



progressio

Publication of the World Christian Life Community

**Called to fill our world
with the language of wisdom**

Progressio is the official publication of the Christian Life Community (CLC). It seeks to build community, supplement formation, and promote apostolic works. By publishing stories, reflections, events and opinions, it endeavors to reinforce, challenge and deepen the community's understanding and living of the CLC Charism, Ignatian Spirituality and the gospel values

ABOUT OUR LOGO

We did not go too far to find inspiration for the logo of the Christian Life Community (CLC). Countless books have been written about the Salvation history of CLC and its beginning in year 1563. From that came the Marian Congregations and its symbol (shown on the top right), having the "P" over the "X" (for the Greek Christos) and the inserted "M" illustrates that the Congregations were put under the patronage of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The blue curved line illustrates a movement forward to **one World Community in 1967**; hence the globe. From this new beginning came a new name: Communauté de Vie Chrétienne (CVX) in French; Comunidad de Vida Cristiana (CVX) in Spanish; Christian Life Community (CLC) in English.

PHOTOS BACK COVER

- Year 2020 marks the 30th anniversary of the approval of the General Principles by the Pontifical Council for the Laity
- Manuel Martinez (World Executive Secretary) Denis Dobbstein (World President) and José de Pablo SJ (World Vice-EA) at the World CLC Secretariat in Rome.
- The Official Logo of the "Ignatian Year 2021-2022"
- New prayer space at the World CLC Secretariat in Rome.
- ExCo Meeting on Zoom November 2020
- The Logo of the World CLC Youth Gathering.

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Editorial

“Learn to be like giraffes” that need a big heart, because of the height of their neck and head, to pump blood strongly to reach the brain. This allows them to fulfill the function of seeing reality with amplitude, in its totality and complexity, and thus to think about its causes and solutions. Do not stop thinking and dreaming big, acting in the simple things of every day.

I heard this metaphor from Fr. Nicolás SJ. The news of his death surprised us at the closing of the previous edition of *Progressio Magazine* (N.1 - 2020). We received many messages of gratitude for so much good received through him in CLC. He was our World Ecclesiastical Assistant from 2008 to 2016. We feel that we lost a companion on the way. We wanted to remember him by asking some people who shared the mission with him during those years to help us remember some of the seeds Adolfo sowed in so many different ways.

Members of past World Executive Councils and our current President, who had the opportunity to meet him, listened to him and dialogued frequently with him, share with us different facets of his personality. They remember him as a close, warm person with a sense of humour. A person who lived with the wisdom of one who knows he is guided and accompanied by the Lord. It is impossible to remain indifferent when reading one of his writings or listening to him in a conference or an interview. His invitations always require us to find answers that call for a great deal of creativity and boldness. Arturo Sosa, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, reminded us in his homily at the funeral of Fr. Nicolás, through the parable of the grain of wheat that falls into the earth and dies to bear fruit, that this is what the life of “Nico” was like: a deep rooting in Christ so that there may be life.

As a World Community, the speeches of the General Assembly in Fatima (2008)¹ and the General Assembly in Beirut (2013)² continue to resonate with us. I invite you to return to them and to remember the notes he shared with us to be a prophetic lay community, guided by the Spirit and the invitation to go to the frontiers carrying the language of wisdom, a message that has meaning and opens paths. They have not lost their relevance.

For the second part, we have invited those who are carrying out the mission of coordinating the regions to share what they are doing today with us, what their main challenges and opportunities are. Hopefully this will be a good window for us to approach where we are present, trying to make God’s presence concrete and visible in

such diverse ways. It is in this diversity that we reaffirm our sense of belonging to ONE World Community, united in mission. We know that we have been taking steps to make the regional teams a space for articulation and coordination that will help what we do generate the best possible evangelical impact. There is still a distance left to cover to improve and to deepen.

Did you know that CLC has a presence at the United Nations? Yes, since 1975 we were granted consultative status at the Economic and Social Council. This year, the United Nations celebrated its 75th anniversary giving us a good opportunity to remember our work there, seeking, through the different working groups, to offer our viewpoint, to create networks of collaboration and to be in a place where the different world problems of today pass through.

December 3, the feast of St. Francis Xavier, marks the 30th anniversary of the approval of the current General Principles. We do not want to miss this opportunity without asking José Reyes and Ingeborg Von Grafenstein to remind us what that time of preparation for the “new harvest” and the years that followed was like. As in the life of Adolfo Nicolás, here too the grain of wheat that fell to the ground needs to die in order to bear fruit. May this time of remembrance be an opportunity for us all to reflect, with grateful hearts, on all that we have received and given in light of these General Principles. What motions does the reading of the General Principles generate in me? Perhaps now is the time to be open to new things and to let ourselves be surprised by the Lord.

We continue to introduce you to the new members of the World Executive Council. On this occasion, Daphne from CLC Hong Kong shares with us her journey in CLC, her experience of working with young people through her teaching profession and her desire to invite them to “taste and see how good the Lord is”.

Even in times of pandemic, we have seen the efforts of so many who continue to bet on creativity and wish to remain united, in community, sharing, celebrating, accompanying. And perhaps that is why Adolfo Nicolás said: “The Christian is essentially communitarian. Wherever he goes he creates community, because he accepts, forgives, rejoices, supports, and endures”. Let us continue to create community. See you next time!



Manuel Martínez Arteaga

¹ http://www.cvx-clc.net/l-en/documents/nicolas_fatima08_en.pdf

² http://www.cvx-clc.net/filesProgressio/Sup70_eng.pdf (Pages 88-97)

Fr. Nicolás keeps fostering in me the desire to become a better person

*Denis Dobbelstein (CLC in Belgium W.)
World CLC President*



Denis Dobbelstein is currently the President of the World CLC. He has been part of the World Executive Council of CLC since 2013 (as a Consultor 2013-2018). Married to Marie - Claire and father to two children, Antoine and Camille. He lives and works as a lawyer in Brussels.

IMUST call to mind my first encounter with Father Nicolás. Thanks to the wonderful messages from Mauricio, Daniela, Luke, Chris and Franklin, you can hear about the strong impression Father Nicolás made not only on me, but also on them.

I said an encounter; but actually I was an anonymous figure in the CLC World Assembly in Fatima in 2008. From far away, I

was especially attentive to the non-verbal aspect of the speech by the person who had just accepted the role of world ecclesiastical assistant. I sensed humility and authority; I observed an attitude of simplicity combined with subtle thought; I appreciated his sense of humour at the service of profound reflection. I can truly say that from my point of view, Father Nicolás had a genuine aura.

I wouldn't have dared admit to my intuitive admiration if I hadn't had the occasion to verify my first impression. I had the chance of meeting Father Nicolás several times, in groups becoming smaller and smaller. Whether the meeting was a large assembly or a small committee, I left with a deep desire to be a better man. The memory of him, even today, fills me regularly with joyful trust.

At our last ExCo meeting in 2016 we could sense that his strength was diminishing. Our meeting was all the more cordial: our assistant showed us his affection. His speech was intimate, as if he were speaking to really close friends, with an incredible liberty of tone and content. It was as if he wanted to pass down all his trust and encourage us to innovate, so as to



bring our contribution to the renewal of the Church.

I WANT to briefly call to mind the more formal speeches that Father Nicolás gave to the whole CLC at the World Assemblies at Fatima (2008) and Beirut (2013). Since Mauricio, Daniela, Luke, Chris and Franklin have already spoken of him with enthusiasm and pertinence, I will settle for sharing three transversal thoughts.

I was especially impressed by Father Nicolás' care in adjusting his words to his understanding of the signs of the times. Without rupture, but with a lucid look at the movements of history, he invited us to explore the language of wisdom in places where the language of prophecy is no longer heard. But he always had the sole aim of making God's presence in the heart of humanity concrete and visible.

This speech came to vividly reinforce - at the risk of making us forget - the words of Father Anthony da Silva: "There is no future without collaboration". Indeed, Father Nicholas shared his conviction that Jesuits and lay people are on equal footing in the face of the challenges of a world that is changing quickly and profoundly; that the complementarity of "intelligences" is necessary to witness to God in today's world.

Father Nicolás had the art of captivating his audience, of arousing enthusiasm. So much so that we could have been exposed to the temptation against which he never ceased to warn us, namely the temptation of superficiality. The language of wisdom is not an easy concept. We have certainly not finished probing the depth of the paradigm shift it implies. Wouldn't the "best" way to honour the memory of Father Nicholas be to let ourselves be transformed by his challenges, again and again, without reducing the words he shared with us to precious memories?

*(Original: French
Translated by Cecilia MacPherson)*

On the other page:
- Fr. Nicolás at the ExCo meeting in 2014

Below:
- Fr. Nicolás at the meeting with ExCo members in 2015

- Fr. Nicolás at the ExCo meeting in 2016



In memory of Father Adolfo Nicolás

*Daniela Frank (CLC in Germany)
World CLC President 2003 - 2013*



Daniela Frank was part of the World Executive Council of CLC from 1998 until 2013. She was the President of the World CLC from 2003 until 2013. She is currently the National Promoter of CLC in Germany

The first opportunity for me, as President of World CLC, to meet Father Nicolás was in January 2008 just a few days after he was elected Superior General of the Jesuits. He immediately assured me that he would be happy to take over the role of the ecclesiastical assistant – obviously well prepared by his predecessor Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach. The only thing that irritated him was that the appointment had to be made via the Pontifical Council for the Laity. He stated, “Oh, it’s such a serious matter!”

Right from the very beginning, the contact with Father Nicolás was very uncomplicated. One symbol for this easy-going communication was the fact that he sent his messages from a private Hotmail account. The first

- Fr. Nicolás dressed as a pharaoh, with some delegates, at the Open day of the General Assembly in Lebanon



email that reached me was almost moved to the spam folder, since I was used to communicating with Father Kolvenbach via his secretary and by fax. Whenever we came together, as ExCo or just the two of us, I met an attentive listener and enjoyed a cordial and straightforward conversation, always to the point.

Just a few months after his appointment, he came to Fátima for the 2008 CLC General Assembly (annoyed that as Superior General, he could no longer travel alone). His speech, “Notes for a prophetic lay community, guided by the Spirit of God”, is, in my opinion, the “most sustainable” input from this Assembly that CLCers remember to this day. In this input, two fundamental convictions of Father Nicolás about CLC became evident:

- ◆ his obvious appreciation for CLC, rooted in the vision, dedication and commitment he could experience in his contacts with CLC and our deep desire to respond to God’s call, living and acting as “a lay apostolic body that shares responsibility for mission in the Church”;
- ◆ his desire for a real partnership between Jesuits and CLC in a mutual giving and receiving, sharing the gifts of St Ignatius.

Of course, he was well aware that in the reality of both communities – Jesuits and CLC – there were a number of stumbling blocks making the collaboration between partners difficult. But, in all our conversations, he never tired of encouraging and challenging us to grow towards such a partnership, e.g. moving from dependence on Jesuits to trusting the potential of CLC as an autonomous Ignatian lay community. On the other hand, he was a clear advocate for CLC among his confreres, e.g. he was convinced that we should not just be seen as well-formed people at the service of Jesuit ministries but equal partners in mission.

Thanks to Father Nicolás, we met with the General Council of the Society of Jesus for a

very frank discussion about CLC in different parts of the world and the quite manifold relationship with the Jesuits living in those regions. Even as I remember this meeting as quite “challenging”, it was a great opportunity to reflect together on the reality of both communities instead of hiding behind ideals – definitely a more solid basis for developing joint perspectives.

A number of times, Jesuits asked us why Father Nicolás was speaking so much in favour and supportive of CLC when visiting their provinces. Hearing these remarks, I was just deeply touched – often quite critical, myself, about the reality of our communities. Meeting CLC members all over the world, as well as with the World ExCo whenever possible, obviously left Fr. Nicolás impressed with the vision of CLC capacities and potential without hiding (and naming) weaknesses and limitations. Accompanying our discernment, he encouraged especially a deeper integration of professional life and mission, using the full potential of Ignatian laity in responding to the needs of our societies, our times.

In 2013, he did not miss the opportunity to come to Beirut for the General Assembly. In his speech, he further developed the thoughts of Fatima towards the “language of wisdom”; the wisdom of finding God in everything. He stressed, again, how important he considered the shared responsibility of Jesuits and CLC for the Ignatian heritage as well as close coop-



eration in the formation in spiritual life so that the gifts of Ignatius would become common good for the benefit of the church and the world. He believed in CLC, and challenged us again and again, reminding us at the Assembly in Beirut: Don’t expect us to tell you how you should live as Ignatian laypeople - but tell us how we as Jesuits can support you.

So, we thank God from the bottom of our hearts for Father Nicolás as a friend, companion and advocate for CLC (especially among his brothers)! May he find rest and eternal joy with God!

(Original: English)

- Fr. Nicolás with Daniela and some delegates at the CLC General Assembly in Lebanon 2013



Father Adolfo Nicolás SJ

Some selective CLC reflections

*Chris Hogan (CLC in Australia)
World ExCo member 2008 - 2018*



Chris Hogan is a CLC member from Australia. He was part of the World Executive Council of CLC as a Consultor from 2008 until 2018.

Fr Nicolás on CLC engagement in the Asia-Pacific Region

At the CLC General Assembly in Lebanon, Fr Nicolás elaborated at some length on CLC engagement in the Asia-Pacific region. Drawing on his decades of experience there, Fr Nicolás spoke firstly of the unique value of Asian cultures to CLC and the world ranging from their contribution to the very spiritual foundations of humanity to the essential goodness of Asian people, visible where he saw love, honesty and integrity. But, he asked, “How do we communicate on matters of faith in a world that is becoming more pluralistic and of diminishing or no Christian faith?”

He said, firstly, that we can learn something from the Asian way of communicating - both hearing and seeing in a more contemplative manner, facilitating the ability to see, hear and feel with the heart of God. In this way, he said, we become more sensitive to God’s transcendent and loving presence in our lives and more able to discern where the Spirit is drawing us.

