



# CLC's gift to the world

## PHOTOS BACK COVER

The World CLC Executive Council at the annual meeting in Rome, 15-22 February 2015. Top Row (L-R): *Denis Dobbstein, Alwin Macalalad, Luke Rodrigues SJ, Chris Hogan* Bottom Row (L-R): *Edel Churu, Rojean Macalalad, Adolfo Nicolas, SJ, Josephine Shamwana-Lungu, Mauricio Lopez, Anne-Marie Brenan, Najat Sayegh*

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## 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 Christus) 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.

# Editorial

**D**uring the process of selection of the new Executive Secretary we asked the final candidates to write an essay with the theme of 'CLC: a gift to the world'. That theme has inspired the content of the articles appearing in this edition of Progressio.

In the words of Tobie Zakia, ex-president of CLC Worldwide, "a community in which those who serve it are changed is a community which is alive and which is blessed by the Lord". I therefore give a warm welcome to the new Executive Secretaries, Alwin and Rojean Macalad who from now on will take over the editing of this publication. You can get to know them better in the article they wrote and which was decisive in their selection for this service to the World Community.

The wealth of CLC is its members and for this reason we would like to make a tribute to the late Guy Schuller of Luxembourg who passed away in August during his active period as president of his national community. He was a real gift to CLC and we were privileged to know him.

The World Assembly in the Lebanon set out four frontiers for our community and by way of 'anticipating the future' we have included some articles that refer to what is emerging in our community a year since the Assembly.

On the frontiers of the family theme we have an excellent witness from the perspective of a mother on the pastoral care needed for homosexuals and transsexuals that reminds us of the attitude of the loving father in the Gospel.

In Asia-Pacific has the youngest population in the world, and it is not surprising that the Frontier of Youth has inspired the members of CLC Korea to organise a workshop on discernment during Youth Day in Asia (AYD) on the theme of Finding God in all things.

The Frontier of Ecology becomes increasingly relevant in our world and that is why we bring the testimony of our members who have been sent on the Amazon Project and the report on the CLC participation in the UN on how the increase in the level of water is affecting coastal cities.

And on the Frontier of Globalization and the Poor we have a report from the Migration Network in CLC Europe and the diligent work of CLC Rwanda with the Support Centre for those affected by HIV/Aids virus. This is work that tries to give back to these people a will to live.

Finally, we have a reflection by Pope Francis on the temptations that "cause diseases" in a community. This can be very useful in our effort to improve our Lay Apostolic Body.

We cannot let pass the 5th centenary of St. Theresa of Jesus who can inspire us about the Language of Wisdom and propose the Lord's question: *What do you want me to do? / What do you want me to do in CLC?*

This being my last editorial I would like to thank the World CLC and Progressio for so great good I have received!

*Sofia Montañez Castro*

## Fire Works: The Gift of CLC



Rojean & Alwin Macalalad

This is really a brief retelling of our (Alwin & Roj's) faith stories, and how later on, we have seen God's hand weaving the beautiful tapestry of our lives together so that we may be of service to the Kingdom. Tall words, which sometimes feel overwhelming-- Kingdom. And yet, for all our efforts, frailty and strife, we are constantly reminded that God is the one who calls, and God is the one who makes all things possible. And for us, God has called us to live our lives fully as CLC.



Rojean and Alwin with Umaga CLC

### Sparks: beginnings of our vocations

The Ignatian tradition has long been of influence to both of us even before we ever heard of the name Ignatius, Ignatian Spirituality, or CLC. In the Philippines, students in Catholic schools undergo retreats and recollections; as children, both of us have been attending the compulsory annual class retreats. Beyond evening prayers, mass sermons and the observance of the sacraments, we were already participating in trickles of Father Ignatius' gift to the Church, through spiritual exercises! Both of us stepped into high schools inspired by the Ignatian tradition, and by the time we were in college, we were both enrolled in Jesuit-run universities, albeit separated by around 1,400 km of sea and islands. Separately, we discovered CLC during college. Hindsight tells us that the spirit was slowly uniting our destinies together. But for us, during that time, it was just a way to participate in a spiritually-oriented school organization.

For Alwin, CLC was just a means for keeping the faith, and achieving a semblance of balance in school, social and spiritual life. For Rojean, CLC was a means to be in a group that does service. The Spirit has a way of working with primordial desires and attractions, and purifying them towards something holy. It was during our CLC days when we were able to form deep friendships. It was during this time when we realized that being spiritual also meant doing something for others. It was during this time when our relationship with Christ began to bloom. Jesus was no longer a figure of authority- he began to be a friend. And faith became a dance with a God who responds always with love. With a God who journeys and creates through us. With a God who says, come, let's do something worthwhile.

