

## OUR COMMON MISSION

This document is the outcome of the XIII General Assembly of the Christian Life Community in Itaici 1998. It presents a common mission as it was discerned by the delegates, put into words by a mandated commission and amended and received by the whole assembly. It is now offered to all national and local communities, all individual members and Ecclesiastical Assistants of CLC all over the world.

This XIII Assembly inscribes itself in the line of all - and especially the last four - World Assemblies. In Loyola 86, it became clear that, as we were a World Community, we were community for mission. In Guadalajara 90, we felt ourselves sent to bear fruit as an apostolic body. In Hong Kong 94, we recognized and integrated the context from and into which we are sent. In Itaici we defined our common mission in the context of our world. The mission of CLC comes from Christ himself who invites us to join him in preparing the world to become the complete Kingdom of God. He calls us to be at the very heart of the world experience and to receive God's gift in its fullness.

In the review of our graces over the past four years we found the hand of Christ and His love and in gratitude for so much good that is accomplished in our lives in CLC. We offered ourselves to follow Him in pilgrimage and labour like Ignatius did.

We discerned about the most urgent needs of world today and from there tried to give flesh and blood to the desire of the Lord for us here and now.

In our review of needs we faced our limitations, weaknesses, our lights and shadows and our sinfulness. But we also found much that was wise and good especially the powerful and pervasive effort to pursue the struggle for mission.

And so we take on our mission with confidence that the Lord takes us as He did with Ignatius, not because we are strong, but because his "love and grace are sufficient for us".

In this process of discernment which began already in our National Communities we went through four areas of our life following the ignatian charism: Christ and growth in Christian life; Christ and culture; Christ and social reality; Christ and daily life.

The process resulted in discovering three areas of mission and a set of necessary means for this mission.

**First**, we want to bring the freeing power of Christ to our social reality.

**Secondly**, we want to find Christ in all our varied cultures and to let His grace illuminate all that needs transformation.

**Thirdly**, we want to live Christ so as to bring him to every aspect of our daily life in the world.

These three areas of mission were enlightened by the spiritual source, which nourishes and empowers us for mission: the Spiritual Exercises, which help us to grow in Christian life.

In addition, we must attend to our own formation for mission, so that our community may ever become a more effective instrument of service.

We suggest to everyone who receives this mission statement to read it not from a merely intellectual viewpoint, searching for information, but as a wording of the strong desire of the World Christian Life Community as gathered in the Assembly.

We invite the reader to join our pilgrimage so that Christ may gain his full stature. That is what we passionately yearn for and wholeheartedly commit ourselves to.

## **CHRIST AND SOCIAL REALITY**

Side by side with the Poor. Our personal relationship with God, which arises from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, is the inspiration, which fires us to participate in the struggle for a just world. We prize the church's prophetic stand against poverty itself and against all that causes poverty. Rooted in Christ and in his love for us, we want to make the option for the poor, not as an idea, but by making serious analysis and adopting a responsible and effective attitude towards poverty and its causes. We are called in our communal life to encourage one another to look at the world and to work in it from the perspective of the poor, and to grow in our capacity to meet them, to know where they are in our societies and which are the best forms to take part in their struggles. We are also called to examine our own lives from this perspective.

### **1. For a More Just World**

We need to work against the greed and the misuse of the power for evil in political and economic structures, often exercised so effectively by the multinationals.

Just as the causes of poverty and injustice are linked among themselves and support one another across national boundaries, we as CLC are called to witness to a world community that empowers its members to be prophets of justice and hope, able to take bold stances and positions in order to bring about more justice to this world. We are ready to establish networks, to undertake social action: we will become social entrepreneurs, with the same intensity that business entrepreneurs employ.

We want to participate in different forums at the national and international levels, bringing to them the voice of the poorest in issues such as the problem of international debt. In different ways all of us are called to active participation in the economic, political and social structures, not only from a critical point of view but also through providing solutions. In this the community empowers us so that we truly believe that we can work to change sinful structures.

We care for the integrity of God's creation in all its manifold blessings. We appreciate sound relationships in every area of human life - family, work, public life and church - and hold in high esteem a culture of dialogue within the human family.

## **2. Witnessing to Our Way of Life**

We recognize that our main contribution to our world is to live fully our vocation, as it is expressed in our General Principles, as individuals and as a community

We feel particularly called to live in solidarity with all, in a simple life style, searching every day for our own conversion to God and sharing the actual experience and the pedagogy of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. We believe that one of our great contributions to our world today, especially in resolving conflicts and taking good decisions at all levels of life, is the process of discernment and those listening and dialogue skills that we learn in our community.