Fr Nicolás then asked what sort of language speaks to today’s world. He traced the evolution of biblical language from that of identity (the early books), to that of history and consolidation (the history books) and then the language of prophecy and purification (the

During the term of his generalate, Fr Nicolás, as our CLC World Ecclesial Assistant, engaged with us on a number of occasions. Especially memorable were his presentations at our CLC General Assemblies. We appreciated his breadth of vision on themes such as the “Missio Dei”, the centrality of Christ (and avoiding distractions), love of the poor, the relevance of Ignatian Spirituality, and attention to everyday reality. He warned us about global trends of indifference and superficiality, urging us to be joyful and people of depth.

However, the CLC Executive Secretary has asked that this short article focus, firstly, on Fr Nicolás and CLC engagement in the Asia Pacific Region and, secondly, on his sense of humour.

Above:
- Fr. Nicolás with Chris at the ExCo Meeting 2015

Below:
- Fr. Nicolás with 2 Asian delegates at the Lebanon Assembly.
- Farewell to Fr. Nicolás in 2016. Gate of the Curia in Rome



prophetic books). While these biblical languages, he said, are still needed, they no longer speak to the wider world. He advocated the use of “wisdom language”, something more characteristic of Asian religions and culture, and able to be expressed in understandable, everyday terms. He cited Pope Francis as a practitioner of such communication.

How then do we proceed? Fr Nicolás advocated, in a culturally diverse Asian context, a “patient dialogue and communal discernment”, working with “all men and women of good faith”, in a “companionship of equals” and a “spirit of mutual influence” – thereby living the particular relevance and versatility of Ignatian Spirituality in the Asian context.

His Asia-Pacific perspectives and encouragement seem especially relevant given the rising global influence of Asia-Pacific countries and cultures in today’s pandemic-plagued world.

Fr Nicolás’ sense of humour

Since Fr Nicolás’ death, many articles have been written about his life and his many great qualities, including his sense of humour. That humour should find itself mentioned in the company of other such “higher ranking qualities” is interesting.

Fr Karl Rahner SJ (and others) offer some insights - and they apply to Fr Nicolás. Father Rahner stated that only a person who has a gift for affection can have a genuine sense of humour and that such humour calls for an altruistic detachment from oneself, an inner freedom and humility, and a mysterious sympathy with others. Even the interior disposition to exercise humour, to laugh occasionally, seems indicative of being in touch with reality, acknowledging that while “there is a time to cry and a time to laugh”, in the end, “all will be well” (echoing prayers of Teresa of Avila and Hildegard of Bingen).

Fr Nicolás’ sense of humour, something like leaven in bread, seemed to enhance all his other qualities. Relating to us as a fellow traveller in life, his humour put people at ease and was a part of his ability to reach across any division in human life. As CLC lay people, we sensed his deep appreciation of our lay vocations and

a love for us and our mission no matter how humble our station or poor our situation.

It is not surprising that a prayer composed by Fr Nicolás during a retreat with his General Council in 2011 included the following words: “Lord Jesus ... enlighten our minds and our hearts, and do not forget to make us smile when things do not go as we wished ...”.

Gratitude for Fr Nicolás’ life.

We thank God for the life of Fr Nicolás, remembering him as a wise and joyful man, present to all people, cultures and circumstances - a “man for all seasons”. His special “quality of presence”, as lived in his relationships with us all, will thankfully be with us for the rest of our days.

(Original: English)

Below:

- Fr. Nicolás with Chris and Ann Marie Brennan

- Fr. Nicolás with Mauricio Lopez and Chris at the ExCo Meeting 2014



Father Nico, a joyful man who spoke the language of wisdom

*Mauricio Lopez (CLC in Mexico)
World CLC President 2013 - 2018*



Mauricio Lopez was part of the World Executive Council of CLC from 2008 until 2018, he was the President of the World CLC from 2013 until 2018. He is from Mexico and resides in Ecuador with his wife, Analu.

The first thing that comes to my mind as I begin to write this brief article about dear Father Adolfo Nicolás, SJ, is what I think defined the identity and spirituality of this good man of God: extraordinary depth, clarity of thought, a great sense of humour and enormous interior freedom. It would seem that these four traits are very characteristic of Ignatian spirituality, and indeed they are, but to live them out consistently throughout a lifetime, and above all the ability to act according to these principles at any

time, before any person, and in any place, gives it a special sense of Magis that few men and women ever achieve.

I believe that these characteristics of how God was reflected in the life of Father Nicolás can express what he so eagerly shared with us in Lebanon in 2013: Embrace our call to be joyful women and men. I remember that during the homily he shared at the General Assembly of the CLC in the beloved, and today very damaged, Beirut, he told us a story that seemed almost like an everyday event, almost irrelevant, in order to help us define the identity of the joyful women and men that our Church and our time needed. The thing is that the simplicity of that story about the ability of a common person to see beyond the superficial, the possibility of finding purpose in life while serving others out of sheer gratuitousness, and especially on the absolute freedom regarding the devotion to embrace God's call to live out the presence of Christ in the lives of others, was a true lesson on what it means to follow Ignatian spirituality today. And this was also a reflection of who Father Nicolás was.

In the various moments we shared with him since 2008, when he accompanied us at the General Assembly of Fatima, acting as Superior General of the Jesuits and as World Ecclesiastical Assistant of the CLC, he always appeared as an older friend, like that close acquaintance who, without intending to impose his ideas, offered his wisdom with simplicity and clarity concerning the need of our CLC to move from a community of apostles to a true apostolic community. Indeed, a few years later, he would give us clues on understanding that our path as a lay community of believers had to go through the process of knowing ourselves as God's chosen people, so as to proceed and understand the prophetic language in following Christ, but that it was necessary to reach the final goal of being able to speak the language of wisdom. This language of wisdom is what our world today, broken in so many ways, needs in order to redefine what it means to experience God, to heal its own wounds,



and it challenges us as CLC to go beyond ourselves and our safe and self-serving spaces to be a credible witness to God's promise of another possible world.

I had the privilege of experiencing the impact of this joyful man, Father Nicolás, on a couple of occasions which are especially dear to my heart. On one occasion, after his visit as the CLC Ecclesiastical Assistant at our meeting as EXCO (I believe it was in 2016), I accompanied him back to the Jesuit Curia and remember how he shared with me, with eyes full of light and hope (they looked like the eyes of a child who saw everything as new), about his certainty that this was the time when the Church could experience profound conversion, and how it was necessary to accompany Pope Francis in this task which had the nuances and strength of the Spirit of the Second Vatican Council. I remember how he expressed that it was a very important moment for us as CLC, and as daughters and sons of Ignatian spirituality, to embrace this time that rightly confirmed a season for the language of wisdom, with special emphasis on laity. His smile shone when he confided with us what the Pope had told him, that although he initially thought his Pontificate would be short, he now knew with certainty that he should remain until the changes became irreversible. In the face of this testimony of Pope Francis, our beloved Father Nicolás repeated, as a truly joyful man, that we should serve with simplicity, in a silent manner, and offering the best of our Ignatian spirituality gratuitously at this special moment.

I remember the second occasion with particular affection, when I received a strongly-word-

ed letter from one of the bodies of our Holy See, prior to its reformation, in which they wrote to me as the world president of the CLC, with a copy to Father Nicolás as our Ecclesiastical Assistant. My eyes were full of tears, as I recall, due to the content and tone of the letter that deeply hurt me, and that contrasted with the beautiful and complex mission that I was living, deeply identified with the Church of the Amazon. The letter was associated with an issue about some aspects of the CLC's choice for pastoral work related to the fringe and boundary of those living a diverse sexual identity. Beyond the letter, and any personal feelings, I hold dear to my heart with special gratitude the way in which Father Nicolás fulfilled his mission as CLC Ecclesiastical Assistant as never before, responding with depth, clarity, courage and freedom that expressed the strength of the Spirit in him, his love for the CLC and for the Church, and the way of a joyful man to affirm "identification with the Church," while defending the preferential option for the most excluded, God's favourites.

I could mention many other memories, but not wanting to exhaust you with too many words, it can be said that the essence of Father Nicolás as a joyful man is expressed primarily by common, seemingly simple, God-filled gestures; beyond grandiose words. Dear Nico, your life has been deeply sown in our CLC, for through your joyful presence you showed your love for us, and for the Church, more in works than in words. Your life as a witness was a gesture for God's greatest glory. Thank you.

*(Original: Spanish
Translated by Clifford Schisler)*



In these two pages:
Mauricio and
Fr. Nicolás in
various meetings

Fr. Adolfo Nicolás

The CLC Jubilee Man!

Luke Rodrigues SJ
World Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant 2010 - 2016



Fr. Luke Rodrigues is an Indian Jesuit. He was Vice EA for World CLC from 2010 – 2016 and worked closely with Fr. Nicolás during that time. He is currently Socius of the Provincial in Bombay

Even though there is sadness at the passing away of Fr. Nicolás, my predominant feelings are those of joy and gratitude and am sure Fr. Nicolás himself would have heartily approved of this. I share here my memories of Fr. Nicolás as a Jesuit and as the Ecclesiastical Assistant of World CLC.

As a Jesuit

To us in the Curia, Fr. Adolfo was a wisdom figure who strove to understand reality with the heart of God. His favorite word was 'depth'. He constantly

urged us to seek spiritual, emotional and intellectual depth, even as he humbly pursued it himself. His sharp, perceptive mind was not obsessed with uniformity but was open to explore different points of view, always seeking an integration between experience and reflection. His life was a wonderful testimony to this depth, integrating the best elements of Eastern and Western traditions. An inspiring wisdom figure indeed!

An outstanding characteristic of Fr. Adolfo was his simplicity. He was a friendly, approachable man who claimed no privileges for himself. He occupied no special place in the chapel or refectory, mixed about freely with everyone and often used public transport within Rome. No wonder then that he got on so famously with Pope Francis, a Pope who is known and admired for his simplicity.

And who could forget his sense of humour? Fr. Adolfo had a delightful ability to recall and narrate the funny side of situations. It was such great fun to hear him tell a joke. His eyes would twinkle with merriment and the whole table would join in his laughter even before the punch line was reached! Those were such beautiful moments that created a strong bond between us and our down-to-earth Fr. General.



As World EA

Much more can be said about Fr. Nicolás as a Jesuit, but I turn now to the relationship we shared as EA and Vice EA of World CLC. He would humorously refer to me as his ‘vice’, a joke that sometimes caused ripples of embarrassment among visitors!

His two addresses at World Assemblies reveal how Fr. Nicolás grew in his understanding of the lay vocation. At Fatima in August 2008, he had barely taken over as Superior General and as World EA. He urged CLC to be a Prophetic Community, actively engaged in visible apostolic action. Could it be that he was addressing a lay community through a Jesuit lens? Five years later, his talk at Lebanon focused on Wisdom Language. Here he expressed appreciation for the invisible sanctity of daily life and recognized the wisdom of those who are in touch with reality. His reflections were of great help in my own journey to understand the treasures that CLC has to offer to the Church and to the world.

During my regular colloquies with him, Fr. Nicolás would ask for a written update on the situation of CLC across the world. He would supplement this with his own experience of meeting CLC members in different countries, throwing light upon the unique way in which they were contributing to the Mission of God. An incident worth mentioning is the one occasion when he seemed really upset with me. World CLC had taken a stand on a particular issue in the Church. Fr. Nicolás received a strongly-worded letter asking him as World EA to explain the stand of CLC. He sum-

moned me and made it clear, in no uncertain terms, that the forward-thinking of CLC must always be within the framework of Church teachings. Then he relaxed a bit and listened attentively as I outlined the reasons why the ExCo stood behind that decision. His face lit up, he voiced his approval and then replied to the letter with a vigorous defense of the CLC position.

Coffee break with Fr. Nicolás was always a special moment for the Secretariat team. He would occasionally join us for an informal chat over a cup of coffee. These were precious moments when we interacted at a completely different level. The café prepared by Van Nguyen had already attained legendary status in the Curia and Fr. Nicolás would savour it with great relish. He would then engage in animated conversations with Franklin and Sofia in Spanish and (in later years) would reminisce with Alwin and Rojean about his days in Manila. His oft repeated remark was that these visits helped keep him in touch with reality.

The year 2013 was an important Jubilee for CLC, marking 450 years of Lay Ignatian Communities. Fr. Nicolás shared with the ExCo a deep insight into the significance of a Jubilee (which is why we remember him as ‘The Jubilee Man’). A Jubilee he said is a time to rejoice in the many blessings received over the years; it is also an occasion to pass on these blessings to others. Gratitude and service - that was his insight into a Jubilee, and that is how he lived out his life. The quintessential Jubilee Man! Adiós querido Padre Nicolás. Vaya con Dios.

From left to right:
- With ExCo in Rome (2012)
- Fr. Nicolás, Luke and Fr. Rotelli with Alwin, Aeraele, Rojean and Van at the World Secretariat in Rome.
- Fr. Luke Rodrigues sj, Bishop John Rodrigues, Fr. Adolfo Nicolás sj and Fr. Savio Rodrigues.

(Original: English)



Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, an assistant who wanted to share our burden

Franklin Ibañez (CLC in Peru)

Executive Secretary of World CLC 2009 - 2014



Franklin Ibanez is a member of CLC in Peru. He is a Professor of Philosophy. He was Executive Secretary of the World CLC from 2009 until 2014. Married to Sofia Montanez, they have two children: Sebastian and Luciana.

The first photo was taken on a short walk in Beirut, in the middle of the General Assembly 2013. I carry Sebastian in my arms; what were we talking about? Curiously, it was about the cooperation between the Society and the CLC, between Jesuits and lay people. “Sometimes it is not easy to cooperate or take on some missions while you are carrying your one-year-old son. Or maybe that is what it is all about, your most important mission is to carry your child.”

I mentioned this and Father Nicolás understood it well. He agreed that it was not always easy to keep this in mind. He said to me: “We Jesuits are in such a hurry to get things done that we sometimes forget each other’s contexts.” That was one of the recurring themes when I met with him in the CLC office in Rome, or that same afternoon in Beirut, in the middle of the General Assembly 2013. How can we cooperate if we have “burdens” or, rather, “gifts” that are so diverse?