This did not mean that the gift of CLC was not well-resisted. For Alwin, CLC was a

school organization, and his membership in it would end after college. He became a Jesuit Volunteer with visions of being assigned in some godforsaken corner of the Philippines—maybe in the mountains to teach indigenous peoples. You know, something worthwhile, as God seemed to whisper. Then, he wanted to back out when he found out that his area of assignment would be around 1,400 km from his home, not in the mountains, but in a city. In Xavier University— a Jesuit university— no less! To take care of some CLC groups! “How could this be worthwhile,” he moaned, “they do not need me!” Alwin wanted to help the poorest of the poor! Somewhere he could make a difference! Not in an urban area to manage a school club! There was a quarrel with God around this point. But to no avail—he was shipped to the assignment to spend a year of service doing formation work. For a school club. In a city.

Rojean was a senior college student then. And the president of a school organization—the Xavier University CLC. They were assigned a Jesuit Volunteer fresh out of college as a CLC formation guide. She was a respected leader, and passionate for a vision of what she then called “a brotherhood of man”—a community built of mutual love and respect for each other. It was during this year when she undertook an individually guided silent Ignatian retreat via CLC; here she received the grace of an overwhelming trust in God’s love and care for her. Her special friendship with Christ is built on this rock.

This was also the year when we met, and became very close friends. In this year, Alwin went through a pre-novitiate discernment and felt that his life was to be lived in a lay Ignatian vocation, as opposed to a religious one. It was also this year that Rojean decided to join the Jesuit Volunteers, and much to her preliminary disappointment, was assigned to become a formator in another Philippine parish—for CLC. She would renew her volunteer work for another year after that.

## Flame: Desires and Commitment

Alwin and Rojean saw in CLC the fulfilment of what a community could be.

We were set afire by the possibilities of what a community such as CLC can accomplish. We couldn’t believe how these people could



Alwin & Rojean with Come and See CLC

shift from conversing about irreverent jokes, to nation building, to following Christ without batting eyelids. We were awed that holiness could exist in endless manifestations in community—all beyond stereotype. We were touched with how these people wept for the Church, and celebrated with the Church. We were inspired by how people could fight, and argue, and acknowledge differences, and still remain loving. We have never been with people as genuinely loving. We have never met a group who taught us more about love. **And we wanted to be them.**

Rojean took the things she learned from CLC as she became the Executive Director of Cartwheel Foundation—a non-profit that gives education opportunities for the indigenous peoples in the Philippines. Alwin went on the work in the CLC Formation



Institute, with the belief that CLC was far too special to keep within the bounds of the community. It was also during this time when Alwin knew his life's deepest desolation, and Rojean's faith, his only beacon. It was during his stay in the CLCFI when he wrote the following to capture what he understood about CLC in a nutshell:

***Lay men and women gripped by the  
profoundest of longings  
Forged by the deepest of friendships  
Marked by the belief that  
no mission is too formidable  
Nor too menial to be undertaken  
Called to be Contemplatives-in-action  
Driven by the fire of Ignatius***

***One community  
One Way of Life  
The Christian Life Community***

We became part of the CLC Philippine community, and simultaneously our love for each other deepened. CLC for us was a way of living out what both of us carried deep in our hearts- a thirst for community, a fire for changing the world. CLC for us was a way to be in a profound union with our personal God, who somehow managed to treat each of us so differently and yet with the same Spirit. To be caught up in this exchange of love between the Father and the Son—to be caught up within the Holy Spirit's eternal flow, this was what we rode on into our marriage, into our work, and into our permanent commitment to the CLC way of life in 2010.



This is how God gifted us with CLC. When we look back, being able to say “CLC is my life” is a grave disservice to the journey. We were created in Ignatius’ school of faith, and recreated in CLC. And in this way of life, our destinies were intertwined. Together—wherever, we always say. That was our marriage’s charism. If that’s what it took to be with Christ. If that’s what it took, to respond to the call of our King.

### **Fire: How We Wish it Were Already Blazing**

CLC does not offer a particular prescription of what to do. It does not take on a specific apostolic activity, like care for the sick, or alleviate the suffering of migrants everywhere. Our saint does not endeavour to tell us what to do. Instead, Ignatius gives us... guidelines. And yet, the Spiritual Exercises are so powerful that one can be anything, with one prerequisite- union with Christ. Being placed with the Son.

CLC gives character to the lay life. A versatility that becomes more and more relevant as the pace of change becomes faster and faster. All around us, things are changing: possibly-habitable exoplanets are being discovered. Corporate economies are now larger than small nations’. A virtual world echoing Teilhard de Chardin’s noosphere now envelopes the Earth. Religious vocations have been decreasing. And a Jesuit pope.

