Today, having heard his messages and exhortations which delight, illuminate, and challenge us, while also filling us with hope, we comprehend the announcement of a new era of ecclesial **kairos (a unique moment)**. And we arrive in Argentina, Francis' native land, "*the end of the world*", as one CLC /CVX community searching for how, together, we can be '**A GIFT TO THE CHURCH AND TO THE WORLD.**'

Let us bear in mind that *the gift of God to us was borne of a woman: Holy Mary, Our Lady*, who in association with our Lord is our mediator, mother and the ultimate model for our service, our freedom, and our community. From Mary, we learn about the frailty of our own plans, openness to the Holy Spirit, the faithfulness of God the Father, and dedication to Christ and his Mission. From Mary, we learn of the values that we, like her, want to

From Mary, we learn about the frailty of our own plans, openness to the Holy Spirit, the faithfulness of God the Father, and dedication to Christ and his Mission

announce to the whole world: family life, the dignity of work, moderation and simplicity of lifestyle, the love and care for our common home, and love and dedication to the Church.

Under the protection of Our Lady Mary, we meet in Buenos Aires to celebrate a new community gathering of discernment, in an attitude of **searching**. We are itinerant searchers and we continue “in pilgrimage”, faithful to our covenant with God. We have been brought here, in pursuit of that dream, borne of the calling that changed the name of our world community and our way of life.

The Good Spirit has guided our planning process. Today, like **Abraham** ascending the mountain, we, women and men, are committed to surrendering all, with complete trust, left with just our covenant with God, free from disordered affections and belongings, we are indifferent, knowing that “**God will provide**”. We search and we desire only what most leads us to **God** as our center and our all: “**Give us, Lord, your love and your grace; these are enough for me / for us**”.

Original in Spanish



A Discerning Lay Community in the Service of Reconciliation

Fr. Arturo Sosa SJ - CLC World Ecclesiastical Assistant

It gives me great pleasure to share this day with you all. This is the first time that I am participating in a CLC World Assembly as CLC World Ecclesiastical Assistant. A million thanks for your warm and fraternal welcome.

As some of you may know, my personal history, since my early days, has been linked to the Marian Congregation of the Colegio San Ignacio in Caracas, Venezuela. I participated in the Kostskas Congregation, which was for the younger ones, and later, in the San Luis Gonzaga Congregation during the last years of my secondary education. It was through the Marian Congregation that I learned to include time for personal prayer, participation in the Eucharist and apostolic commitment, in my daily schedule, in addition to responsibility for my studies and family life. Being a member of the Marian Congregation was undoubtedly of great importance in the maturing of my vocation to the Society of Jesus.

Consequently, I am profoundly grateful to those who directed the Marian Congregation and my fellow companions during my youth. With them, I shared the initiation to the spiritual, apostolic life and community life, as well as the encounter with the social reality of my country. In that environment I lived Vatican Council II passionately, as it developed, and the refreshing shake up it brought to the Church.

Strengthening and Deepening

The celebration of the first fifty years of the Christian Life Community is an invitation to look at and recognize the many gifts we have received. It is a time for



Fr. Arturo Sosa SJ

**To give thanks to God
for so many gifts in the
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following Jesus more
closely**

Keynotes

gratitude and renewal of the decision to follow the Lord in service to the Church and the world. To give thanks to God for so many gifts in the lives of so many people who, in this half century, have found in the Christian Life Community a path to personal growth and to following Jesus more closely. To give thanks for all of the apostolic work fostered, directly or indirectly, by members and communities throughout the entire world...

Vatican Council II brings to the forefront the lay character of the Church, which is defined as the People of God. The profound renewal of the Marian Congregations inspired by Vatican II gave birth to the CLC communities, seeking to put

in motion a part of God's People through Ignatian Spirituality. The renewed experience of the Spiritual Exercises leads to the decision to follow Christ in a lay life that is nourished by communal experience and apostolic commitment.

Gathered here in San Miguel, Buenos Aires, for this World Assembly, on the 50th anniversary of the birth of CLC, we also feel the Spirit's gentle breeze, which invites us to strengthen and deepen our experience in order to respond to the new challenges of the human and Christian life, at the dawn of a new era for humanity. We experience how the Lord continues to act in history to reconcile all things in Himself. He continues to call men and women to follow this spiritual, communal and apostolic path, which CLC has opened, to contribute to the strengthening of the lay Church.

In celebrating these fifty years, let us listen to the voice of Pope Francis, in this place which he knows so well, as he speaks to the entire Church and to all people of good will in a language that seems so familiar. His dream is to see the spirit of Vatican II incarnated in the Church as a body. His dream is a Church, the People of God, emerging from the experience of the One who was crucified and is risen, who gathers His followers in a community of service for the reconciliation of human beings among themselves, with the environment and with God. A community attentive to the signs of the times, committed to the fight for social justice and the liberation of peoples.

A Discerning community

Pope Francis continues to remind us how, in good times and in bad, the Christian life is a source of joy. A deep and interior joy which in Ignatian language is called consolation. A joy which comes from having recovered the freedom to put oneself in the service of others. Discernment is the key to staying in touch with the source of joy of living as disciples of Christ. That is why Pope Francis invites us to make discernment a normal part of our personal lives as Christians, in the life of the community and of the Church. In his recent Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exultate*, he returns to this theme:

The gift of discernment has become all the more necessary today, since contemporary life offers immense possibilities for action and distraction, and the world presents all of them as being valid and good. All of us, but especially the young, are immersed in a culture of zapping. We can navigate simultaneously on two or more screens and interact at the same time with two or three virtual scenarios. Without the wisdom of discernment, we can easily become prey to every passing trend.¹

Among the few loaves and fishes² that CLC has to share with the Church and the world, there is the experience of personal and communal spiritual discernment. Ignatian spirituality introduces us to discernment and trains us to develop it as a habit in our Christian life. Pope Francis has asked the Society of Jesus for specific help in spreading discernment within the life of the Church. This call extends to all who share Ignatian spirituality. CLC, as a lay movement of Ignatian inspiration, is best placed to help and develop a lay Church which is capable of discerning personally and as a community.