That year, Lebanon was home to about one million Syrian refugees: A huge challenge for a country that barely reaches six million inhabitants today (2020). Included among the many refugees who fled the war, there were also members of the CLC. What should we expect from them? Should they have stayed in Syria to

try to maintain some solidarity with those who could not escape? Or was it alright that they would have preferred to find a safe haven with their families? It was a dramatic situation. “What is expected of the laity in such contexts?” I asked myself. “Let us be prophets and wise persons based on our circumstances,” I replied to myself, inspired by the two speeches Father Nicolás gave us at the Assembly of Fatima (2008) and Lebanon (2013).

Those two speeches, on the call to be prophetic communities and on the need to speak and live in the language of wisdom, made a deep impact on the attendees. Those who heard it through third parties or *Progressio* publications were also impacted. They left a deep mark on the world community. Those who read or listened to these speeches were challenged, motivated. How can we be prophets, with the radicality that this implies, while we have an ordinary God-given mission? Caring for our families, work, political life, among others, are places where God wants us and constitute the immediate reality of the laity. Father Nicolás told us that it was precisely there, based on our particular circumstances, where we must live as prophets. And from there recover the wisdom of little things, which the world of technology and the great economic indicators forget.

Sofia and I arrived in Rome in October 2009 to take over the Executive Secretariat. Alberto Brito S.J., Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant that year, surprised us with some exciting news as soon as we saw him: “I have arranged a lunch with Father Nicolás. He is happy to meet you.” We were even more happy. That first personal encounter with Father Nicolás was sufficient to know the greatness of a simple man: Friendly, wise and with a great sense of humour. He held an important position. However, time was given for some simple and deeply significant domestic details.

In 2011 we were considering buying a house that could serve as a stable home for the person

On the other page:
- Fr. Nicolás and Sebastian

- Franklin with Sebastian and Fr. Nicolás

- Fr. Nicolás with the ExCo at the General Assembly in Lebanon.

who, appointed to the office of Executive Secretary, had to move to Rome with his or her family. We shared this idea with him. He was in agreement with the decision: "It is normal for lay people to want to have their own house." On one occasion he appeared at the house by surprise. He did not ring the bell neither did he enter. Days later, he told us that he had gone to see it from the outside. How do you interpret this gesture? As General of the Society and with all his duties, where did he find the time to visit the house the CLC had just bought? It was a very symbolic endorsement of the project and a sign of affection for us. But it was also much more: It was an act in support of the CLC and his desire for it to take root. He was of course the World Ecclesiastical Assistant, but there was an additional sign of affection in this gesture. It was certainly an excellent excuse to invite him to dinner another day.

We talked about many things. He had a broad vision of the world, the Church, the Society and, indeed, the laity. I shared with him many of my frustrations, particularly those related to finding the laity's role in the Church of the 21st century. I would like to remember him as someone who understood the need to give the laity its rightful place. The last photo in the house of the CLC is good proof of the above. He took care of Sebastian for a while as we finished the details related to the dinner. He wanted to share part of the "burden" or, rather, the gift.

*(Original: Spanish
Translated by Clifford Schisler)*



Deep roots allow for unceasing growth

*Father General's homily for the funeral of Fr. Adolfo Nicolás **



The grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies to produce fruit, is the parable of the life of Jesus, nailed to the cross and raised, as a sign of the love that opens the way from death to life anew. It is also the parable of the followers of Jesus, of those who, like Adolfo Nicolás, choose to “hate their life in this world” in order to become his companion, that is, to occupy the same place that Jesus occupied, the redeeming cross as the entry into life. Of those who choose to become another grain of wheat that falls to the ground, dies and bears much fruit.

The grain of wheat fallen into the ground dies to make it possible to take root and be nourished, in order to grow and bear abundant fruit. Nico experienced this process throughout his life. That is why it has been a fruitful life. He fell to earth at different times in his history. He fell into different lands. He always knew how

to die, take root, grow outward and produce much fruit. Putting down roots was the experience that allowed him to acquire that awareness of the need to go deep, to penetrate all dimensions of life. One who is distracted does not take root. One must constantly dedicate oneself to the task of finding the right nutrients for the growth that produces the most rewarding results.

To be rooted in Christ is the first great challenge for those who choose to be planted in the ground where the Lord is. Everything else depends on this trusting abandonment into God's love as the source of life. To be rooted in Christ is to participate in the "inner struggle" that is a basic part of the search for the will of God, in order to find it and make it one's own. Adolfo was able to go through this challenge many times until the end of his life, without sidestepping the difficulties or letting himself be tempted to change course. To be rooted in Christ, it is necessary to become detached from oneself, "to hate one's life in this world" in order to gain true life. This seems impossible to us, but God made it possible in Nico's life.

Whoever has taken root in Christ receives the Spirit that makes him a child of God, free from all slavery, a co-heir with Christ in the passage from death to life. We knew an Adolfo who was free – free with the audacity of those who have lost their fear of following the inspiration of the Spirit. Nourished by the soil of the Lord in which his roots were well planted, Nico advanced steadily in the discernment of the spirits and attained the wisdom of those who are guided by the Holy Spirit.

Through his wise discernment, the Society of Jesus received an abundance of grace to grow in creative fidelity to its original charism, responding to the demands of its contemporary mission. Adolfo made every effort, in the various responsibilities entrusted to him, especially as Superior General, to incarnate in the life

* <https://www.jesuits.global/2020/05/23/deep-roots-allow-for-unceasing-growth/>

and work of the apostolic body of the Society the demands and orientations of the General Congregations that followed the Second Vatican Council. He strove to serve the Church through our way of proceeding. He was always available to accompany his brothers and sisters in religious life in deepening that sense of total consecration to the Lord.

Deep roots allow for unceasing growth and bearing abundant fruit. Nico knew how to make the cries of all humanity his own, building bridges from east to west, and from north to south. Like Jesus, Nico knew how to engage diverse cultures, to learn from them, always giving witness to the Good News. He was well aware of the "failure to which humanity was subjected". He knew first-hand the sufferings of migrants and the excluded, forced to live in the peripheries and at the edges of society. He identified with their desire for justice and reconciliation.

Nico lived with "the hope that humanity would be freed from the slavery of corruption to obtain the glorious freedom of the children of God". We knew him as a person who was alive to a universality that was grounded. He never lost sight of the vastness and complexity of all humanity and was always down-to-earth in participating in the simplicity of ordinary people's lives.

Adolfo was very intelligent. An intelligence that did not lead him to take refuge in abstractions but to penetrate deeply into the concrete life of his fellow human beings, especially the poorest and that of his Jesuit brothers. An intelligence that translated into a capacity for concrete service because it understood each situation, and made room for the inspiration that came from the Spirit.

For a long time to come, we will enjoy the abundant harvest produced by this grain of wheat which, having died to itself, has given so much life in the Spirit. His familiarity with God illuminated all aspects of his life. From this came his welcoming smile for each person or group he met, and his serenity in facing thorny, tricky, or complicated situations without being overwhelmed. May the Lord give us the grace to receive with joy so much fruit produced by Adolfo Nicolás and to know how to savour it so that we too can become disciples and companions of Jesus.

We celebrate this Eucharist in memory of Adolfo Nicolás on the eve of the feast of Our Lady of the Way, the Madonna della Strada. A devotion that has inspired the Society since its beginnings. It reminds us that we are pilgrims, and that we do not walk alone, but rather accompanied by Mary who takes us by the hand, following her son Jesus who opens the way to the Father. We do not know the details of the journey, but we have learned from companions like Adolfo that it is not necessary to have the map, but to trust in the one who opens the way for us and in his Spirit who reminds us what is needed at each moment.

I invite you to turn this encounter around the Word and the table of the Lord into an Ignatian "colloquy", first with Nico, our dear friend in the Lord, so that he may share with us his freedom, his joy, his wisdom, his radical love for Jesus Christ and his Church. Then with Mary of the Way so that she may help us walk more swiftly in the way of her Son and make the most of the opportunities that history opens up for us to show others the way to God.

I also speak with our brother and Lord, Jesus, the Crucified-Risen One, who precedes us in the loving gift of self that brings about reconciliation. With God our Father, acknowledging with gratitude so much good received through Nico and begging him to fill us with his Spirit, to be collaborators in the mission of making all things new.



Lord Jesus,
What weaknesses did you see in us
that made you decide to call us,
in spite of everything,
to collaborate in your mission?
We give you thanks for having called us,
and we beg you not to forget your promise
to be with us to the end of time.
Frequently we are invaded by the feeling
of having worked all night in vain,
forgetting, perhaps, that you are with us.
We ask that you make yourself present
in our lives and in our work, today, tomorrow,
and in the future yet to come.
Fill with your love these lives of ours,
which we put at your service.
Take from our hearts the egoism
of thinking about what is “ours,”
what is “mine”, always excluding,
lacking compassion and joy.
Enlighten our minds and our hearts,
and do not forget to make us smile
when things do not go as we wished.
At the end of the day, of each one of our days,
make us feel more united with you
and better able to perceive and discover
around us greater joy and greater hope.
We ask all this from our reality.
We are weak and sinful men,
but we are your friends.
Amen.

Fr. Adolfo Nicolás SJ





Africa and the adjacent I

To pass from “I” to “we” Ignatians

Organized evangelization of Africa, Madagascar and Mauritius Island began in the 15th and 16th centuries, thanks to the involvement of missionaries coming from Europe. The implantation of CLC here dates from the middle of the 20th century, even though the association from where it originates, the Marian Congregations, active in the Church since 1563, was founded in Madagascar in 1876. It also inspired the creation of our communities in Zambia and Zimbabwe. In our countries¹, the foundation period is still ongoing and dwells principally in meeting the challenge of a coherent choice of the CLC charism. Firstly, through an effective belonging of the members to a specific body of laity in the Church in which “the public commitment of a member is an invitation to rid ourselves of every burden and persevere in the service to the one who has called us into community, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus”²; and then, by promoting a leadership which organizes and operates in view of an apostolic Ignatian fruitfulness, shared in our Church and in our society.

Radically assume one’s membership

There are presently twenty-two national communities. Thirteen of them are officially incorporated; six have observatory status; three are emerging. The members and communities are accompanied by Jesuits and by religious of Ignatian spirituality, founders of the movement here and there. It is important today to better inform and train them on the CLC charism, to enable them to better ren-

der this service. There also seems to be a need to enhance and structure collaboration with the local Provincials of the Society of Jesus as well as the Jesuit Conferences of Africa and Madagascar. To have CLC members accompany others is a prospect that is increasingly envisioned. Only communities in Madagascar, Zimbabwe and Nigeria have a CLC-Youth structure. The others integrate the youth into existing structures and/ or initiate apostolates suitable for them.

The members are almost a thousand. Many among them, the majority, have not yet made their commitment, in line with the anthropological foundation that justifies such a move: “Temporary or Permanent Commitment with the CLC [should be] perceived through the senses”³ For the most part, the feeling that one is a CLC member is based on the following: the person appropriates the Ignatian tools and regularly participates in activities or responsibilities, ad intra and ad extra, without for that matter seeing the need or the

³ CLC Charism, N°169, 2.

⁴ General Principles, N°10.

¹ The communities of Africa are located South of the Sahara. CLC-Egypt is integrated into the Middle East Region.

² CLC Charism, N°198.



Islands in CLC today

*Tómàs Núg (CLC in Cameroon)
Responsible for the Coordinating Team of the Africa Region*

importance of taking a formal commitment, as it is presented during the period of reception⁴. Everything indicates in any case that this generalized abstention disadvantages the stability and the cohesion of the groups. In the local socio-cultural context, a generalized and well-known proverbial wisdom says furthermore that “only the thief hides the path leading to his hut”. This wisdom thus invites man to live with assurance in the place where he has sunk his roots and then to openly reveal it to others with serenity.

It remains that the members of CLC recognised as such in our countries, obviously draw profit from Ignatian spirituality. The individual experience of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola during initial retreats is at the base of the decision which follows to adhere to CLC. Meetings in small local groups, which constitute a favorable framework for apostolic life, promote regular exchanges of views around lived experiences, particularly in the family; but also, at times, in professional life and in Jesuit and Church structures, or in society as a whole.

Common missions are discerned but are still carried out with a certain slowness. Among the unfavorable factors is the exacerbation of the ethnic and clannish identity. This phenomenon is further aggravated by political actors and even by leaders of local churches. In the CLC milieu, this questions, in my opinion, the degree of the appropriation of the grace of purity of intention, enunciated in the Principle and Foundation of the Spiritual Exercises and which we say each time at the beginning of prayer : “to serve and worship his Divine Majesty” (SE, 46). The fruits of an apostolic fraternity are however visible, here and there, thus confirming the faith in one of our fundamental options: “We have encountered Christ in the Gospels and choose to follow him. Our enrichment, not only by our own cultures which provides so much for the uniqueness of each but also by what we receive through the cultures of one another, is one of the profound blessings of our lives.”⁵ For members, it is therefore a question of articulating and harmoniously living, through the use of the discernment tools of the Ignatian spirituality, the integration of the CLC culture within the best of an African humanity, which is also very diverse.

A leadership that is organized and leads towards the Mission

The same challenge of unity or apostolic coherence is valid for national communities. To face up to it and in line with different World Excocs, the perspective of an organisation at continental level was highlighted in 1994, on the outskirts of the General Assembly of Hong Kong where nine communities of Africa were represented. The desire to

⁵ Final Document GA Itaïci-Brasil 1998, Progreso, n° 1,2 3, 4, p. 134



journey together was confirmed and deepened. We have thus moved from the idea of a model of an English-speaking country / French-speaking country structure to that of a creation of three CLC Sub-Regions, with the priority criterion for regrouping national communities then retained being geographical proximity rather than language.

The present coordination structure dates from 2011. It was confirmed in 2016, during the Pan-African Assembly in Kigali and comprises a Coordinator, a person in charge of Formation, someone in charge of Finance, an Ecclesiastical Assistant, and a member of the World Exco appointed to serve as a link with our national communities. Roles have been defined, but the structure scarcely fulfils its mission of facilitation. The reasons are first of all at the level of the Team itself: the resignation, declared or silent, of many elected or appointed members and the lack of a defined procedure for their replacement; more widely still, the lack of a common reference charter for CLC-Africa. Then at the level of national communities: the failure of real collaboration of the national ExcOs as well as “ordinary” members who tend to favour direct contact with the World Secretariat in Rome.