A contemplative in action- a discernor—one that has an utmost belief in God’s love and creativity- this is the person the world is looking for. These are the organizations and communities that the world is looking for. This is the Church that the world is looking for. This is what our CLC Charism offers: a process, a journey, and the lives of our members.

If more people were to find their fire, then the Church, as a body, would be dancing. Dancing to an eternal symphony, and creating the world according to God’s vision. CLC’s gift to the world, for us, is a how-to-dance manual!

*Alwin & Rojean Macalalad  
World CLC Executive Secretaries*

# Guy Schuller

(1954-2014)

***«Our hearts filled with gratitude, tears in our eyes because he left us so early and supported by the hope that he will be present to us in God, we keep a loving and thankful memory of our friend Guy Schuller, who entered the Life of God on 20th August, 2014. »***

With these words CLC Luxembourg announced Guy's departure for a new Life. He passed away after a long illness at the age of 60, leaving behind him his wife Edith and two grown up children.

Guy marked the life of our small community profoundly, particularly during the two periods of his presidency (2007-2014). All those who met him, encountered a committed, cordial, enthusiastic and generous man, happy to believe in God.

The Prophet Micah (VI, 6-8) wonders: « With what shall I enter Yahweh's presence...? » Here is the answer : »You have already been told what is right and what Yahweh wants of you. Only this, to do what is right, to love loyalty and to walk humbly with your God. » Guy showed us that he fully identified with these words by choosing this text as first reading at his funeral on 25th August, 2014. Here we find what he had most dear at heart.

1. Mindful of justice, and in the face of the immense complexity of world economic structures and the aberrations of globalisation, Guy never tired of reminding us to ask the pertinent questions: what are the profound causes of the crisis which has been shaking our world for years? What are the true motives that lock the majority of citizens (of the wealthy countries) in the vain pursuit of a happiness reduced to the maximisation of pleasure, of power, of money, of the desires of the body or of comfort? How can we reasonably limit our material cravings? How can we give a worthier and more human place to those excluded from the current system? And Guy provided

perspicacious analyses to help us understand the current system and its shortcomings, as well as directions for concrete action.

To achieve this, he was not content to stay within the circle of CLC. On the contrary, he was engaged, since his youth, in community life. As an economist at the Stater (National institute of statistics and economic research in Luxembourg), Guy was in charge of the "Etudes, prévisions et recherches" and taught at various universities.

Guy was convinced that it is vital that politicians and civil society raise public awareness of the ethical dimension of political, economic and financial action and that every citizen is called to take into account the ethical dimension of his concrete individual and collective actions.

Yet, it was in the context of our CLC community that Guy reminded us of the necessity to change direction! I remember the "Journée des Equipes" in autumn 2009. Guy's illness kept him at home and prevented him from participating. Nevertheless, he had prepared a text on the subject of socially responsible consumption and a simple style of life (cf. General Principle 4) and asked his wife Edith to present his notes to our community.



Guy Schuller

The issues of poverty, ethical savings, a simple lifestyle ... have been at the centre of our national meetings for a long time and still are. They have found a concrete manifestation in the commitment of CLC members to the LISEL (student chaplaincy at the university of Luxembourg) and to the GIM (Ignatian group for migration).

Socially responsible consumption, both active (by the careful choice of purchased goods) and passive (boycotts and renunciation), alternative savings (ethical savings accounts, ethical banking, shareholding in socially responsible businesses) can, if implemented little by little, but tenaciously, contribute to a change of mentality and action. Therefore, we should act mindfully and attentively every day, while still bearing the contradictions of the human condition and implicate ourselves in society and politics...

These engagements translated for Guy the statement by St Ignatius "Love is in the actions. And it consists in giving and receiving."

And these convictions had for Guy a spiritual dimension. We should choose to follow Christ in everything.

In 2010, Guy wrote:

***"During Lent.... Christians are invited to conversion. A preliminary condition to ensure that this time should bear fruits, is that we ask ourselves the right questions as to "what is to be converted". In this respect, the approach of DSSE (discerning, sending, supporting and evaluating), as proposed by CLC, should help our members to ask the pertinent questions on the individual and community levels. Discernment and evaluation are situated at the beginning and end of this process, but they are intimately linked. An evaluation done with interior freedom should lead to the relevant questions to ask in order to discern the next step. As far as social justice is concerned, the GIM (Ignatian***

***group for migration, Luxembourg) has raised relevant- albeit difficult- questions concerning the relation of migration and development. This relation is crucial but audacious and little explored on an international level. The strategy of "advocacy" as proposed by world CLC is of the same order. I wish you that your spiritual way might allow you to look profoundly so as to help you ask the right questions for yourself and your community- in order to choose life in the footsteps of Jesus Christ dead and risen."***

2. In the passage from Micah, there is something like an invitation to progress: from practising justice to the merciful love of God and from there to the humble walk at God's pace.