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Discernment is necessary not only at extraordinary times, when we need to resolve grave problems and make crucial decisions. It is a means of spiritual combat to help us to follow the Lord more faithfully. We need it at all times, to help us

¹ G.E. No. 167

² Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

recognize God's times and those of His grace, lest we fail to heed the promptings of Lord and ignore his invitation to grow. Often discernment is exercised in small and apparently irrelevant things, since greatness of spirit is manifested in simple everyday realities.³

Discernment is complex and demanding. It involves acquiring and maintaining that Ignatian indifference that derives from that inner freedom by which we overcome any attachment to our own interests, possessions, or the use of instruments. It also involves developing a sensitivity to the signs of the times, learning to perceive where and how the Spirit is acting in today's world, in the social context in which the life of each one of us, of our society and our environment unfolds. Discernment demands that sort of silence that sets itself apart from the noise that hampers the opportunity of listening to the Spirit.

The CLC General Principles indicate the regular practice of the Spiritual Exercises, the school of discernment, as the specific source and characteristic instrument of our spirituality (PG5). This is how the lived experience of personal and communal discernment can become a truly shared gift in the Church, and a tool of wisdom for all activity in the world, at the service of the joy of the Gospel, which is the main nucleus of the Christian lifestyle (PG 2) that is CLC.

Consolation is a gift of the Spirit that we need to ask for insistently. Practicing and teaching this prayer of asking for consolation is a way that helps us to share



³G.E. n. 169

with others the joy of the Gospel. This deep experience is born of deep union with Jesus in constant prayer and generous service. Taking care of these fundamentals is a priority, both in the formation of new members of CLC and in the constant spiritual growth of those already committed. It is in sharing those few loaves and fishes with others that the Lord multiplies them so that there is enough for all, even for the late-comers.

This is the way the CLC charism is realized: helping many, both within the Community and it, to experience the joy of the encounter with the Spirit and to commit themselves to participate in the liberation of human beings and the transformation of society.

Discernment is always an exercise that consists in looking at the world, in all its reality, while letting oneself be moved internally and dedicating oneself to the greater service. Discernment leads to an action that prolongs that which Jesus started for the redemption of human life. We know this well from the contemplation of the Incarnation in the Spiritual Exercises, which inspires CLC's General Principle 1.

The 36th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus recommends the frequent use of spiritual conversation, i.e. dedicating time to share with others, in simplicity, the fruit of personal prayer or reflection, as a useful tool to create and strengthen the habit of personal and communal apostolic discernment. This entails a deep desire to both listen to the other and attention to the movements and new understandings that arise from this listening.

CLC has long practiced spiritual conversation, especially in the regular meetings of small groups. The experience of the community dimension of discernment is a richness that can be shared with others in the Ignatian family. The efforts of constant integration, in all dimensions of life, of the three pillars of the CLC charism - spirituality, community and mission - and the tool of the four verbs -discerning, sending, supporting, and evaluating- have already borne many fruits in the life of the community. They are part of the gift received in these fifty years.

In order to enrich CLC's service to the Church and the world, the top priority should be to sustain and develop this gift in the personal life of each member and in the communal life of each local group, of the national communities, and of the one Christian Life Community.

Companions in a mission ...

The Society of Jesus has a very special spiritual and formal bond with CLC. Our spiritual and historical closeness commits us to a shared responsibility in the mission of proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel from the Ignatian perspective as each one lives out the charism received according to one's religious or lay vocation. This responsibility in mission does not belong exclusively to us, because it is the mission of Jesus Christ, in which we are invited to participate. It impels us to look for new ways of deeper collaboration between CLC and the Society of Jesus. Collaboration in the best interest of the mission of Christ, according to one's own vocation, without seeking to protect one's own personal or corporate interests.

What is pointed out by the 36th General Congregation for the Society of Jesus, is equally valid for CLC and for the whole Church: The magnitude and the interconnectedness of the problems that affect humanity, presenting great and diverse challenges to the mission of the Church, are so great that only by working in collaboration with others, cooperating with each other - hand in hand - can we, in fact, contribute effectively to their solution.

In the last fifty years, the Society of Jesus has been learning to be a collaborator with others in mission. Here, too, there is a rich experience in the relationship with CLC. The starting point for a fruitful collaboration in the service of Christ's mission, greater and more complex than the apostolic activities of the Society of Jesus and of CLC, is the recognition of each one's vocation and the charism of each institution. This recognition means respect for one's own institutional characteristics, as well as the legitimate and necessary autonomy of each entity. By recognizing the other, we recognize the richness of the Lord's gifts to his followers, in the effort of building a new humanity reconciled in Christ.

We know of many examples of joint work between Jesuits and members of CLC, with their bright and their dark points. There has been much fruit, as well as misunderstandings and even conflicts. There is much scope for growth in the collaboration between the Society of Jesus and CLC, to contribute together to the service of the mission of Christ. I would say that it is a challenge of hope that opens new apostolic horizons for each one of us.

Mission of reconciliation and justice

The 36th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus once again made the exer-

cise of contemplating the world with the eyes of the Trinity and, at the same time, inspired by the Contemplation to Obtain Love, looked for the traces of God's work in the world. GC36 heard the clamor of the millions of forced migrants, of the victims of violence and of the growing economic and social inequality. GC36 understood the challenge of announcing the Good News in the new digital ecosystem, in secularized societies and those dominated by religious or ideological fundamentalism. GC36 confirmed the need to build bridges, to promote citizen commitment in democratic political regimes that have the common good as the basis of their action. GC36 noted the negligence in failing to reach agreements to stop the deterioration of the environment and to care responsibly for our Common Home.

Consequently, the way in which the 35th General Congregation (2008) had formulated the mission of the Society of Jesus- companions in a mission of reconciliation and justice- was reaffirmed. We feel the call to participate in the work of reconciliation that God is carrying out in our wounded world, a work in at least three intimately related dimensions: reconciliation with God, with one another and of human beings with creation.⁴

CLC General Principle 1 also includes this contemplation: The Three Divine Persons, contemplating the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions, decide to give themselves completely to all men and women and liberate them from all their chains. It also recognizes a call: Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continually to God and to bring about unity within our human family ... in all our particular circumstances. CLC, in the document that formulates its charism, proposes to work for unity against all the divisions that affect humanity.

These divisions simultaneously affect social, economic and political relationships, interpersonal relationships, and relationships with the environment, a whole that Pope Francis, in his encyclical *Laudato Sí*, defined as a single and complex socio-environmental crisis. It is the whole human person, in all its dimensions, that experiences disunity, disintegration, in relationship to God, to others and to creation. Thus, the three dimensions of reconciliation must always be present, together. Reconciliation with God is not possible if, at the same time, reconciliation with other human beings and with the natural environment are not realized. It is necessary to work holistically against these divisions, in favor of this multiple reconciliation that includes, of course, the struggle for justice and the social transformation that leads to creating the conditions for a decent life for

⁴ GC36, D1, 21



all peoples and for each human being.