For the moment, the minimal animation of our

Regional Team is too dependent on the sporadic or opportunistic goodwill of the members who are still present as well as that of certain national leaders. The WhatsApp groups set up here and there, publicise priests’ homilies, Vatican documents, messages of condolences in the case of death or congratulations on the occasion of a birthday or wedding anniversary. A project to publish a document that brings together the history of each of our national communities has been initiated.

It is therefore a matter of emphasizing the fact that, concerning leadership at all levels of CLC in our Region, we need fewer people stuck in ordinary administration than charismatic people. That is to say, authentic members who “facilitate the communities’ processes of discerning, sending, supporting, and evaluating our personal and communal mission”⁶. The very precious gift of the General Assembly of Buenos Aires, the dynamic of Communal Apostolic Discernment as “the way to deepen our vocation as a lay Ignatian apostolic body”⁷, has still to be made known and promoted, through continuous training of guides and members. This should incorporate the fact that we live here “a culture shock which strikes at the age-old foundations of social life, and sometimes makes it hard to come to terms with modernity.”⁸ Apart from that an-

On the previous page:
- The African delegates
at the General
Assembly in Buenos
Aires 2018

Below:
- The coordinating team
of the All Africa
Assembly in 2016 with
members of the World
ExCo

⁶ Final Document GA Nairobi-Kenya 2003, Progressio, Supplément n° 58, p.96.

⁷ Final Document GA Buenos-Aires-Argentina 2018 n°20, Progressio, Supplément n° 74, p.129.



thropological crisis our commitment cannot neglect the fact that we are evolving from inside a pyramidal model of Church which still confines the laity to a role which is not at all Ignatian: “Pay, pray and obey”, because of a still tenacious and active clericalism, as much among the clergy as the laity who are sometimes consenting victims.

A very seasoned member from one of our oldest communities spontaneously and recently wrote to me: “We are striving to conform rather than take risks and be really prophetic. Furthermore, the CLC in Africa wants to be

like the CLC elsewhere, particularly in Europe. We should rather be relevant to our very alienated people. If only I can find people with whom we could dare! I believe that there are ways to follow that are profoundly Christian and Ignatian.” Yes, in these original paths of collaboration, which we are still searching, we should and we can, individually or collectively engage in the Mission, hold hands, even without touching each other, as it is the practice during this time of the pandemic.

(Original: French)

Below:
- A moment during the All Africa Assembly in Rwanda 2016
- Visit to Kigali Genocide Memoria

⁸ Benoit XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus*, 2011, n°11.



Graced and Animated Conversations in Asia Pacific

CLC Asia Pacific Animating Team



A graced Asia Pacific Assembly

The CLC Asia Pacific Animating Team: Agnes Shin (Korea), Cosmas Tsao (Taiwan), James O'Brien (Australia), Jeraldine Ching (The Philippines), Gregorius Tjaijadi (Indonesia) with Daphne Ho (Hong Kong - ExCo Link).

Our Asia Pacific Assembly in Korea was an experience of the Holy Spirit with us as a CLC in Asia Pacific region. The previous Animating Team (which Agnes, Greg and Daphne had belonged to) prepared sessions around the theme 'Living Faith in the Crowd'. We experienced the grace of communal discernment together in a very deep way: in large and small groups, through conversation and prayer. We were moved and inspired by the communal discern-

ments CLC in Korea have undergone in their graced history, listening with awe to what was shared of this during the Assembly. We were grateful for the Jesuit EAs who joined us in the Assembly - their presence, wisdom and encouragement represent real gifts for our region.

In reflecting on the Buenos Aires General Assembly experience, the Assembly dreamed about 'moving the tent to the crowd'. We wondered how we might offer the gift of communal discernment and its fruits within our societies and local churches for these times, especially through the frontiers of youth, family, ecology, globalisation and poverty. We were encouraged and propelled to take action.

Animating conversations

Since being elected in October 2019, the Animating Team met via Zoom every 4-6 weeks, while often communicating via Whatsapp message in between. More recently, we have begun to pray, reflect and share our lives in addition to bringing forward initiatives and collaboration. We feel that we are getting close and becoming a true CLC community. This experience is a great blessing, and we are grateful to God for calling us into this community.



Within the Asia Pacific region, we have thirteen national communities: Australia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Macau, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Vietnam. We are blessed with diverse cultures. A great number of languages are spoken throughout our region's various communities, although English is spoken when regional meetings are held.

Early on in our term we divided up our responsibilities for communicating with National Communities. Each animator keeps in contact with representatives of two or three communities. These conversations encourage free communication between each national ExCo and the Animating Team.

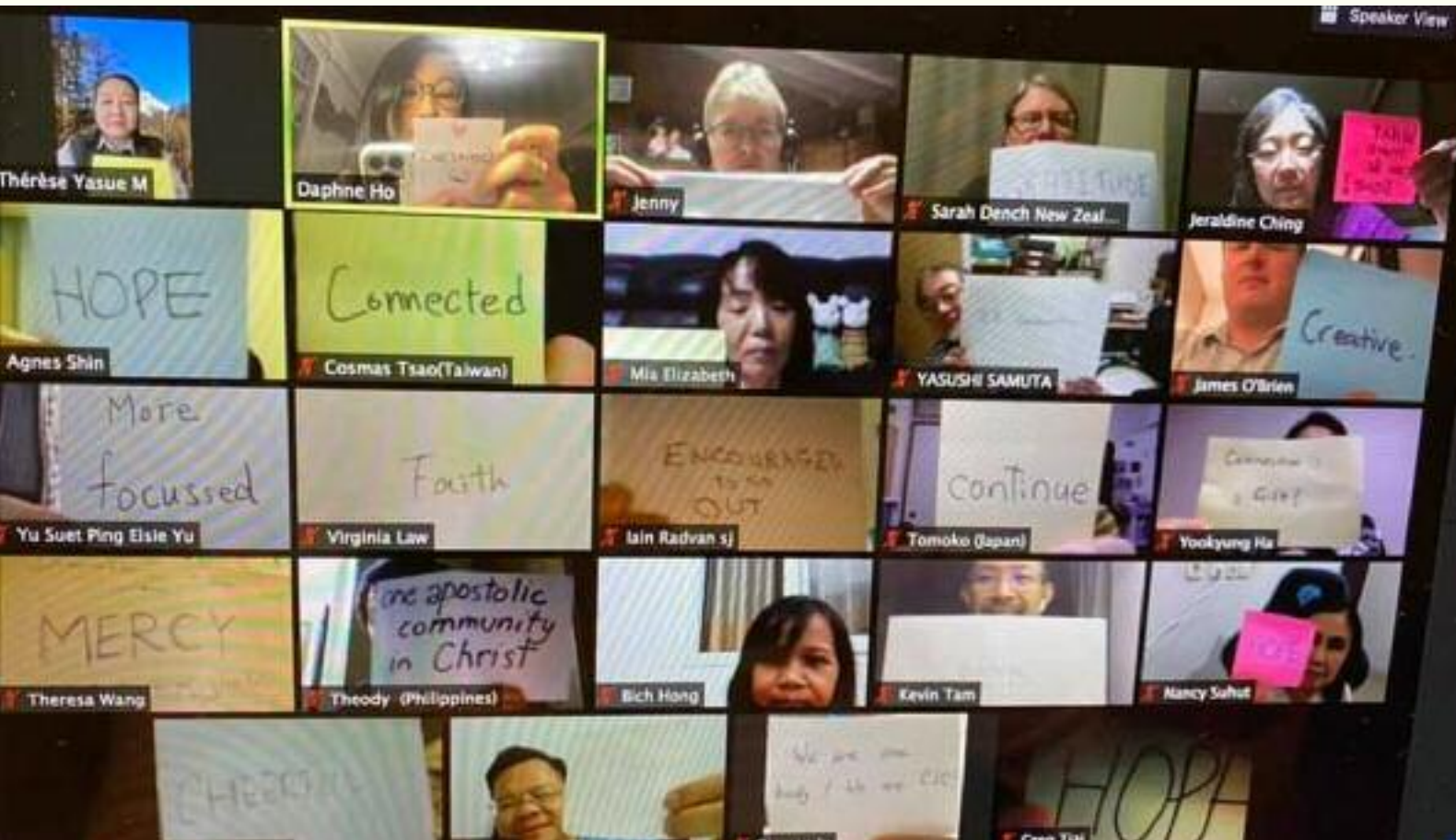
Digital connections: a blessing during a pandemic

During the pandemic we have realised that online experiences of solidarity are very essential to our community. Digital connections, like our 'CLC Asia Pacific Link' Facebook page, have been deepening links within our Asia Pacific region for several years now.

During the pandemic we have held two meetings with the National Communities within our region. Firstly, on April 25 we met with two members of each NC to share experiences of the pandemic. We searched for God's presence in how we were living the experience on the ground in each concrete situation. Each person felt very consoled and lifted up by the experience, and there was a desire to do more together. We prepared a survey for the various NCs to give us insight into what our AP region wishes to do as one.

More recently, on August 8 we met with the AP Links to break open that survey before the AP Links. We decided to hold quarterly meetings for the time being. These could be shared prayer experiences, webinars on CLC Projects and Frontiers, or Asia Pacific community social evenings. We would invite a wide network of CLC members in the region, developing 'collaboration among National Communi-





Above:
- Words expressed during the CLC in Asia Pacific (AP) Zoom meeting last 25 April 2020

ties’ and building ‘channels to support and work with each other’ (Korea AP Assembly 2019 Final Document).

Accompanying young people

We wrestle with the challenge of accompanying young people as CLC communities. At the Korea AP assembly we wondered, how do we form young people in our region? CLC in Asia Pacific prepared an encounter alongside the Asian Youth Day held in Indonesia in 2017. In Korea, we affirmed that encouraging and accompanying young people is a priority for us as a region: ‘we want to enter the door of young people of today and be transformed alongside them in God’s presence. Then we can walk together through the next door rejoicing’ (Korea AP Assembly 2019 Final Document).

Our various national and regional communities have different approaches to planting and growing CLC seeds in young people. For instance, Hong Kong has responsibility for a primary and secondary school, while Korea has the ‘Hope schools’ for disadvantaged youth. CLC in Philippines connects with students in high schools and universities. As a National

Community, they discern paths for youth CLC members to embrace the community as an adult. In contrast, Australian young people may start joining CLC in their early 30s.

At the recent Asia Pacific Assembly, one young member from an emerging community asked an inspiring question: maybe the problem is not ‘why the youth do not have an interest in CLC’ but ‘why does CLC not approach young people?’ We reflected on the ways each young person reveals God’s generosity; they are unique gifts for our communities.

We believe many young people of today hold a deep desire to encounter the God of their lives. In June 2020, one member of CLC in Taiwan was invited to give a retreat for the graduates of local universities. There were very few teachings and homilies in the retreat but rather some spiritual guides and space for sharing. This approach led the graduates to experience their connection with God and God’s gifts. For example, in the first morning, participants were invited to reflect on the graced moments in their university life. When the reflection time ended, participants had noticed that God was always ‘with them’ even in the troubled times. This experience transformed participants’ personal images of God and

planted a deeper desire for more encounters with Him.

The General Principles 30 years on: a call and a challenge

Now that the General Principles are in their 30th year, we recognise their importance now more than ever. The world is constantly changing; however, our community remains rooted in God's love and the vision of the Incarnation (GP 1). These roots nourish our spirituality, community and mission. We have joined the 'loving initiative' that is of God (GP 1). We want to share our CLC gift with others.

Since Buenos Aires, the World Community has strongly affirmed our call to personal and

communal discernment (GP 5). We believe walking the way of communal discernment will enable us to better open ourselves to hear God's call. This will prepare us for the 'creative and concrete collaboration' we are now being called to in 'advancing the reign of God on earth' (GP 6). Will we say 'yes' to God's initiative today?

We are called 'to help and encourage other members ... as friends in the Lord' (GP 12). As an Animating Team, we wish to build such friendship between and among members in our national and regional communities. We want to dream together.

(Original: English)

On page 23:
- AP Assembly 2019 - Daphne Ho and Agnes Shin

- Moments of joy and laughter at the AP assembly.

- Small group sharing - Michael with Cosmas (Taiwan), Robert (India), Virginia (HK)

- AP Assembly 2019 - Conversations on CLC in the modern context

Below:
- AP Assembly 2019 - Cultural Evening - delegates and participants in the immersion



Living Faith in the Crowd

CLC Asia-Pacific Regional Assembly

The Euroteam

Angelika Scholz (Germany), Jean-Benoît Hoet (Belgium W.)
Kasia Artemiuk (Poland), Chris Micallef (Malta)



The CLC Euroteam is the regional co-ordinating team for CLC communities in Europe. The team is elected during a regional assembly usually held during the Pentecost weekend following a General Assembly. The current Euroteam was elected during the last regional assembly held during the Pentecost weekend of 2019 in Vilnius, Lithuania. As the Euroteam, we are:

- Above:
- The election of the Euroteam in Vilnius, Lithuania 2019
- ✓ Angelika Scholz from CLC in Germany and our present co-ordinator;
 - ✓ Jean-Benoît Hoet from CLC in French Belgium;
- Below:
- A relaxing moment
- ✓ Kasia Artemiuk from CLC in Poland;
 - ✓ Chris Micallef from CLC in Malta.

Allow us a few lines to introduce ourselves.

Angelika: I am a member of CLC in Germany. I am single and working as a high school teacher, mainly in teachers' training. I've been in CLC for about 20 years now and I often participated in international events where I really experienced being part of one worldwide, lay community. It was a great gift for me to be elected in the Euroteam and to be called to serve the community. In times when nationalism and populism start rising again, working in the international team is an important symbol of unity and peace in Christ.