## **3. Standing as Prophets in Our World**

We feel CLC is called to resist the growing consumerism and individualism and the resulting cultural erosion. Our spirituality forms us to be proactive, and this will give us the confidence we need to be counter cultural when necessary. We do not want to be "burned out" prophets in the world, but to rejoice in Christ's presence in it and to return frequently to nourish our essential relationship with the Lord, and we also need to learn how to serve as leaven in a silent and profound way, promoting and living out just relationships in the family, in the workplace, in public life and Church issues.

## **4. Formation through Experience and Action**

CLC needs to act. CLC needs a formation/training programme to help it be active in the world. Many or all of the social needs that we want to address need formation to be dealt with. But action should not wait for full formation. We need from the very beginning to learn to be contemplatives in action, to promote insertion experiences in deprived or oppressive situations, and to foster a model of experience-reflection-action in our formation programmes. We want to develop an active, progressive, continuous and adaptive formation in the Spiritual Exercises, and find specific ways in which their richness can be shared with people in all circumstances of life.

## **5. Networking and Collaborating**

We feel that today there is a big opportunity to collaborate with others and find flexible and dynamic structures to ensure effectiveness in the service we want to bring to the world. We want to collaborate within CLC and beyond, and to humbly join others and help in their initiatives. We see a particular call to do this with the Society of Jesus in many different sectors, according to local realities and personal skills: education, refugees, social concern, NGOs, etc.

# **CHRIST AND CULTURE**

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 unique identity of each

but also by what we receive through the cultures of one another is one of the profound blessings of our lives. Yet we abhor the harm, which the sinfulness of each culture can cause in breaking persons and in splitting community. Furthermore, in its drive towards uniformity, the emerging world culture seems to be having the negative effect of destroying the uniqueness of each culture more than the positive one of drawing peoples of different cultures together in one world which respects the unique contribution of each culture. It is from these perspectives that we commit ourselves to the fuller realization of the presence of Christ in all cultures in the following ways:

*1. Working in word and deed as prophets who foster the growth of all that is good and transform all that is harmful in the cultures in the world where we live.*

Regarding the dominant world culture:

We oppose its individualism with the concern for dialogue found at a deeper level in this culture, its marginalization of the poor with its concern for human rights and for the dignity of all and its consumerism with its more fundamental affirmation of life.

We affirm a simple life-style which places the emphasis never on things but always on who we are, on what we can share and on what will serve the human person.

We commit ourselves to lives of witness emerging from our CLC form of community life focused on receiving and giving, and our effort is to draw others into this way of living.

Regarding local and regional cultures:

We support all that is unique in the realization that all humanity is finally enriched by every perspective, the concern for community which often needs to be expanded beyond limited horizons and the rich symbolic life which enables us to dream and to create even as we recognize the symbolic can be used to demean and destroy.

The various media and means of social communication, and especially the mass means, have tremendous potential for good and for evil. We commit ourselves to learning to use them effectively and to be critical of what is presented to the consumer. We must employ them extensively in our desire to communicate our Christian faith and the values for which we stand.

*2. Incarnating Gospel values in every situation so that every culture can realize its potential to bring humans fully alive*

We shall incarnate ourselves in our own culture while still having the strength to be counter-cultural in our criticism and witness.

We attend especially to those who are searching that they may find meaning and to those who are hopeless that they may find a way.

We search for better forms of education so that true values may be appropriated and lived. We recognize today that every stage of life has its crises and challenges, and we support everyone on their journey, most especially young people who can face special difficulties because of the relativity of values presented to them.

We bring skills for dialogue and commitment to reconciliation in every situation.

*3. We commit ourselves to becoming involved to find a new way of being universal Church drawing to itself from all that makes today's reality so rich in its diversity.*

We promote dialogue in the Church and between the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations, other religions, people who are searching and all of good will.

We work for authentic inculturation in local Churches, helping Church in promoting what is positive in the local churches and challenging their negative aspects, and applying this to pastoral service, to catechetical, to liturgy and to theology.

We work to integrate with our faith every aspect of our reality, including family, marriage and work.

We promote the values of authentic human relationships in the Church, which implies attention to healing our brokenness and working for the transformation of sinful structures.