The spiritual experience of CLC has as its starting point the reconciliation of each person with him/herself, an experience of integration that is the response to the desire of people... who feel a more urgent need to unite their human life in all its dimensions with the fullness of their Christian faith.⁵ The unification of one's

life is a challenge that is particularly felt in the lay life, which develops in cultural contexts that favor the dispersion and disintegration of people. Ignatian spirituality has always proposed to seek and find God in the midst of the world, without fleeing from it; on the contrary, it promotes learning to find God in all things in order to love and serve in all things.

Working for reconciliation, or the unity of the human family, is a necessity and a task to which we, Jesuits and CLC, feel called. From our particular experiences we feel the call to contribute to that mission. We are encouraged by the same spirituality and by having traveled a long way together ... let's not hesitate to explore new forms of collaboration and deepen our joint service to the mission of Christ in the midst of this wounded world.

I want to end my address with a heartfelt word of thanks as Superior General of the Society of Jesus. Thanks to CLC for all the companionship, for so much apostolic collaboration and spiritual wealth shared with so many Jesuits throughout all these years. May Our Lady of the Way, a particular devotion of Ignatius of Loyola, continue to accompany our journey and help us to turn to Jesus, her Son, to meet with Him, to found in Him our Hope and to give our life so that others may have it in abundance.

Thank you very much.

Original in Spanish

⁵ CLC GP 4

Spiritual Conversation

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Introduction to the Spiritual Conversation Guides

The ESDAC (Exercises for Spiritual Discernment on Apostolate in Common) is a team of facilitators that use a process of group discernment based on the frame of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. During the Buenos Aires 2018, the team of Graziano Calci, Françoise Uylenbroeck, and José de Pablo SJ helped the assembly go through a discernment process following the grace we were asking for: **We desire greater depth and integration in the living out of our CLC charism in the world today.**

Throughout the 10 days, and together with the World ExCo, they were attentive to the movements of the spirit(s!) and proposed adjustments to the process according to the needs of the assembly. This section publishes the guides developed by ESDAC for the spiritual conversations during the assembly, and we are deeply grateful for their generosity. (For more information about ESDAC, you can visit: www.esdac.net)

The general description and guide for Spiritual Conversation can be used for group meetings, as a way to deepen a discerning heart within community. However, it should be noted that the exercises reproduced here were developed as part of a whole process, considering the movements within the small groups, the events and graces of each day of the program, as well as the fruits gathered during the assembly plenaries. The exercises were constantly being adjusted according to the needs of the process. We advise care and attention to the context if elements of these exercises are to be used.



Spiritual Conversation

The main attitude is a respectful and grateful listening.

He who has the talking piece (e.g. feather, mate cup) in his hand has the right to speak. He should not be interrupted.

Each person is an "**expert of his own experience.**"

Each person speaks in his turn. While he is holding the talking piece, he has the right to speak. No one can interrupt.

Share what you can. Do not communicate more than you want to. Feel free.

Silence times between participations are appropriate and necessary

Be respectful about what is **confidential**. That means: do not quote anyone outside of the group, except with the consent of the person.

Choose beforehand what you want to share about your prayer. Describe your experience in a **short** and **clear** way. The small group of spiritual conversation is not a place to make a homily, convert others to your point of view, or impose on others your favourite ideas.

Nor is it the place to **solve other people's problems** or to bring them relief.

Speak in the first person "I" and not in the third person, "people say, people do..." Talk in your own name.



The Time keeper takes care to ensure that, in the available time, everyone has the space to express themselves, and the group may be able to do at least the first two rounds of sharing, as much as possible.

Three sharing rounds (for groups of 6-7)

First round (+/- 20 minutes)

Each one shares in his turn the conclusions (fruits, fears, peace...) of his personal prayer, possibly with the aid of notes taken during his re-reading of the prayer. During this first round, people do not react to what is being shared, save to ask for an explanation. It is helpful to prepare it in advance to listen fully what others are sharing. Taking some notes while you listen may help for the second round.

Second round (+/- 15 minutes)

- 1. Take a few moments of silent reflection about the shared experience in the 'first round' of sharing (what touched me? what new things did I discover? any question? ...)*
- 2. Share, giving free rein to interactions among you.*
- 3. At the end of this round: try to name the consensus that there is currently among you.*

Third round (+/- 10 minutes)

Those who wish start talking speaking to the Lord, in relation to what has been lived and shared.



Exercise 1

The Gifts I personally received in CLC

Monday, July 23rd, 2018

Song

Texts

- **Mc 6, 38-44** *“How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.” When they found out, they said, “Five—and two fish.” Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.*
- **CLC General Principles 8:** *As members of the pilgrim People of God, we have received from Christ the mission of being his witnesses before all people by our attitudes, words and actions, becoming identified with his mission of bringing the good news to the poor; proclaiming liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, setting the downtrodden free and proclaiming the Lord's year of favour*
- **Spiritual Exercises 233-234:** *... to ask for interior knowledge of so great good received, in order that being entirely grateful, I may be able in all to love and serve His Divine Majesty*

The image

I imagine myself beside Jesus, with a basket in my hands containing all the the bread/gifts that God has given me through CLC in my life

Asking for Grace

I ask God for inner knowledge of so much good received into my life as I am part of CLC.

Guidance for prayer

- Read the text and imagine the scene. Contemplate the way Jesus looks to the crowd and how he asks his disciples to collaborate to his mission.
- Look at your life as an answer to Jesus' question: "*How many loaves of bread do you have?*" and go through your life remembering and naming the gifts received through CLC.
- Who has helped you to receive these gifts from God? Who have shared with you these gifts?

Conversation with God

Present these gifts, like loaves of bread in your basket, to the Lord. Dialogue with Him and listen to His words.

Indication for the sharing in little group

Write on your personal loaf two or three main gifts you received along your CLC journey and bring it to your little group. Prepare what you want to share with them about it.



Exercise 2

Events in the history of CLC that are important to me

Wednesday July 25th, 2018

Texts

- *The apostles re-joined Jesus and told him all they had done and taught.*
Mk 6:30
- *And Mary said: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; because he has looked upon the humiliation of his servant. Yes, from now onwards all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name, and his faithful love extends age after age to those who fear him.* Lk 1: 46-50
- *Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, this is your son.' Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother.'* Jn 19: 25-27
- I receive with gratitude the talk of María Magdalena Palencia Gómez

Image

I open the book of our CLC story in the world and in my country, I see the faces of the people I met during these years and I read our common events with tenderness.