Jean-Benoît: for 38 years, I have been a member of CLC in Belgium. I am married to Véronique (also CLC for decades) and together, we have three wonderful boys: Augustin (24), Guillaume (22) and Thomas (20). I am working within the social sector, fighting deep precarity & social exclusion in Brussels, "being inserted among the poor (...)" and embracing serious responsibilities to seek constantly the answers to the needs of our times" (GP1 & GP2).

My Faith has been nourished by numerous CLC sharings across local, regional, national and international communities, always trying



to seek and discover the tracks of Jesus Christ's presence within my daily life. CLC helps me to build a closer relationship with Christ, discern the directions I choose in my own life and serve my brothers and sisters. It is a real gift to be called to serve in the Euroteam, called "to creative and concrete collaboration, readiness to go and serve where the needs of the Church so demands". (GP6)

Within the Euroteam, I am thrilled by our continuous exercise to be, as a team, permeable to the Holy Spirit! (you might notice Him blowing in Vilnius within the picture above – not the one with the Belgian beers)

Kasia: I have been a member of CLC for nine years. My local community is based in Poland. I have also been engaged in the CLC European Migration Network. Professionally, I work in multiple roles such as being an English teacher, education consultant and trainer, as well as an intercultural trainer. Having lived and worked in many places in and outside of Europe, I feel at home among people of different cultures and languages. Hence, I am truly enjoying every step of the journey with the Euroteam, which has been a great gift to me. It is the experience of being one community with all its beauty, diversity and challenges, following the Spirit in stepping out of our comfort zones and creating more space for connectedness.

Chris: I am a member of CLC in Malta. I am married (to Roberta) and I have two young adult girls (Alison and Christina) who have journeyed with me in the past experiences of service and continue to do so in this Euroteam community. This is not my first experience of being sent to serve our community in Europe and beyond and I hope my time on this Euroteam will continue to help us all grow more into being one lay apostolic body. The experience of praying and working with the other members of this Euroteam is really good and I look forward to the rest of the journey ahead of us.

Our task, like other regional teams, is to (i) help the World ExCo with the regional co-ordination and discernment whenever they require such help and to (ii) help the national communities in Europe organise and co-ordinate cross border initiatives. In the case of CLC in Europe these cross border activities can be either for the whole region or loosely based on language. Being close to our brothers

and sisters in the Middle East and also sharing some common languages (French, English and Maltese), we commonly invite members of the Middle East communities to our activities. It has always been very enriching for us to meet and live as one world community by expanding our geographic region to include our regional neighbours.



CLC in Europe

CLC in Europe is made up of 19 full members of the world community and three observer communities in different stages of their journey towards full membership. This means that even though we are geographically a small region we have at least 22 different national languages and 22 different cultures. We are the embodiment of diversity!

In Europe we developed a special role in each national community, that of the Eurolink. The Eurolink is a very important role for us since it means that we have a person in every national community who is sent by the leadership of that community to be a special link with the Euroteam. It facilitates our communication and exposes another person to the world community since this person tends to become a link person to every other Eurolink. So the network of Eurolinks is a freely connecting network that spreads information in a multi dimensional way; they help CLCers in their country to connect to other CLCers in other countries and is another important form of shared responsibility for our world community.

We have a full range of communities, young and emerging; established; dying and resurrecting. We have CLC members as young as 16 years of age and mature well over 80 years of age! We have members who are in high school

and members who carry the history and treasure of our roots in the Marian Congregations. The beauty of CLC in Europe is that we can still “tell the story” of CLC from generation to generation. This story will be a first hand account of the experience. In spite of our diversity in language, culture and age when we meet, we feel that we are one family, one community!

Remaining in contact with the various national communities is quite a challenge. Having 22 different national languages means that in most cases we are communicating in a second and sometimes in a third language. This has its difficulties and limitations. However, we do manage to overcome this most of the time through translations into and from English.

The diversity in culture in Europe is also incredible. There are stark differences in the way we think, the way we act, the way we move forward. This too means that we need to exercise a good amount of “freedom of movement” in our activities otherwise we risk to stereotype ourselves and lose the beauty and creativity of diversity. Unfortunately this also means that it takes us longer to move, making sure that everyone is understanding the process in more or less the same way. It is frustrating sometimes when we need to act as a regional voice in our advocacy and this diversity can slow down momentum especially if there is a time related issue, for example in the case of forced migrants reaching our frontiers. We may need to think of having more focused frontier teams with a certain amount of autonomy to act, similar to the Migration Core Team (MCT) that we have in Europe.



During our last European Assembly 2019, we received the work of the General Assembly in Buenos Aires and started to focus on putting it into the context of our region. We now have a few areas of priority that the Assembly gave us and with which we are planning our work and even acting whenever possible. The two areas of priority are the Youth, and the experience of

one community in all our diversity through concrete situations and creating safe spaces of communal discernment for reconciliation.

Youth

The European Assembly in 2019 was dominated by the topic of Youth. While their physical presence was lacking they were certainly very present during our time together. This was a culmination of work by the previous Euroteam and a sort of “handing over the baton” to the next Euroteam. It was also a time to reconfirm (evaluate) the work done and identify it as still an important priority area. We said that we want to:

- i. **Go forth:** We want to “go where they are”, to be involved in the world where young people live as it is here and now. We want to meet them where they are, in their concrete lives, in their search for God, justice and peace, as well as in the struggles they are facing.
- ii. **Share:** As a worldwide community we want to become a sign of living unity in diversity and peace – people of different nations, mentalities and cultures praying and working as one community for “progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all people” [GP2]
- iii. **Deepen:** We want to offer young people the gift of authenticity in living our identity and spirituality.

Concretely we were planning our European youth formation week for 2021 when we heard that CLC in Spain was also organising a large Ignatian youth gathering in the month of July 2021. So as not to cause confusion we put our ideas aside and decided to support CLC in Spain and focus our joint efforts on this one event in Loyola, Spain to mark the 500 years from St. Ignatius’ conversion.

Creating Concrete Experiences of One Community

Another “voice” that emerged from the European Assembly was the need to create safe sharing spaces for our members to experience the one world community that is CLC. The Assembly was aware that we are very diverse lin-

guistically, culturally and even ideologically. But Europe urgently needs to heal from the divisions and walls that have been so easily erected over the past few decades. The Assembly said:

- Our community feels called to “work for justice through a preferential option for the poor” (GP 4). This work can be experienced through our joint engagement in concrete situations and frontiers (e.g. social justice, migration, ecology, youth, family)

The Euroteam wants to support the development and work of the existing European Migration Network. Furthermore, we would like to encourage our members to set up new networks and working groups at the European level, especially on the topics of integral ecology and family. In agreement with the World-Exco, the Euroteam also would like to encourage the NCs to get in touch with Magis in order to initiate our cooperation with the existing Ignatian networks for young people.

- According to GP 6, we feel called “to go and serve where the needs of the Church so demand.” As expressed in the final docu-

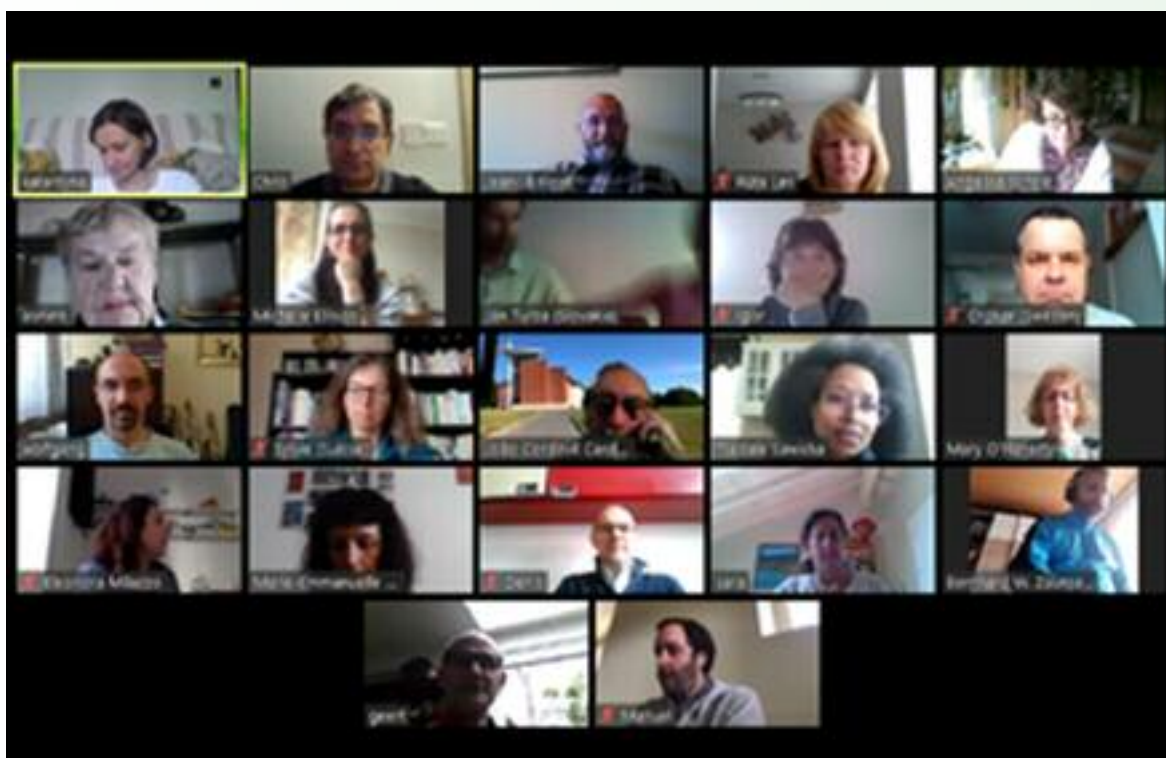
ment of the General Assembly 2018, discernment is one of the most important gifts of Ignatian spirituality that “can be shared with the Church and become a tool of wisdom for action in the world” (Final document Buenos Aires 14). So CLC in Europe wants to serve the Church and the world by creating spaces of communal discernment for reconciliation.

The Euroteam wants to encourage and invite all members to share best practices and design new Ignatian tools which can be replicable and useful in concrete situations, especially when we face challenges at our frontiers.

Conclusion

The General Principles of CLC remain an important guide and catalyst to our work and service. They remain a reference point in our discernment both individually and as a community. They inspire our journey towards becoming a lay apostolic body in the Church and in our diverse societies. They invite us to remain ever grounded in our lay expression of Ignatian spirituality in all we do.

(Original: English)



- The regional meeting on Zoom

CLC: Touring presence in Latin America

Daniel Moya (Cuba), Flor Alicia Moncaleano (Colombia), Celso Schiavo (Brasil)



For the CLC touring Latin America, as a result of Fatima 2008¹, it turned out that, like the Virgin, we received a challenging new call which would see us working together with shared responsibilities, aiming to promote a sense of united community, using the strength of the compatibility of our culture, language and outlook, to build ONE world community². Since then the national executive councils in our region have started to integrate and collaborate to form a coordinated regional body called CENAL³.

In 2017, the year of the Golden Jubilee, which saw celebrations around our world community, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the first General Principles and the foundation of the CLC, Lima Peru held the Latin American Encounter,

where attendees gladly recognised and adopted the path of the CENAL and expressed the will to consolidate the regional organisation in order to strengthen our identity, share our resources and better define our mission.

Planning ahead for the next encounter in Lima, we came up with the possibility of coming together in Cuba; and the General Assembly in 2008 in Buenos Aires, thanks to the Holy Spirit, supported the idea that we should mobilise our sights, our hearts and our wills towards the national CLC meeting in Cuba. This support acknowledged Cuba's rich history and tradition, along with its people's perseverance and commitment. The community in Cuba is a vulnerable community, living in isolation due to the economic and political restrictions. Circumstances have restricted the members from participating in live and virtual encounters which have been organised by our apostolic body. The richness of our involvement with the Latin community that we experienced in Buenos Aires reaffirmed not only the encounter in Cuba to be held in August 2019 but also contributed a criterion to take into account for our future callings.

The fruits from our Latin American Meeting were: the definition of our new line of action

¹ CLC World Assembly. Fatima, Portugal. 2008

² Operational procedures documents CENAL.

³ Operational procedures documents CENAL



for the next five years; the election of a new regional team coordinator; the approval of the operational procedures of their role; and the profound imprint of a life shared in service, joy and unity.

Flor Alicia Moncaleano Sánchez of the Kairós community in Colombia, Antonio Celso Schiavo of the Pilgrim community in Brazil and Daniel Alberto Moya Herrera of the Reasons for Hope community in Cuba, have been selected as the team for coordination in Latin America to be at the service of the regional community from 2019 to 2024. After our first year of service we recognise our main challenges as being: to enhance the gift of our identity so it can guide our lives and our discipleship to collaborate efficiently and enable the CLC to use the gift of our calling to help our own conversion, that of the church and the world.

Latin America is a region of great richness with an abundance of gifts that manifest in its history and people, with their cultural diversity, their geographic variety and their faith. This contrasts with a long struggle dominated by oppression, social and economic inequalities, narco-trafficking, high rates of violence, discrimination against indigenous populations and women, the alarming migration rates, corruption, and unemployment. This context presents us with great challenges.

This beloved region is a mission land. It is a place of journey for our existing national communities, 17 of which are recognised and one more which has declared its intention to be incorporated into the world community. In Cuba, with the experience of encountering Jesus among us through revelation, we identified

five challenges⁴: a) recover the value of policies that build on the common good, b) promote integral and sustainable development in our people and countries, c) welcome and accompany our migrant brothers, d) advance the recognition of people's dignity in our society and in our church, and e) strengthen the national CLC communities and promote collaboration amongst them.

An additional challenge in this region is the "Amazonia". The Pan-Amazonian synod is giving us challenges beyond the environmental, economic, political and cultural. The CLC is calling us to fix its gaze, interest and actions in response to the deeply felt needs of its people and territory.

We acknowledge the difficulties: the resistance of the old ways and the chaos of the trends that are diluting us or absorbing us in a manner that disables us from pausing to reflect, express ourselves and to THINK DEEPLY.

On the other hand we are taking advantage of the abundance of the new wine, finding pleasure in a new way of doing things as part of our grace, accepting and SHARING the news of Jesus' gospel: the way, the truth and the life of all of us, a part of each reality that propels us to MOVE FORWARD.