## **CHRIST IN DAILY LIFE**

As we want our belonging to CLC to run through everything we do in our daily life, we desire to live fully according to who we claim to be as an Ignatian lay faith community on mission. This desire clearly has two important aspects, which can both be connected with our commitment to seek and to find God in all things. On the one hand, we can miss God in the ordinary thereby missing both richness in God's presence and many opportunities to serve. On the other hand, we can blind ourselves to God's presence in some aspect of our life, in this way neglecting a challenge to grow and the potential to serve in this aspect of our life. We discern the following four strong desires and make them our priorities in our mission today with regard to bringing the presence of Christ to our daily life.

*1. We desire to nourish the absolute value of every human person and of authentic human relationships in the community of humankind.*

Throughout our entire world, the forces of death are strongly at work and have an impact on all our daily activities. We want always to affirm the human person created in the image of God.

We want to live lives that are unafraid to be affectionate in our relationships and to appreciate this world as gift of God.

In the faith conviction that no one is expendable, we want to have a special care for the poor and to include this perspective in the decisions we make in every aspect of our daily lives.

We include a critical Christian understanding of globalisation, environmental problems and militarisation in our interpretation of the world

*2. We desire to promote family life as a basic unit in building the world into the Kingdom of God.*

Concern for the area of family in its variety of manifestations moves us very strongly since it is so threatened today even to the point of decay.

We will cultivate authentic relationships and affection in couples, between parents and children and between the generations.

We are committed to living marriage and family life in a discerning way in order to integrate them with our faith so as to live these dimensions fully as vocation of the Lord in the Church.

We give ourselves especially to care for families suffering from any kind of brokenness.

*3. We desire to accompany young people on the way to meaningful life and to invite them into contact with the Lord who offers them fullness of life.*

Young people are especially vulnerable to consumerism and other antivalues. Each young person stands at the crossroad of choosing a way of life, and we work to ensure that the way of Christ may be seen as attractive and challenging. We will listen to young people in their hopes, desires and generosity and foster their growth in every way we can.

We will offer young people an inculturated faith initiation, meeting them where they are and going together the way towards a deeper encounter with Christ with the effective help of Ignatian pedagogy.

*4. We desire to integrate professional and other working activities into a truly human life and into our Christian faith*

The pressure of an overarching concern for profit must be resisted in all areas of professional life.

While affirming that work is not an end in itself, we want to value work and the dignity of the worker.

We want to overcome the distance often present between our faith commitment and our professional and working activities so as to live these activities as a part of our personal vocation.

We also want to find ways to deal with un- and underemployment, even in circumstances where we cannot solve this problem.

## **MEANS FOR MISSION**

### *1 Spiritual Exercises*

As a world community, CLC is to actively support all its members by providing the means and resources to fully experience the grace of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, in offering them models that are dynamic, progressive and continuous. Since all Ignatian Sources are integral to our spirituality, we wish to read them all from a lay perspective. In this spirit we support the attempts to adapt the Spiritual Exercises.

## ***2 Formation***

CLC will provide formation teams, at regional, and world levels, who will develop and propose formation programs, which intellectually and affectively integrate the spiritual, communitarian and apostolic dimensions of CLC life. Special assistance ought to be given to developing programmes that will enable our members to be proactive and counter-cultural whenever needed.

CLC will offer its expertise in the development of persons, integrating faith and life, touching all dimensions of daily life, with a special sensitivity to the poor and marginalized. We wish to provide formation and education programmes that will enable persons and/or communities to listen actively, to deal with conflict resolution and promote sincere and open dialogue among our members and with other persons in society.

CLC will assist all its members in learning the process of personal and communal discernment, which will lead to more effective personal and communal apostolic activities. To achieve this, we will provide meaningful programmes and training for leaders, guides and co-ordinators in the spirit and method of the Ignatian pedagogy. We also wish to provide means and resources to all our members, at every stage of human development, so as to attain awareness of personal vocation and be affirmed in their identity in the community.

## ***3 Collaboration in mission***

CLC feels a particular call to collaboration in mission with the Society of Jesus and other Ignatian family members. CLC is especially interested in the creation and actively supporting apostolic networks within the Church and with other international groups.

## ***4 Finances***

CLC is especially concerned with the financial support given by all its national communities, for dealing with its expenses at the world level. Financial responsibility should always be discerned by each member in his/her small community, and is clearly seen as a sign of mature commitment with World CLC.

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