The grace that I desire

I ask the Holy Spirit to help me recognize and welcome, without censoring, the significant events that have marked our history.

Points for meditation

- I observe the apostles coming to Jesus. Jesus who listens. What do the apostles tell him? How does Jesus look when he listens?
- I take some time to observe the immense joy and the immense sadness of Mary.

- What are important moments for me within CLC-CVX life in the world or in my country? Moments of trust, peace or joy? But maybe also moments of sadness and suffering?
- I choose the **three moments** that are the most important to me, moments of joy or moments that are painful. I write them down.
- I imagine I come to see Jesus, like the apostles, and tell him my story, with all the joys and the difficulties.

Conversation with the Lord (or Father or Son or Holy Spirit)

I share with Jesus the three most important moments that have surfaced for me. Happy ones or difficult ones.

How does He look at me? What does He say? How do I respond?

Conclusion

I review this prayer time: what has given me joy, sadness, fear, anger... ? What did I discover?

I note what I want to share with the group at this time: the three moments that are the most important to me.



Exercise 3

My feelings in relation to our history line

Wednesday July 25th, 2018

Text

- *At that time Jesus, **full of joy** through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father...” (Lk 10:21).*
- *Jesus is **amazed**: “I have not found such great faith even in Israel.” (Lk 7:9)*
- *He was **amazed** at their lack of faith. (Mk 6:6).*
- *As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it (Lk 19:41).*
- *He was deeply **moved** in spirit and **troubled**. Jesus wept. (Jn 11:34-35).*
- *And he began to be **sorrowful and troubled**. Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.” (Mt 26:37-38).*

Image

With Jesus as my companion on the journey, I return to the events noted on our history line.

The grace that I desire

I ask the Lord for the grace to perceive and to name the feelings and emotions that these events evoke in me, here and now.

Points for meditation:

- I savor the Gospel texts by reminding myself of their context.
- From our history-line, I choose those events that touch me most. I become aware of the sensations, emotions, feelings, I experience today about these events. I make an effort to name the emotions as precisely as possible (energy/tiredness; excitement/boredom; Joy/sadness; peace/fear; security/confusion; anger...)

- I choose one event that gives me a positive energy like joy, happiness, peace and I write this feeling down on my green post-it.
- And I choose one event that today still give me feelings like sadness, fear, anger, that drain me of energy. And write this feeling down on my red post-it.

Conversation with the Lord

What does He say to me about these feelings I identified today? What do I say to Him about them?

Conclusion

I review this prayer time. And bring my 2 post-its to the assembly.



Exercise 4

Recollection of what we received

Where am I now?

Friday, July 27th, 2018

Texts:

- Mc 7, 24 - 37
 - *There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him. After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "**Ephatha!**" (which means "Be opened!"). At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.*
- 1 Jn 1, 1-3
 - *That which was from the beginning, which **we have heard**, which **we have seen** with our eyes, which **we have looked at** and **our hands have touched**—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.*
 - ***The life appeared**; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.*
 - ***We proclaim to you** what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*
- Our common Mission: CLC Itaicí 1998
 - *First, we want to bring the freeing power of Christ to our social reality.*
 - *Secondly, we want to find Christ in all our varied cultures and to let His grace illuminate all that needs transformation.*
 - *Thirdly, we want to live Christ so as to bring him to every aspect of our daily life in the world.*

The image

I imagine myself walking beside Jesus, looking together to the path we have walked in the last days: the loafs of bread, history line, meeting with Arturo Sosa, immersion in the barrios...

Asking for Grace

I ask God to open my inner senses to go in depth in the grace that I'm receiving during these days.

Guidance for prayer

- Read the text and imagine the scene. Contemplate the way Jesus receive this fellow man.
- Contemplate the way Jesus walks beside you and how He is present in the CLC Assembly.
- Look at the last days and go back to your most significant feelings through your inner senses: choose an image, a sound, a touch, a smell and a taste of the last days.
- What can you see now with new sight? What has been your "*Ephatha*"?

Conversation with God

Present these sensing sensations and the feelings attached to them to the Lord. Dialogue with Him and listen to His words.

Indication for the sharing in little group

I choose the senses and feelings that I would like to share. And we pay special attention to what shift we did experienced in our hearts.



Exercise 5

God reveals himself to his creatures: possible faces or names for God

Friday July 27th, 2018

Texts:

- Psalm 8,2.5-6

O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honour.

- Mc 9,2-8

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus.

- Mt 16,13.15.17

'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' (...) 'But who do you say that I am?' (...) 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' (...) 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.

Image:

I close my eyes for a few moments, contemplating the face with which God wants to reveal himself to me, his favorite son or daughter.

The grace that I desire:

I ask for the grace to recognize the name/the face of God I feel more of my own, that speaks more intensely of my experience and of my relationship with Him.

Points for meditation:

- Who is the Son of Man for me? What is the image of Jesus, or of God the Father, that I feel more of my own, that reaches me, that touches me? In my relationship with God, what is the name of God that reveals my own truth? How does God reveal Himself to me in a more direct, profound, repetitive way?
- I remain in contemplation listening to what God is whispering to me ...
- I try to name the face of God I feel more of my own. I may name the face of God by using a word, a drawing, an image or a symbol.

Conversation with the Lord (Father or Son or Holy Spirit):

I tell the Lord what is flowing into my heart as I discover his presence being revealed to me. I listen to His call and what He's trying to tell me.

Conclusion:

I gather myself and share with my group my experience of prayer.



Exercise 6

Recognize the deep sense of our Common Name as CLC

Saturday July 28th, 2018

Song:

Have no fear, for I am the Lord your God, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name, you are precious and honored in my sight, and I love you. Do not be afraid, for I am with you... (Isaiah 43: 1-7. Lyrics by Fr. J.-B. du Jonchay, original in French)

Texts

- Is 49, 1
The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.
- Ap 2,17
He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it.

The image

I contemplate the face of Jesus

Asking for Grace

I ask God to renew the awareness of our deep identity as CLC, giving us words to name our “name of grace” according to this “Kairos” moment.

Guidance for prayer:

- What does our name mean? Christian Life Community? What does it refer to? How have we embodied it so far? How do we honour it? Is it a name that gives us more freedom or does it restrain us? Is it a name that says something about what we are and that others are able to recognize?
- The Lord calls us by name, He knows us from everlasting, He knows our

true and profound identity, the one to which He calls us. He leads us to the "secret" name that reflects our being and our common mission, with Him and in the world ...