Our experience in Buenos Aires, and the result of our work there, is still pushing us forward to share with our regional community the profundity of what we lived, the information of our general principles and the norms that define the identity of our shared mission, our communion with the Church, and the transcen-

On the other page:
- Flor Alicia Moncaleano (Colombia)

- Daniel Moya (Cuba)
- Celso Schiavo (Brasil)

- CENAL meeting, Lima 2017

On this page:
- CENAL meeting, Lima 2017

- New coordinating team together with the previous one. (Cuba 2019)

⁴ Final document of the CENAL encounter in Cuba, 2019.





dence that we recognise in the scheme which proposes three stages - Deepen, Share and Move forward - in a way that allows us to enjoy and embrace this journey with the encouragement of the Holy Spirit and our own charism. This, in conjunction with the continuous practice of communal discernment, has been the focus of the work to ground the results of the regional general assembly.

We are happy for our harvest in the region. We gladly embrace the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the MAGIS, the outcomes of the DDPCS⁵ CLC and the first educational course for Youth frontier. Our mission focuses on Youth - seeing them as members of our community and as repositories of a unique gift which has been conferred upon them by the Lord. They are both a source of grace and

apostolic restlessness in our region. Our communities are blessed by the presence of many youth who challenge us by demanding us to be better and happier witnesses, to live in a way which heartens them and shows them the possibilities on the horizon, demanding realisation in our lay vocation, in our own lives, and in the apostolic dynamics of our communities.

We thank the Lord for the CLC, his gift in Latin America, for choosing us to be at the service of the regional coordination and for those who preceded us in this mission. Grant us the ability to receive your voice with humility and to become instruments of your love and grace for the entire community, the Church and the world.

*(Original: Spanish
Translated by Sarah Walker)*

Above:

- Sending ceremony of the new coordinating team during the CLC in Latin America Assembly in Cuba 2019.

Below:

- CENAL meeting in Cuba 2019

⁵ Diploma in Political Dimension of Social Commitment



CLC in the Middle East

*Inji Fayez, Abed Alrayss,
Roger Haddad, Dany Younes SJ,
Ghassan Sahoui SJ, Najat Sayegh.*

“Our Community is made up of Christians: men and women, adults and youth, of all social conditions who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with him for the building of the Kingdom, who have recognized Christian Life Community as their particular vocation within the Church.” GP 4

Like all CLCs, the above is the essence of CLC in the Middle East.

To get closer to reality, the regional Middle East Team (MET) had three meetings. This was the main blessing of writing this article. We shared our current situation, reality, dreams, frustrations and misfortunes. During this process, the August 2020 Beirut explosion took place, which made our last meeting a heartfelt precious time of sharing and support. MET consists of National Community Coordinators and Ecclesiastical Assistants from three countries: Egypt, Lebanon and Syria. Although Egypt is in Africa, Lebanon and Syria in Asia, we follow the regional provinces of the Jesuits. The Jesuit Province includes other countries, such as Morocco, Algeria, Palestine, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq, but there are no CLC national Communities there.

The three countries altogether comprise between 300 to 400 CLC members, which represents a very small percentage of Christians who are about 13 million in the three countries. Our members belong to various churches (Catholic, Orthodox and Evangelical) with various rites diversity (Maronite, Syriac, Armenian, Coptic and Roman ...) which is part of the larger diversity of religions (mainly Christianity and Islam), where Christians represent the religious minority. This surely creates opportunities for openness and coexistence but also for tensions.

One of the important characteristics of our Middle East CLCs is that we all speak Arabic and share this large cultural heritage. Globally, the region is experiencing the birth of a society, longing for dignity and freedom, through revolutions and uprisings in the three countries, migration and especially among Christians, and unstable economic and political circumstances. Yet, the reality of each country is different: war

and after war crisis in Syria, violent economic crisis in Lebanon, which increased frighteningly after the Beirut explosion ...

We meet as MET once a year in one of the three countries. Each country undertakes coordination in rotation for three years. CLC in Syria is currently the coordinator. In most cases, we find it difficult to meet due to travel costs burden on our national communities, but the COVID19 pandemic opened new opportunities to meet via Internet regularly and share formation efforts. We also translate documents of the World ExCo to Arabic and most importantly we exchange experiences, documents and formation ideas.

Below:

- Fun day in Lebanon
- Spiritual exercises for university students in Syria



Buenos Aires' core experience was one of communal and personal discernment.

Inspired by this encounter, CLC in Egypt devoted a year for communal discernment, about our apostolic vocation, following the discernment process of Buenos Aires. One of the fruits of this discernment is the confirmation of our call to work on the production of "Pray As You Go" App, in Arabic, in collaboration with the Jesuits in the Middle East. The app was launched in February 2020.

In CLC in Lebanon, local communities experience discernment through DSSE (Discern, Send, Support, Evaluate). CLC in Syria was not able to participate in the general assembly due to entry visa issues, but they shared a message that all participants in the assembly read and interacted with. CLCers in Syria felt solidarity, communal support and sympathy.

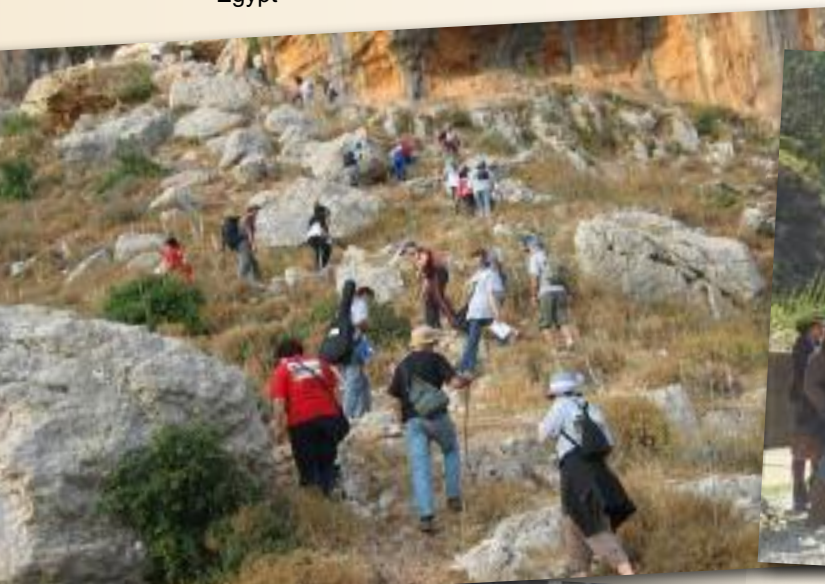
The CLC in the Middle East is facing difficulties in integrating the youth. We may experience some progress, but we need a lot of work to build bridges of communication. Young people are interested in communal life and have a firm desire to participate and create a

framework for mission, which requires an adequate response to their own missionary initiatives without hindrance. We feel that what might attract young people to CLC is their thirst for spiritual growth, through introductory spiritual activities aiming to identify and listen to inner feelings and to experience methods of meditation and prayer. This is what the national communities are doing: in Syria through spiritual gatherings for university students; in Egypt, through short retreats and discernment workshops with the Eucharistic Movement for Youth (MEJ); and in Lebanon through the experience of the pilgrimage, which is a spiritual hike in nature to find God through it and in it.

For youth candidates, CLC in Egypt organizes formation meetings for them; CLC in Lebanon considers reviewing their Pre-CLC program to make it more flexible and compatible with the reality of youth; and CLC in Syria sees necessary to benefit from the university spiritual gatherings experience by creating similar activities that achieve the same goals and pave the way for youth to join CLC.

In spite of the attempts to construct the aforementioned bridges with youth, the generation

- Below clockwise:
- Pilgrimage in nature, Lebanon
- Formation Day - Lebanon
- Christmas mission with Muslim children, Syria
- Trip in May 2019, Egypt



gap, a CLC image of stagnation and routine, ... still represent an obstacle for youth, and the biggest challenge for them is to find themselves in a community that does not speak their language and appears locked in spiritual jargon or concepts.

We also sensed the need for young people to see in CLC members a role model of faith in action. Hence, the importance of getting close to young people to get to know them and live their reality through enculturation to better communicate with them.

To improve the experience of young people when they join our communities, we agreed to implement the following recommendations:

- ◆ Choosing guides talented in accompanying youth and understanding their specificity.
- ◆ Creating innovative and attractive encounters for young people through various formation sessions in cooperation with the Jesuits and based on our charism, especially the unity of faith and life.
- ◆ Creating platforms that help young people grow spiritually through prayer sessions, short simple spiritual exercises and a special formation to seeking God's will in our lives and finding God in all things.
- ◆ CLC in the Middle East needs also to work to be a community with a more apostolic visibility in its actions, its life and its mission, and not only in its words.

On the 30th anniversary of promulgation of the the current General Principles, we reviewed our vision of the principles and the challenges they may pose for the future. We find the GP a rich text that represents our iden-

tity as CLC and our way of life, starting from contemplation of the Incarnation to being active in the heart of the world. But its current wording, in our Arabic version at least, may seem heavy and difficult to understand for new generations, who are more familiar with shorter simple sentences; thus the search for easier formulations to present the GPs to them; with an introduction to Ignatian spirituality and tools.

On the other hand, we find it very difficult in our region to encourage members to make temporary or permanent commitments, while we are aware of their importance to build the community. We also noted the need to strengthen our relationship with the Jesuits and to live an apostolic partnership that can fire up a desire for further cooperation and mutual support.

In between our meetings to prepare for this article, the Beirut explosion occurred, which killed hundreds, injured thousands, and demolished hundreds of thousands of homes. A painful event symbolizing the actuality of the ever-volcanic Middle East region, which put under question our positive contribution as CLC communities in our complex political life.

Finally, the reality of our communities in the Middle East reflects the reality of our churches, swinging between our survival instinct dominated by apprehension and our apostolic vocation to be like the yeast in the dough, serving the more universal and urgent good and go where others do not go; putting on "faith and love for a breastplate, and the hope of salvation for a helmet."(1Thess 5:8).

Below:
- National Assembly in
Egypt, Summer 2019

(Original: English)



CVX-CLC North American Team

*Michelle Mahoney (Canada), Ann Marie Brennan (USA), Barb Rudolph (USA)
Ed Plocha (USA), Carol Gonzalez (USA), Frank Vuong (USA)
Dominique Cyr (Canada), Charthur Gonzalez (Mexico), Nadia Gbaguidi (Haiti)*

CLC members in North America have had a history of relating across borders for over 40 years, more often in an informal way. Through friendships, there have been collective retreats, attendance at one another's national assemblies and formation workshops, development of formation resources, meetings with our CLC working group at the UN in NYC, and informal gatherings with small groups across the borders. There have also been some strong connections with cultural groups—Vietnamese and Korean—living in Canada and the USA who have shared formation resources, gatherings, and retreats in their native languages. In 2005, there was a joint

North American Regional Meeting: Formation for Mission in North America entitled *The Gift of Water as a Focus for Personal and Corporate Action*; this meeting also included members from CVX Mexico. After the World Assembly in Fatima in 2008, the leadership of the three national communities of Canada (English-speaking and French-speaking) and USA teleconferenced for a couple of years.

The current model of the North American team began in 2014 with the encouragement of the World ExCo which was more actively promoting relationships among national



communities within a continental region. As the World ExCo link to North America, Ann Marie Brennan was asked to revive the teleconferences among the four national communities in Canada (English-speaking and French-speaking), Mexico and USA. The leadership of each national community was invited to identify up to five members from their respective communities to participate on these calls. The role of the link has been to foster conversations and to cultivate areas of common apostolic ministry within the region as well as to support communications with the World ExCo. Proposed agenda items have included: benefits of regional relationship, building on common areas of interest and mission especially on the four Frontier priorities, exchanging resources, discussing feasibility of a regional gathering and regular videoconferencing. Our online meetings began in November 2014 and continued monthly for a couple of years and are

now quarterly. The NA regional team expanded in 2017 to include CVX in Puerto Rico, and then CVX in Haiti in 2018.

The conversations have been lively exchanges on topics related to formation, communications, and mission. Highlights in the last few years include:

Sharing of Formation resources: Magis Formation program in Mexico, Young Adult online program in USA, Formation program in Canada

Sharing of national communications including CLC Harvest Magazine, CLC Canada newsletter

Immersion Experience in New Mexico in October 2015. An international delegation from Canada, Mexico and USA attended a mission trip to the Lord's Ranch CLC in



New Mexico, visiting their mission centers in El Paso, TX and Juarez, Mexico, as well as gathering together for liturgies, evening reflections, meals, music, and singing.

Shared Mission. CLC in Central Region Canada and CVX in Canada discerned a joint mission in Haiti and Dominican Republic and have organized many insertion trips to that end and now are supporting Haiti through the Raspberry Pi project, providing computers and training for Ignatian Leaders in Haiti CVX. In 2016, Canada CVX and CLC discerned to support Haiti in their desire for full membership into World CLC. This was in response to a request from World CVX/CLC They have offered formation programs, retreats, and the Spiritual Exercises in CVX Haiti in this God-parenting role. Later, in 2016, members of the NA team collaborated to provide support for the Charabatis, a CLC family who had to flee Syria due to the war and relocate to Canada after an interim stay in Lebanon; this was a graced blessing for the team. In 2017, the devastation in Puerto Rico due to Hurricane Maria opened up communication and outreach between CLC in Puerto Rico and in USA, including Christmas gift boxes of needed supplies for families that have lost their homes.

Communal Discernment. In 2017, the NA team engaged in a communal discernment process on whether to offer to be co-hosts of the World CLC Assembly. While a challenging process due to strongly differing perspectives, the group still found it to be a graced experience, one of courage in attempting such a bold, large-scale discernment and also an experience of surrender in the realization that this was not the time.

Below:
- North America
Regional meeting in
Zoom



Learnings from one another:

- Richness in the Spiritual Exercises. It continues to be helpful to hear how communities find much richness in the Spiritual Exercises, deepening their knowledge and appropriating the practices of spiritual conversations and discernment. CVX in Canada has made this a primary focus over the last year.
- Finding God’s Love in the midst of Challenges. We share common problems such as climate change, injustices toward Indigenous peoples and Mother Earth, political divisions, and attracting young people to CLC. Yet, it is amazing and uplifting to see God’s steadfast love and the courage and commitment to humanity in the faces of one another, in our listening, desiring and working toward a better world.
- Sharing and Inspiring. In the sharing of ministries, initiatives, resources, prayer, and spiritual conversations, we inspire one another and learn of new ideas to try locally. We are also finding ways to join each other’s liturgies and Assemblies online.
- Unity in Diversity. We represent communities over a very large geographic area—over 8.4M mi² or 21.7M km²—with diverse weather/climate challenges, many different cultures and languages, and also varying economic resources in different countries. Still, we come together as sisters and brothers in one community interested in deepening our Ignatian spirituality and our sense of mission.
- Connection to World CLC: Our conversations have raised awareness of the leadership and information disseminated from World CLC and the increased opportunity to share concerns and issues with our World CLC. The group very much enjoyed connecting with other CLC members worldwide on the Zoom call during the pandemic to share experiences and pray with one another.

Recognizing the challenges to build on our graced experiences and to more effectively work together as a regional community, the team shares a strong desire to gather together, to pray and reflect with one another, and to be of service together in areas of great need.

(Original: English)

Happy 75th Anniversary to the United Nations!

Ann Marie Brennan & Mary Ann Cassidy

This year, October 2020, the United Nations celebrates its 75th Anniversary! #UN75

At the end of World War II, many countries worldwide believed that there needed to be a better way to resolve disagreements rather than resorting to war and violence. To that end, leaders from around the world developed a courageous vision to bring countries together to address and solve problems peacefully, united in a common vision of peace: The United Nations! The UN Charter was signed and ratified by 50 countries in San Francisco, USA on June 16, 1945. It was an historic day, a sign of shared responsibility to the conscience of the world, to avoid a third world war and to commit to work together for peace and the common good.

The concepts of solidarity and unity are integral to the values of Christian Life Community. Our General Principles, which guide and motivate our CLC way of life, inspired the original idea and rationale for CLC to participate in the United Nations. In GP #1 we read, “Jesus invites all of us to give of ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity within the human family.” In GP #2, “the spirit of the Gospel and the interior law of love... which the Spirit inscribes in our hearts... challenges us 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.” In 1975, CLC received status as a non-governmental organization at the UN

Over the years, the United Nations has grown; it now reaches every corner of the globe. Calling to mind the Ignatian meditation of Three Divine Persons, contemplating the Earth and the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions, the UN has a unique global vantage point. It acts as a central place to convey world problems, and there are many! Today, the pressing challenges include the climate crisis, pandemics, inequalities, new forms of violence, and rapid changes in technology.

UN Sets Sustainable Development Goals! To help organize and prioritize issues needing attention, the UN established the “Sustainable Development Goals” or SDGs as part of an Agenda of goals to be achieved by 2030. Similar to the Millennium Development Goals established in 2000, the SDGs are ideals which we can work toward. There are 17 SDGs!

Our CLC Working Group at the UN in New York City. The Sustainable Development Goals help to guide the focus of our CLC working group at the UN in NYC. Currently we are a team of five with Joan Woods, Ann Marie Brennan, Marie Schimelfening, Nicholas Kim, and Mary Ann Cassidy who recently joined as secretary. As our main representative at the UN, Joan Woods works with a network of religious and secular groups in the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) community. Areas of her participation include Women and Families, Migration, Climate Change, Indigenous, and the Amazon. Joan shares her learnings with the rest of our team who in turn help share relevant information and action items with our world CLC community through communications via World ExCo, Facebook, etc. Ann Marie is the link between the working group and World CLC (EXCO). Marie serves as a consultant offering historical perspective of CLC engagement at the UN. Nicholas Kim uses his professional background in coastal oceanography which is rele-

Ann Marie Brennan is currently the Vice President of World Executive Council of CLC. She has been part of the World ExCo since 2013 (as a Consultant 2013-2018; Vice President 2018-present) She has been a member of the CLC working group at the UN since 2003. She and her husband Patrick are members of St. Catharine CLC group located in New Jersey, USA; they have four children.

Mary Ann Cassidy is Chairperson of CLC Metro Council in the New York Region of the USA. She recently joined the CLC working group at the UN as Secretary. She has been a member of local CLCs in both Northern New Jersey and Westchester, New York. She now lives in New York and has five grown children and many beautiful grandchildren.

- Ignatian Delegation outside UN 2019





vant for Sustainable Goal #14 on use of water and life in the oceans.

The CLC team strives for “creative and concrete collaboration for the work of advancing the reign of God on earth.” (GP#6), and networking at the UN has been affirmed at world assemblies in both Fatima and Lebanon. We helped to coordinate a wonderful, weeklong gathering in July 2019 with Jesuit and Ignatian ministries for the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to look at several SDG goals in greater depth. Ministries represented included EcoJesuit, Fe Y Alegria, Jesuit Refugee Service, Loyola Chicago University as well as the Jesuit Social Ministries Offices in the USA. The group also met with Archbishop Auza, who has represented the Vatican at the United Nations since 2014. We had enthusiastic discussions on the connections between the encyclical Laudato Si, the Apostolic Preferences and the SDGs. Even Fr. General Arturo Sosa made a video for our side event!

Building upon this positive experience of Ignatian networking and collaboration, the team spent a good bit of time and effort last winter 2020 connecting with Fordham University and Jesuit Social Ministries offices to host several side events for the Indigenous Peoples Forum in April 2020. We were working with REPAM (Pan-Amazonia Ecclesial Network), including former World CLC President Mauricio Lopez and Cardinal Baretto as well as the NGO Mining Working Group and one of their sub-committees on the Amazon. Unfortunately, once the pandemic struck, these events had to be cancelled. Thinking creatively, we co-hosted a webinar on

Earth Day with Jesuit parish Saint Francis Xavier on the Amazon, which featured Mauricio Lopez and his experience at the Synod on the Amazon. We also highlighted this year being the 5th Anniversary of Pope Francis’ encyclical Laudato Si’ Care for our Common Home.

Solidarity and Unity Needed! We in CLC can see the enormous need for unity in our world, to see beyond our own walls, to see our interconnectedness and how our actions impact others, to envision together how we can collaborate to make the world a more sustainable and inclusive economy and society. In June 2020, UN Secretary General António Guterres said, “We live in a moment in which we face enormous challenges... from climate to pandemics to nuclear proliferation to the lawlessness in the cyberspace... what needs to unite us must be more important than what divides us.” In September Pope Francis’ made an important statement to the UN on the occasion of its 75th anniversary saying that we must choose “a renewed sense of global co-responsibility, a solidarity grounded in justice and the attainment of peace and unity within the human family, which is God’s plan for our world.”

Participate in a Global Conversation! To mark the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the UN on October 24, 2020, also known as UN Day, Secretary-General Guterres has announced that this year’s commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations will feature a large and inclusive global conversation on the role of global cooperation in building the future we want. You, too, can share your voice with the UN! Consider and respond to this survey: <https://un75.online/>

Happy 75th Anniversary United Nations!

(Original: English)

- Logo with Sustainable Development Goals
Below:
- Ignatian Delegation with Archbishop Bernardito Auza (permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations)



30 Years of the General Principles

José Reyes
CLC La Barca, Osorno, Chile

1. Thankful Memories

I remember that 3rd December 1990 when we were travelling from Borgo Santo Spirito to Palazzo San Calisto in Trastevere, the venue for the Roman Dicastery. The group included Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ (Ecclesiastical Assistant), Josefina Errázuriz (who served as Acting World CLC President while our President Brendan Mac Loughlin was sick), Tim Quinlan SJ, (Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant), Juan Ochagavía SJ (Assistant of the Superior General), and myself (Secretary of the World Executive). The people who awaited us were Siervo de Dios Cardenal Eduardo Pironio and Bishop Joseph Cordes (President and Vice-president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity) and his assistants, Msgr. Peter Coghlan and Sr. Guzmán Carriquiry.

We had already got to know each other well through a long and intense process that we had just emerged from. The revision of the General Principles started officially in 1982 as a result of a dynamic action from the World Assembly in Providence to generate a united Ignatian Lay community, dedicated to the service of one world, enlightened by the vision of the Vatican Council II and its subsequent theological developments, both pastoral and legal.

From 1982 onwards, the World Community operated through an ad hoc commission to revise the General Principles. This commission came from the Providence Assembly and was led by the tireless and devout Father Nick Rieinan, SJ (USA). It put together suggestions received from around the world in different languages, originating from national assemblies or from individuals, in formal letters or working documents or even on loose pieces of paper, with ideas or petitions. The ad hoc commission was given the task of processing these contributions and then reporting back to the World ExCo. This method enabled new proposals to be generated in a more structured

way, in the form of more formal amendments to the existing text. Those proposals were then re-circulated to the contributing communities.

By the beginning of 1989, the commission had compiled all the submission material for the World ExCo. There, the World Secretariat drafted a suggested text and an alternative text to share around the communities in preparation for the Assembly in Guadalajara in 1990. The Assembly went through everything, article by article, praying, analysing and challenging material throughout this experience. Finally, the text as we know it now was approved with an almost unanimous decision.

The CLC, invigorated by the Holy Spirit, is therefore the author of a text which contains its very identity, its covenant with the Church, and its dream or vision. The Holy See also stood alongside this community process through its Pontifical Council for the Laity whose names are recorded above. The Society of Jesus did the same through their many Jesuits that participated or actively guided the processes of the CLC. We can highlight their theological contribution (principally that of Fr. Ochagavía) and legal contribution (principally that of Fr. Gianfranco Ghirlanda) and the never-ending support of Fr. Kolvenbach.

So this group of 3rd Dec 1990, which experienced the solemn but emotive ceremony of Canonical Approval, was a representation of the whole ecclesiastical process, celebrating a “joyful communion with everything that has preceded us, represented by the Saint of that day Francisco Javier.” Cardenal Pironio was the person who signed and gave us the Papal Decree of approval which I thoroughly recommend reading¹ because it is a text which links



José Reyes

José Reyes, 63 years old, is married to Cecilia. They have four children and nine grandchildren. Currently retired, he used to be a Mathematics teacher and Director of schools. He is a CLC member since his adolescence. He had been the Executive Secretary of the World CLC (1986 to 1992) and was part of the Executive Council of the World CLC as Vice President (2003 to 2008).

¹ Pontificium Consilium Pro Laicis, Decree 1620/90 / AIC-50, in PROGRESSIO, supplement No. 36, January 1991, pg.

important aspects - ecclesiastical, legal, communal, spiritual, relational and historical.

2. Great Inspiring Themes



The first nine principles contain the great agreements that are explored in more detail throughout the text. In the afterglow of Guadalajara 90 and the Canonical Approval, the ExCo commissioned an international reflection group to write a commentary about each of the nine principles.² The contribution of this group can be of great help to those who wish to gain a greater understanding of the nine major themes - whose brief summary is presented below.



Number 1 is a moving opening and provides a great synthesis. Here, an Ignatian view places us in front of the Holy Trinity as our inspiration and guide, recognising and accepting our fragility and our sins. Number 2 defines the spiritual and behavioural tone for the reading and sets a guideline to what is to follow, highlighting the importance of the Holy Spirit and the eternal Law of Love that inscribes itself in our hearts, drives away any temptation of judgementalism, and fills us with respect for the diversity of time, places and people. Number 3 places us in the ecclesiastical communion of the Ignatian tradition, recognising the history and the eternal grace of God within it, establishing a status of discernment, allowing us to face, analyse and assimilate all of the richness beyond the present

moment. These first three themes are part of the introduction.



The main protagonists of this memorable event
From top to bottom:
- HE Eduardo Francisco Card. Pironio
- Fr. Juan Ochagavia SJ
- Fr. Nick Rieman SJ

Beside from left to right, in the front row: José Reyes, Brendan MacLoughlin, P. P.H. Kolvenbach SJ, P. Tim Quinlan SJ and Josefina Errázuriz. In the back: P. J. Ochagavia SJ, Marie Schimelfening, Anthony Martyris, Tasinda Pagu, Eadaoin Hui, Juan A. Cordoba & Jack Milan



² International Reflection Team: "Deepening our understanding of the General Principles", PROGRESSIO, supplement n. 38-39, September 1992.

¹ Reyes, Jose: *Antropología y Cristología en los Principios Generales*, in PROGRESSIO, 62, p. 45 – 63.

The following 6 themes, which compose Part One of the General Principles, aim to inspire us further on our journey:

- ♦ Grounding our concept of spirituality and focussing on the mission mandated by Christ (GP4).
- ♦ Using the experience and life dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises as our main resource and the specific tool that distinguishes us (GP5).
- ♦ Using our sense of belonging, as a member of the Church, to accommodate the changing times and new needs (GP6).
- ♦ The importance of living and nourishing community links or networks at different levels, uniting through love and action (PG7).
- ♦ the orientation and calling for our apostolic life, each of us participating in the Mission of Christ in different ways (PG8), and
- ♦ the rich inspiration that we find in the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, to fulfil our vocation and mission (PG9).

These 9 structural themes in the General Principles set our vision and mission, and express our ecclesiastical identity. There are many sub-themes, many guidelines, and many reflections which are drawn from this age but which are accompanied by receptivity to what is universal and permanent. In that respect I urge you to read the article which I wrote several years ago in which I tried to cover in more detail this richness around our calling as a community.

(Original: Spanish
Translated by Sarah Walker)

Step by Step

Ingeborg Von Grafenstein
CLC in Germany

When in 1967 the 150 delegates from 38 countries decided to replace the century-old “Rules” for Marian Congregations with new “General Principles and Norms” and to adopt the name of “Christian Life Communities” and when three years later this basic document was confirmed by the World Assembly in Santo Domingo and finally approved by the Holy See in 1971, a tremendous step was made: a new start into new land. These General Principles were not just a text, but a promise, a call, a challenge ahead.