These names should be an invitation to:

- be open to the future,
 - show who we are,
 - help us confirm that our actions and our lives are connected to our true identity,
 - help others have a better understanding of our identity, vocation and mission.
- Thinking of the historical line exercise we recently did, what is the gift that God is continuously giving us as CLC, so it can be spread and shared around the world?

Conversation with God

I thank the Lord about the gifts we are receiving as CLC. For example, our increasing awareness and unity experienced in the last few days. I dialogue with Him, exchanging intuitions and insights around possible names of grace for our Community; names that are slowly emerging in my heart.

Conclusion

I collect what I would like to share with my faith-sharing group about the fruits of my prayer.



Exercise 7

Acknowledging our communitarian paralysis

Saturday July 28th, 2018

Texts:

- Matthew 5:13-16

'You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.

- Genesis 19:26

But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a statue of salt.

The Image

I contemplate with Jesus how easily we waste the gifts we have received: the bread rots, the salt becomes dull and the light is hidden.

The grace to ask:

I ask the Lord for an inner knowledge of the disorder of our sin as a global and local community and I ask for the grace to reconcile myself to Christ in the community.

Guidance for prayer

- I read the text and imagine Jesus telling me that I am salt of the earth and light of the world. And he also tells this to my local and global community.
- However, there are times when we lose the flavor and do not illuminate. We were paralyzed looking back, like Lot's wife.
- In turning back from God we become paralyzed in our apostolic body as a community in mission.

- The bread that we receive as a gift no longer feeds, hardens or even becomes toxic.

Conversation with God

I present to the Lord our paralysis, the untapped gifts, the hidden lights. And I ask for mercy and forgiveness for our global and local community.

Instructions for sharing in the group

I share with the group the paralyses that God showed me in our global and local community.

I imagine the shape of a group statue representing the sin of our community and I share it with the group.



Exercise 8

Going deeper to our Common Name of Grace as CLC

Sunday July 29th, 2018

Texts

- Mc 8,22-25

They came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village; and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, 'Can you see anything?' And the man looked up and said, 'I can see people, but they look like trees, walking.' Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he looked intently and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. Then he sent him away to his home, saying, 'Do not even go into the village'.

- RM 8, 24-27

In hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Let's take a look at the prayer sheet with a list of the "expressions" from the small faith-sharing groups and the paralysis were represented by the groups yesterday. Re-read the paragraph on "*Personal Mission*" by Monbourquette

Asking for the Grace

A greater depth and integration in our charism.

Image

I let the image of God surface in me, which I naturally relate with our group.

Guidance for prayer

- I see Jesus with the blind man in Bethsaida. He asks him, "Do you see anything? "
- Under what circumstances and actions, I feel more in tuned with myself, my community, others and God as a CLC member?
- When do I feel that my CLC community gives the best of itself? When am I able to say in my experience in CLC: "here and now we are really ourselves"?
- What special gift does CLC has to share with the world? What do people close to us say about this?
- How does the paralysis we recognized yesterday pushes us towards a deeper desire for truthfulness in our identity?

Conversation with God:

I thank the Lord for this time of prayer and for its fruits. I confide in him I have a better understanding of our common identity and how to live it in truthfulness. I listen to what God has to tell me.

Conclusion

I collect what I would like to share with my faith-sharing group about the fruits of my prayer.



Exercise 9

Harvesting the fruits of these days

Sunday July 29th, 2018

Texts:

- Is 43 18-19

Do not remember the former thing, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

- Mc 2,21-22

'No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. 22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins.'

- Act 3,1-10

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, 'Look at us.' And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, 'I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk.' And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. All the people saw him walking and praising God, and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Image

With Jesus's eyes, I look at our Assembly, to all the delegates gathered here representing the World CLC.

Asking for Grace

Lord, I ask for you to listen to my deep heart and to acknowledge what you have given to us during these days.

Points for meditation

- Let the text that touched you the most resound in you. Remember all you have lived until now and keeping every moment in your heart.
- Try to write a short and concise summary of the gifts received during these days.
- What feelings and movements are kept in my heart now?

Conversation with the Lord

I give thanks for all I have received and listened during my prayer. I share this with the Lord and I ask for confirmation.

Conclusion

I prepare what I'm going to share with my small faith-sharing group.

Small group instructions

We write down on the provided sheet a brief statement which summarizes the gifts received during these days. Bring this statement to the Assembly at 6 p.m. Thank you!



FINAL DOCUMENT

17th World Assembly of the Christian Life Community Buenos Aires, Argentina 2018

CLC, A gift for the Church and the World *‘How many loaves have you?...Go and see’ (Mk 6:38)*

*We journeyed together desiring greater depth and integration
in the living out of our CLC charism in the world today,
and the Lord called us to DEEPEN, SHARE, and GO FORTH.*

1. We journeyed to “the end of the earth,” Buenos Aires, in search of the missionary spirit and zeal that has transformed Pope Francis and enlivened our Church. Our journey led us to follow in the footsteps of Bergoglio, to the Colégio Maximo de S. José, where his pastoral vision was originally established and developed among the people and parishes in Barrio de San Miguel.

2. We were also led into an experience of the Church in Latin America which offers a model for evangelization in our increasingly secular world by seeing the possibilities for liberating people to choose Christ. We saw the Spirit at work in renewing, energizing and missioning lay people.

3. We came together as one World Community. We desired to grow in gratitude for the gift of our community and way of life, to deepen our responsibility for enabling the Lord to multiply the loaves we have received, and to increase our impact on our world. We discovered the apostolic significance of our way of proceeding as a lay Ignatian community and the gifts we have to offer to a world that is groaning in labor pains¹ for spirituality and transcendence.

Preparing for the Assembly

4. **[Three Contextual Realities]** Our Assembly was called together amid three contextual realities: the 50th year anniversary of the renewal that led to CLC, a papacy renewing the Church, and the renewed call for the laity in our world today.² These contexts revealed a “Kairos” moment where we might reflect more

¹ cf. Romans 8:22.

deeply upon our identity and mission as a lay Ignatian discerning apostolic body through the loaves we are invited to offer to be multiplied.

5. **[History of Mission and Identity]** We journeyed to the Assembly conscious of our history of mission and aware of our priorities. The most recent World Assembly in Lebanon in 2013 clarified our orientations for action at our discerned four frontiers of family, globalization and poverty, ecology and youth. The link between mission and identity was made evident in Nairobi in 2003 when we confirmed our call to be a lay Ignatian apostolic body with DSSE (Discern, Send, Support, Evaluate) as our way of proceeding.