Two decades later, the Assembly in Guadalajara discussed, discerned and finally adopted a ‘revised’ version of our “General Principles”, approved by the Pontifical Council for the Laity on Saint Francis Xavier’s feast in 1990: another decisive step in the life of CLC all over the world!

Now – after three more decades and much lived experience – it is worthwhile to remind ourselves why the need for such a ‘revision’ was felt and what the main achievements of the GP version of 1990 have been.

A time to plant and to water

Since the return of the delegates at Roma ’67 with the new General Principles in their luggage, a new desire for renewal showed up in many countries. The new World ExCo started

with great emphasis to support those countries who asked for help: visits to many places in all regions, the offer of authentic Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, community-building sessions, written materials offered by the World Secretariat and by regional secretariats. In Europe a hotspot for mutual help was created in 1969 when people from 11 countries met for a first attempt at communal discernment and came up with a working party of 10 people promoting the CLC Way of Life and the Charism region-wide. The most important impetus for growth was the International Formation Course of Rome preceding the General Assembly in Augsburg 73, when 2/3 of the delegates participated and so prepared themselves to spread at home the CLC Way of Life and our Sense of Mission. Before the next Assembly of Manila 76, a follow-up Formation Course centered on Discernment and Mission was added.

A next step: call to become one World Community

Thanks to such occasions of deepening the understanding of CLC vocation and the inspiring community experiences, a more and more urgent question came up: Is the inherited structure of being just a federation of member



Ingeborg Von Grafenstein

Member of CLC in Germany. Member of the World Executive Council, as secretary between 1990 and 1998

Below from left:
- The closing Eucharist of Rome (1967): a delegate from Japan presents to Bishop Audet (then Ecclesiastical Assistant) with the gifts for the offertory the just adopted text of the General Principles

- Our Lady of Guadalupe Patroness of Mexico, site of the General Assembly in 1990.





countries still fitting for us? Should we move towards new horizons and change into a World Community of persons called to this Way of Life, forming one body “at the service of One World”?

Thus – during the World Assemblies in Rome (1979) and in Providence (1982) – the delegates discerned and finally decided to dare the big step: No longer to be “*Christian Life Communities*”, federated with one another and working together, but *ONE “World Christian Life Community”*. Similar to the Society of Jesus we then commit ourselves not just to our own small community but to WCLC even though we live it out “in all our particular circumstances” (GP1).

Here lies the starting point for a revision of the General Norms, as well as for a revision of the General Principles - in the light of the experiences and insights since 1967. A commission was started to prepare such a revised version.

A time for harvest and new sowing

On that basis the World Exco scheduled the General Assembly 1990 in Guadalajara/Mexico for dealing with this decision. Prior to the meeting a draft of the proposed text was sent to all national communities in order to study it and give their comments and proposals in advance. After incorporating the answers into the text, the ExCo submitted a final version as well as the original text of 1967/71 to be discussed and voted on during the meeting.

The task of this General Assembly, however, was not at all a mere aesthetic surgery of a document or a stylistic upgrading. Its impact was much stronger: the revised text tried to harvest the large pool of experiences and insights gained meanwhile. What in 1967 had been indicated in rather short terms could now be explained much more in detail, offering a more complete vision of an Ignatian Lay Community for Mission. Comparing the ‘old’ text with the now submitted ‘new’ draft showed that there was no contradiction but an increase of explicitness, especially of the impact of the Spiritual Exercises and formation, of community life and discernment, both personally and as a group, and – last not least – of apostolic life.

As a consequence, decision taking was not done just by discussing and voting but involved a real process of praying on the text, listening to each other and to the Lord and then by approving the final draft by vote.

Paul did the planting, Apollos did the watering, but God gave the increase

These words from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (6:3) came to my mind when looking back on the period following Guadalajara and focusing on the impact of the new GPs and GNs on the life of WCLC.

A first level of 'planting the seed' was the witness of the delegates back home and the way the text was presented in the different national communities. Many of them needed to ensure first a good translation into their own language, but all had to take care of transmitting the document in such a way that the seed was well accepted and nourished by adequate means and methods, such as reading groups or specific written materials, e.g. in 1991 the commentary "Deepening our understanding of the General Principles" in *Progressio* Supplement # 38-39. Another attempt to foster a creative and faithful living of our charism and mission were the "Guidelines for CLC-Forma-

tion" prepared by the Exco and edited in 1996 in Supplement 45-46. Some years later, taking into account the experiences and echoes coming from national communities, a revised edition titled "The CLC Charism" came out in 2001 as # 56.

A great impetus for growth came from the "Formation Encounters" that were offered by the ExCo and the World Secretariat for different regions: French- and English-speaking Africa, Europe, Latin America, Asia-Pacific, North America. Unity in diversity and mutual inspiration were the fruits of these endeavours. Much more could be mentioned here, e.g. the four years Formation Program "Magis" in Latin America, documented in Supplement # 54-55, not to forget the General Assemblies ever since, strengthening the World Community to grow and better serve Christ's mission as an apostolic body within the larger Ignatian Family.

Harvesting was done. The grain then needed to be sowed again in order to bring new fruit in the time ahead. Today, after 30 years of traveling the road of our GPs let us profit from the jubilee to gratefully reflect and share with one another how the Lord "gave increase" and led us, step by step, and to ask him for readiness to follow his ways with us in the years to come.

(Original: English)

On the other page:

- Josée Gsell and Giancarlo Murkovicz carrying the offerings during a Eucharist. Rome 79.

- Working and discernment group in the General Assembly Rome 79.

- ExCo members guiding Guadalajara

'90: Mary Schimmelfening (standing), Antony Martyris, Tim Quinlan sj, Brendan McLoughlin, Josefina Erazuriz, Eadaouin Hui, José Reyes

- Members of the new World ExCo (1990-1994): Mary Nolan, Antony Martyris, Eadaouin Hui, Brendan Mc Loughlin (president), Ingeborg v.Grafenstein (secretary) José Maria Riera, Maria Clara Bingemer (vice-president)

Below:

- The delegates of the General Assembly (1990) with the World Ecclesiastical Assistant P.H. Kolvenbach



My CLC Journey

Daphne Ho
CLC in Hong Kong



Above

- In front of the Mural Wall at MPS—I am the handmaid of the Lord: Let it be done to me according to your word.

Lk1:38

Below

- At the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Entry into the Society of Jesus of Rev. Seán Ó Cearbhalláin, Ecclesiastical Assistant of Eirene

I was born in a non-Catholic family. Being attracted by the bible teachings in school, I was baptized at the age of 15. And that also marked the beginning of my CLC life. Looking back at my faith journey, I see that CLC formation has played a very important role in strengthening my faith in God, and that inspired me to have a strong desire to know Him more deeply, to walk with Him more closely and to love Him more dearly.

I started joining a CLC group called “Rosarian” when I was in Secondary School. I was active in participating in the CLC youth forma-

tion programmes. Although I could not understand too thoroughly the Charism of CLC and Ignatian Spirituality at that time, the programmes enabled me to experience a sense of community and helped me see the true meaning of my life. Together with some other CLC friends who had graduated from high school, we established a new group called “Eirene”—the peacemaker.

Eirene celebrated our 25th Anniversary two years ago. Over the past decades, our members walked and grew together as a community. With the accompaniment and support from Fr. Seán, our Ecclesiastical Assistant, our sense of identity and understanding of CLC has grown stronger and stronger. Because of our unique experience of joining CLC since high school years, Eirene has decided to take up the responsibility of the Youth Formation work in CLC after a communal discernment in 2009. We wish to share our story of growth with the young members, accompany them to walk the CLC journey and support them to develop new communities after their graduation. Working together on this ministry, we have received so much more than what we have given. We experience the solidarity of the COMMUNITY, deepen our Ignatian SPIRITUALITY, and contribute the gifts we have received from the community through working on a MISSION together. The three pillars of our CLC Charism have been interconnected and reinforced in the process of serving in this ministry.

Apart from my services in CLC and the Church, my profession is also closely related to the service of young people. I have been teaching since my graduation. Working in school is an extremely fulfilling experience for me as I can connect with a lot of young minds every day. It is always interesting to listen to their life stories, their dreams, their ups and downs, their struggles and their perspectives about the world. Being a Religious and Moral Education teacher, I have the privilege to share the Gospel and Christian values with my stu-



dents. People may think that young people nowadays might find these messages boring and outdated. However, from my experience, many young people actually yearn for more and deeper knowledge about the meaning of life and how they can be themselves in this fast paced and morally twisted world. Sometimes, they do want some time and space for solitude and reflection despite of their busy schedules. I was happy that I could provide that opportunity for them in my lessons. Through our discussions, sharing or even doing the Examen, we could learn with and from each other.

1997. Being the leader and only member of CLC working in the school, I tried to seize every opportunity to share my understanding of Ignatian Spirituality and let my teammates experience the beauty of it through our daily encounters, staff development programmes and reflection sessions together on a regular basis. It is amazing to see how these values, which we CLC members embrace, have been so well received among teachers, students and parents. Every time I hear my colleagues, even for those who do not have any religious orientation, talking about “Magis” or “finding God/good in all things”, my heart smiles. I am particularly grateful that our leadership team has been taking a more “discerning” way in making important decisions. The willingness to listen, the student-centered mindset, and the openness for the better have made a significant difference in the development of the school.

In this new academic year, I took up an even more challenging mission of taking up the principalship of

On the left:
- Students in my homeroom in the old days

Below:
- Children studying at CLC Marymount Primary School



Five years ago, I took up a new challenge to work as the Principal of Marymount Primary School (MPS), one of the two schools that CLC (Hong Kong) has been sponsoring since

Marymount Secondary School (MSS). This was one of the most difficult decisions I have ever made in my life. The continuous social unrest in Hong Kong since 2019 and the unprecedented attack of COVID-19 in 2020 have



brought so many changes to the context and reality of our society. Young people of this generation have never ever been so lost and confused as before. Mutual trust has been lost. Division between people has widened. Making up my mind to step out from my comfort zone and start building bridges and other forms of connection in a new environment was certainly not easy. It was the experience in the tent in Buenos Aries that inspired my discern-

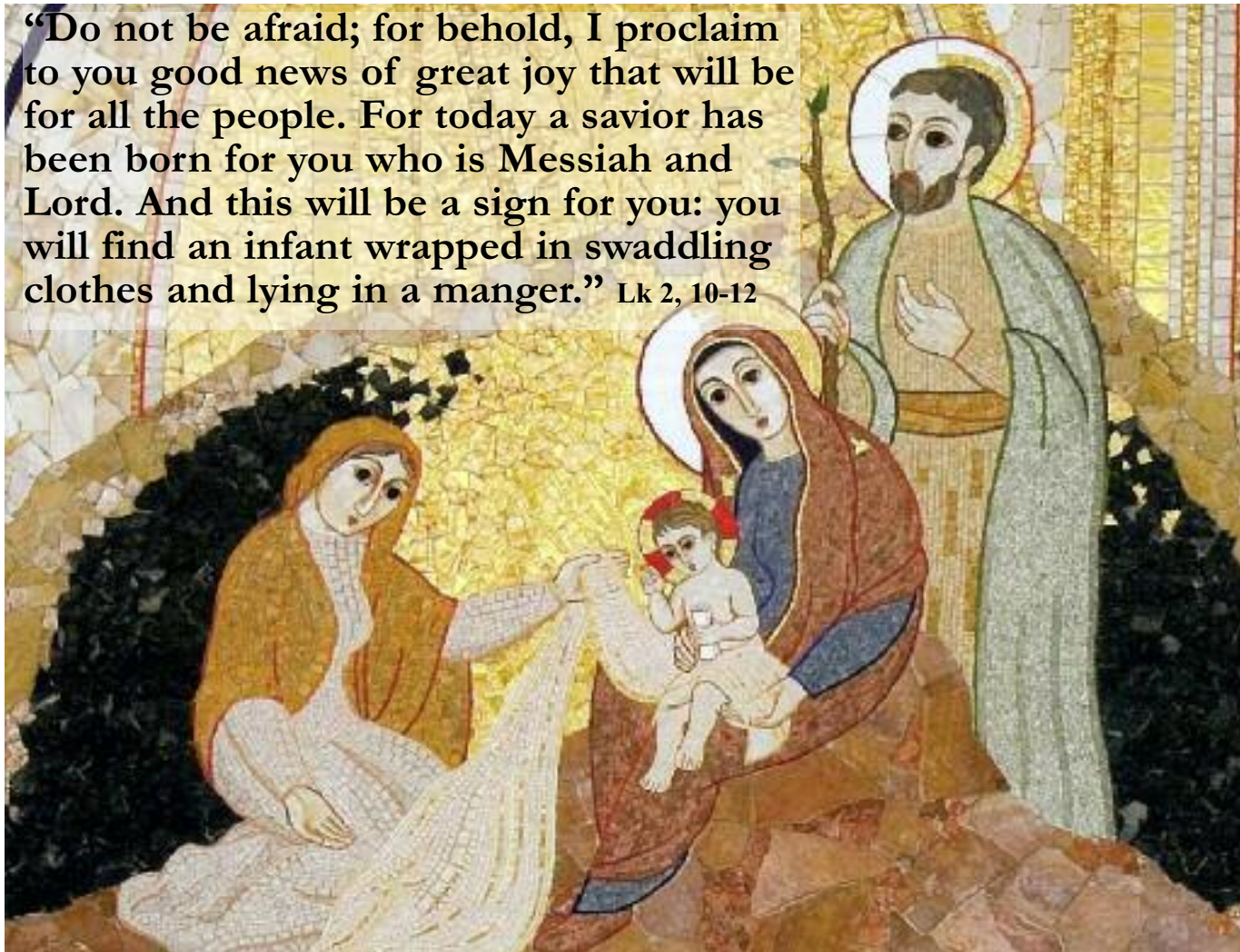
ment to make myself available for the community and the young people whom God has given in our hands. With an unfailing desire of **sharing** the treasure of Ignatian Spirituality with the young ones, it is my wish to work even harder to **deepen** my faith in God with the support of my community and **go forth** to reach out to the students – to invite them to spend a moment in the tent with me.....to come and taste the wonder of our Lord.

(Original: English)



My DREAM Team at MPS

“Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” Lk 2, 10-12



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