6. **[Signs of the Times]** We journeyed amid volatile and complex times in our world's history, characterized by increasing polarization, a deepening ecological crisis, and an unwillingness to welcome the other. These difficulties delayed some delegates and prevented others from arriving at all. Our world makes our hearts ache, but we drew inspiration from the Trinity in their Contemplation of the world in the Incarnation, and confidence from the Spirit which hovered in the darkness over the waters of the original Chaos in the Book of Genesis. We saw the Spirit at work in how CLC Syria journeyed with us in prayer and fraternal affection even when its delegate's visa was granted only on the last part of the Assembly. We sought to place ourselves in the hands of the Spirit, full of confidence and hope that we could seek our way towards the future we only see dimly.³

Becoming the Assembly

7. **[Welcoming New Communities]** We were welcomed warmly with great generosity by ARUPA, the organizing team from Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. Their welcome enabled us to enter into the joy of being one world community. We also welcomed the new national communities of Latvia, Mauritius Island and Vietnam into the World Community, adding to the communal gift that CLC offers to our world. Present at our Assembly were 63 of 67 affiliated communities and 8 observer communities. In total, there were 204 participants. This included 51 Jesuits, which reflects our strong spiritual bonds and collaboration with the Society of Jesus. The Assembly noted that the re-emergence of CLC in highly secularized societies like the Netherlands and Sweden confirms that our world hungers for profound community experiences that offer opportunities for evangelization.

8. **[Papal Greetings]** The Assembly received with gratitude and found inspiration in the surprise greeting of Pope Francis. He reminded us that humble thanksgi-

² See Projects 168 and President's Letter #4. See also *Evangelium Gaudium*.

³ cf. 1 Cor. 13:12

ving for our gifts leads to the responsibility of going forth to encounter others. At the center of our spirituality are the two dimensions of contemplation and action, “because we can only enter the heart of God through the wounds of Christ, and we know that Christ is wounded in the hungry, the uneducated, the discarded, the old, the sick, the imprisoned, in all the vulnerable human flesh.”⁴

9. **[Dicastery Greetings]** Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life greeted us with insights drawn from the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*. He invited us to reproduce in our own lives the various aspects of Jesus’ earthly life in order to harmonize our whole life with the mission we receive from God. His greeting echoed the necessity of both identity and mission for the one who desires to follow Christ and incarnate God in our world today.

10. **[Journey with a Missionary Church]** The Kairos moment in our Church calls us to be missionary disciples to our world through an encounter with Jesus that opens us up to the love of the Father.⁵ Austen Ivereigh, a biographer of Pope Francis, shared that entering into this missionary spirit means: being Christ in our wounded world by helping people reconnect with creation and the world as creatures of God; to experience family and community which are the bonds of trust and unconditional love that build resilience, character, and self-esteem; and to help people find sanctuary. This journey invites us to let reality and the Holy Spirit guide us in our mission.

11. **[The Journey is the Experience]** We entered into a concrete experience of a missionary church through an encounter with the families and members of the Parish Community in Barrio de San Miguel. We had the opportunity to share our lives with one another. The Assembly was touched by the joy of the welcome we received and inspired by the generous spirit that animated the life of the community, in spite of the difficult realities they also shared. We were reminded that “*the journey is the experience.*”

12. **[History of Grace]** Maria Magdalena Palencia Gomez of CLC Mexico shared about our journey as a discerning lay Ignatian apostolic community from Pius XII’s challenge to the Marian Congregations to undergo a renewal process until the present. Her story of our history reminded us how the Spirit has been consistently present with us, patiently guiding and inspiring us as God has labored to shape and form us into a community at the service of God’s Kingdom.

⁴ Letter of Pope Francis to Mr. Mauricio Lopez Oropeza, President of the World Christian Life Community.

⁵ Austen Ivereigh, “*The Francis Option: Evangelizing a World in Flux.*”

13. **[Our Name as Identity and Mission]** Beyond our history of grace, Magdalena also shared several key stories and reflections that reminded us of our identity as Christian Life Community, which Fr. Arrupe had said was the name bestowed by the Lord upon the CLC and contained within it the mission of these communities. He had linked this to the call of Abraham, whose covenant and mission was established through the name given to him by God. We were reminded that our identity and mission are a gift entrusted to us by God. We have clarified and responded to this grace through the years, always navigating the tension between the promptings of the Good Spirit and the obstacles and divisions introduced by the Evil Spirit.

14. **[Being a Community of Discernment for Reconciliation]** Our World Ecclesiastical Assistant, Fr. Arturo Sosa, S.J., invited us to see our being a community of discernment as a gift for developing a laity capable of individual and communal discernment. This discernment can be shared with the Church and become a tool of wisdom for action in the world. Forming our members in both constant prayer and generous service will facilitate the link between individual reconciliation and our ability to become agents of reconciliation.

15. **[Magis as living in permanent tension]** Fr. Sosa touched upon the tension that arises as we deepen our relationships. He also referred to Magis as living in the permanent tension of being pulled to both God and to the world at the same time.⁶ We will need to navigate this tension in our communal discernment while being very attentive to the workings of the Evil Spirit, which may easily turn tension into conflict.

16. **[Sharing to create Community]** The tapestry woven by the various inputs helped us grow in our communal spirit and we were re-energized in the importance of being community. We opened ourselves more deeply into the gift of our way of life by sharing openly in small groups throughout the Assembly discernment process. We were awakened to the beauty of discerning together as a lay Ignatian discerning apostolic body.

Discerning as an Apostolic Body

17. **[Spiritual Conversation and Apostolic Discernment]** The delegates were invited to be part of a formal communal discernment process informed by the Spiritual Exercises employing spiritual conversation. For five days, each morning and afternoon, we followed a three-step sequence: individual prayer, sharing in small groups (in three rounds, allowing us to be moved and respond to what we have heard from others) and plenary. While the dynamics of the Spiritual Exer-

⁶ Cf. Jesuit General Congregation 35, 8.

cises provided the framework, spiritual conversation was a sweet reminder of our small group sharing at home. The process was facilitated by the ESDAC⁷ team, which provided prayer guidelines and creatively guided us in the way each group offered its own insight to the whole Assembly.

18. **[Abraham's Trust in God]** As the Assembly engaged in the discernment process, Abraham resurfaced as a reference. When God calls him, Abram not only has his name changed to Abraham, but he is led by God out of his comfort zone without knowing where he is heading. Abraham's only assurance: his faith in God. As Abraham, we started the process with only our confidence in the Spirit, which helps us to find meaning in the midst of chaos. Similar to how each of us trusts the Spirit each time we do the Spiritual Exercises, the Assembly as a whole felt called to respect the process and trust the direction of the Spirit.

19. **[Joys and Struggles]** As days went by, we began to realize the process of communal discernment is challenging: it requires patience and openness of heart. We faced obstacles, resistances and pain throughout but realized these are an integral part of the process to be understood in light of Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection. Like pilgrims journeying to unknown territories, we feel called to humbly share with our CLC companions our own experience and the fruits we have received:

- a. **We learned it is difficult to grow in indifference.** During the discernment process, we faced various difficulties, either with the way the process worked or with what was exactly being asked of us; at times, there appeared to be insufficient clarity. That gave rise to frustration, lack of meaning and desolation. We realized it is painful to put our attachments aside and focus our hearts on the greater good, which very slowly emerges from the group's sharing. In that process, we learned from one another to be humble and patient.
- b. **We experienced a growing sense of intimate spiritual connection among ourselves,** as our sharing went deeper and deeper, transcending our personal backgrounds, local realities and language difficulties. Although sometimes we resisted being more personal in our sharing, we were able to gradually open our hearts to each other; we laughed and cried and dreamed together. In that process, we became a community of friends in the Lord.
- c. **We felt liberated in acknowledging our frailties and imperfections.** At some point, we realized that, to truly walk together, we would have to be ho-

⁷ Exercices Spirituels pour un Discernement Apostolique Communautaire, <http://www.esdac.net/>

nest about everything that hinders the Spirit from flowing freely in our communities. We enacted and contemplated the various paralyses inhibiting our communal life, in order to acknowledge how our communities can easily close in on themselves, becoming self-centered; how they can be caught in a web of self-interests, falling prey to division and conflict; how they may let the passion for announcing the Kingdom die and lose the shine that attracts others to our way of life. In that process, we learned how the power of truth and reconciliation lived out in community can be profoundly liberating.

- d. **We moved from fear and doubt to union of hearts and minds.** As the days continued to unfold, despite the difficulties in adjusting to the process, and despite the occasional bouts of desolation, we began to feel genuine peace together. Throughout the Assembly we were sustained by the prayers of the world community which we felt, especially in particular difficult periods. This invisible but powerful current eventually erupted in deep gratitude, consolation, joy, hope and desire for the future. In that process, we briefly tasted the Peace only the Resurrected Christ can give us.
- e. **We realized we can take decisions together.** As each member in the small group began to grow familiar with each other, it became easier to identify convergence points in our sharing and find a common response for the questions proposed for our discernment. In that process, we learned how to merge our diversity into something more than just the sum-of-the-parts.

20. **[Treasure of Communal Discernment]** On the whole, the delegates to the Assembly experienced communal discernment as the way to deepen our vocation as a lay Ignatian apostolic body. While General Principle 8 urges us to know no limits in our apostolic calling, General Principle 2 is very clear in the need to respect *‘the uniqueness of each personal vocation [which] enables us to be open and free, always at the disposal of God’*. Common prayerful discernment in successive rounds allows our spiritual movements to gradually converge throughout the process. This enables us to grow in confidence and ownership of our collective decisions. It is a process which requires humility and perseverance because resistances may seem difficult to overcome. However, the fruits – stronger community bonds, increased clarity on the route to take – are too precious not to be harvested. We gradually opened ourselves to the grace entailed in journeying together. We realized that the process itself is a grace – the journey is truly part of the experience.

Fruits of our Apostolic Discernment

21. [**What we received**] We arrived in Buenos Aires desiring greater depth and integration in living out our CLC charism in the world today. We leave the Assembly feeling deeply grateful and consoled for so great a good received. We felt sorrow for our paralyses. We were offered a way for deep internal conversion. As we felt reconciled with each other and with our history, our hearts filled with immense joy, we became real friends in the Lord, companions on a journey, re-energized for Mission. We feel confirmed in our call to be a lay Ignatian apostolic body in the Church.

22. [**Where we feel called**] Our evolving discernment led us to ponder the question: ‘*As CLC community, we are called today to...?*’ Among the many responses that were offered, three main windows were opened:

We feel called to **DEEPEN** our identity, through an inner conversion that allows us to be more faithful and caring about our charism in all its dimensions;

We feel called to **SHARE** humbly with others the gift of Ignatian spirituality as lived out in our lay vocation. We view Discernment and the Ignatian tools and methods as precious gifts we cannot keep for ourselves;

We feel called to **GO FORTH** to serve those most in need and sow the seeds of mercy, joy and hope in the world in order to follow Jesus more closely and work with him for the building of the Kingdom.

23. [**How we will live out our calling**] The process of communal discernment held in Buenos Aires gave us a new understanding of CLC as a lay Ignatian apostolic body and inspired us to shoulder our financial responsibility in a more proactive manner. When translated into our national communities, the process of communal discernment can prove a powerful tool to improve the quality of our apostolic calling to the Kingdom. It may also sow the seed to help us understand whether there is a certain way of living out our call to Mission which is specific – and prophetic – to our lay vocation. The Assembly therefore recommends that the World ExCo expand, develop and evolve this process for use at the various levels of our world community. We also call upon national communities, through their delegates returning from the Assembly, to share the methods and fruits of this process to facilitate greater depth and integration of our charism in the apostolic lives of our communities.

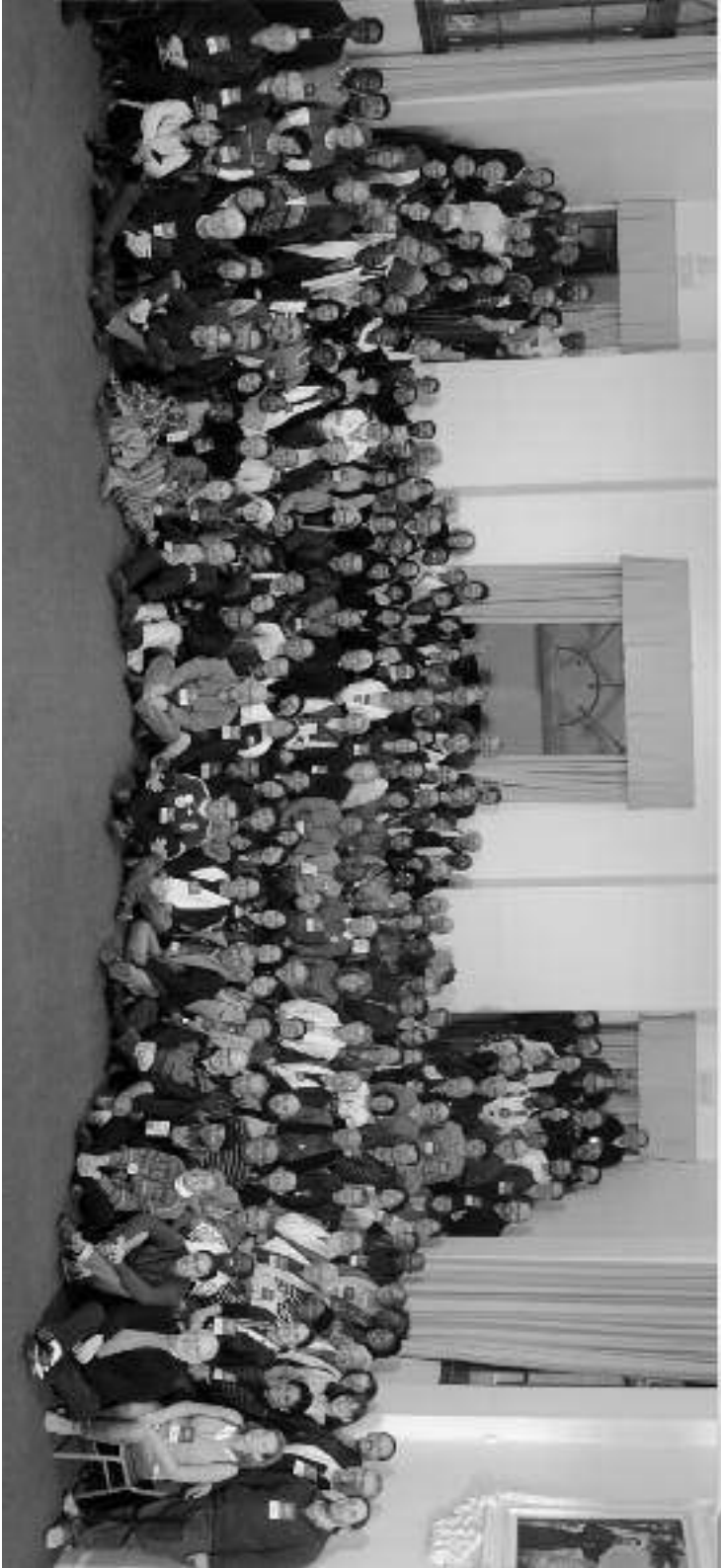


XVII ASAMBLEA MUNDIAL CVX - CLC

CLC, a gift for the Church and the world

CVX, un regalo para la Iglesia y para el mundo

La CVX, un don pour l'Église et le monde



New CLC National Communities

On the Open Day (day 5) the Assembly experienced a very special moment: the incorporation of three new CLC national communities. The newly incorporated communities were: Latvia (sponsored by England and Wales), Mauritius Island (sponsored by France) and Vietnam (sponsored by the United States).

Latvia has 6 communities with a total of 58 members.

Mauritius Island has 15 communities and 86 members. Their places of mission are: social, parish and youth ministries.

Vietnam started its CLC national community in 1998. There are 16 communities and 185 members. Their places of mission are: working with ethnic minority groups, the elderly, orphans, leading prayer groups among immigrant workers, soup kitchens, and the “Leading as Jesus” program.

Welcome to our World Community!



New
Communities

Amendment to General Norms

Amendment to General Norm 21

General Norm 21 stated:

*The elected members of the Executive Council are: the president, the vice-president, **the secretary and four consultors**, all elected by the General Assembly for a period of five years. They may be re-elected only for three terms maximum and two terms maximum in one office.*

The new General Norm 21 approved in Buenos Aires

The elected members of the Executive Council are: the president, the vice-president, **and five consultors**, all elected by the General Assembly for a period of five years. They may be re-elected only for three terms maximum and two terms maximum in one office.



World Executive Council Elections

On Tuesday 31 July, on the feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the General Assembly in Buenos Aires elected the new World CLC Executive Council for the period 2018-2023.

The new ExCo was formed as follows:

President:	Denis Dobbstein (Belgium)
Vice President:	Ann Marie Brennan (USA)
Secretary:	Catherine Waiyaki (Kenya)
Consultor:	Fernando Vidal (Spain)
Consultor:	Daphne Ho (Hong Kong)
Consultor:	Diego Pereira (Uruguay)
Consultor:	Najat Sayegh (Lebanon)

The appointed members of the Executive Council are:

Ecclesiastical Assistant:	Arturo Sosa, SJ (Venezuela)
Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant:	Herminio Rico, SJ (Portugal)
Executive Secretary:	Alwin Macalalad (Philippines)
Resource Executive:	Rojean Macalalad (Philippines)



List of participating National Communities

I. Established members

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. ACU (absent) | 23. France | 44. Nicaragua |
| 2. Argentina | 24. Germany | 45. Nigeria |
| 3. Australia | 25. Guatemala | 46. Paraguay |
| 4. Austria | 26. Hong Kong | 47. Peru |
| 5. Belgium Wa. | 27. Hungary | 48. Philippines |
| 6. Belgium-Fl. | 28. India | 49. Poland |
| 7. Bolivia | 29. Indonesia | 50. Portugal |
| 8. Botswana | 30. Ireland | 51. Puerto Rico |
| 9. Brazil | 31. Italy | 52. Rwanda |
| 10. Cameroon | 32. Ivory Coast | 53. Slovenia |
| 11. Canada English | 33. Japan | 54. South Africa |
| 12. Canada French | 34. Kenya | 55. Spain |
| 13. Chile | 35. Korea | 56. Sri Lanka |
| 14. Colombia | 36. Lebanon | 57. Switzerland |
| 15. Congo RD | 37. Lesotho (absent) | 58. Syria (absent) |
| 16. Croatia (absent) | 38. Lithuania | 59. Taiwan |
| 17. Cuba | 39. Luxembourg | 60. Uruguay |
| 18. Dominican Rep. | 40. Madagascar | 61. USA |
| 19. Ecuador | 41. Malta | 62. Venezuela |
| 20. Egypt | 42. Mexico | 63. Zambia |
| 21. El Salvador | 43. Netherlands | 64. Zimbabwe |
| 22. England & Wales | | |

II. Confirmed in Buenos Aires

- | | | |
|-----------|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latvia | 2. Mauritius | 3. Vietnam |
|-----------|--------------|------------|

III. Participated as observers:

- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. Benin | 2. Ethiopia | 3. Haiti |
| 4. Macau | 5. New Zealand | 6. Singapore |
| 7. Slovakia | 8. Sweden | |