Guy's entire life bore witness to this dynamism. At the end, he described himself as an open man, open minded and openhearted, a builder of bridges, longing for conciliation, a patient seeker for solutions.

The pursuit of peace and social justice characterised Guy since his youth and pushed him to participate in various associations. A second dimension came to be added to the first, i.e. the love St Paul talks about in his letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor XIII, 1-13). Discerning love (*discreta caritas*) does not make us blind, on the contrary, it leads to openness, questioning, discernment, pursuit of a magis of faith, hope and charity. Guy had learned to practise it since his adherence to CLC. Thus he was able to renounce other, more prestigious, engagements at the moment when he answered the call of the community to become its president.

The unfolding of the spiritual dimension of his whole life and deepening (living more deeply and acting more effectively; the motto of the World Assembly at Fatima) were concretised by his decision to do the Spiritual Exercises in daily life, once he was elected president. Finally, he also undertook a formation in the accompaniment of CLC groups so as to be able to continue serving CLC after the end of

his second mandate as president (February 2015). His illness prevented him from realising this project.

In June 2012, Guy wrote in the editorial of CVX-Intern (journal of CLC Luxembourg):

*“The major problems of the world (financial crisis, war, terrorism, famines, natural catastrophes...) or in our private lives (illness, death, failure...) may at times overwhelm us to a point where we look at the future in despair. (...) If it is undeniable that reality is far from being an easy ride, the Christian message invites us to the triptych: faith, hope and charity. Often, Jesus’ action began with a different look at the reality he met – however difficult and complex it was. This “different look” is not only a change of perspective, but also the starting point of a new relationship to reality. (...) Looking differently at reality may be regularly tried out in our lives, when we reread our daily life. At the beginning of our prayer, we give*

*God thanks and then, we ask the Spirit to open our lives, particularly the most difficult part, to the love and mercy of God. Thanks to this different look – with the eyes of the heart- we can prepare our conversion and our discernment concerning our future.”*

Guy has left us. He was able to consent to the way that was his and he was able to take that different look at his own reality, one of the hardest, and which evades all human control. Guy was able to consent to the hardest crossing, his agony, to enter the Life of God.

3. Eventually, the verse from Micah is also found in the three essential dimensions of CLC dynamism: spirituality, community and commitment.

That is why this prophetic word was always dear to Guy. And it will remain so for us as well.

Luxembourg, 15th October 2014.

*René Schmit*

I wish you that  
your spiritual way  
might allow you  
to look profoundly  
so as to help you  
ask the right questions  
for yourself and  
your community-  
in order to choose life  
in the footsteps of  
Jesus Christ  
dead and risen.



## Fears and hopes as a Catholic mother of a gay son

### A parent's perspective



Joseanne Peregin

Presentation by Joseanne Peregin (President of Christian Life Community, Malta – “LGBT<sup>1</sup> children’s parents’ fears and expectations”) for “The ways of Love”, an International Conference towards pastoral care with homosexual and trans people (Rome, Italy, October 3, 2014)

**N**ever in my wildest dreams would I have ever imagined I would be giving a speech to theologians. But then again, never would I have ever dreamt that one day, I would be the mother of a gay son either. I come from the tiny island of Malta, where everybody knows everyone and most of us are traditional Catholics. I have been

happily married for nearly 30 years, and am a proud mother of three children all in their 20s. I have been an active member of the Christian Life Community for over 35 years, 6 of them as president of CLC Malta.

More recently, however my service in the church has evolved as the helpline for parents struggling with their child’s ‘coming out’. In 2008 the Drachma LGBT group which was established in 2004, had invited St Jeannine Grammick to Malta. After listening to her talk, a handful of us parents decided to meet again and we still meet every month. The Drachma Parents’ Group offers a SAFE SPACE for parents to come to terms with their own process of acceptance. But although it is a SAFE SPACE, it is not a closed space so I am delighted to share this experience with you, although I am certainly no theologian.

I will start from how I dealt with my son’s ‘coming out’ – driven by the Ignatian phrase: ‘God is in all things’. Then, I will explain some difficulties with the Catholic Church’s position on homosexuality. And finally, I will say something about my own ‘coming out’, as

a parent. (Probably, my participation at this Conference is like my final stage along this process).

### Dealing with my child’s ‘coming out’

So how did my 17 year old son ‘come out’ to me? Well, quite typical of his generation – by sending an SMS! It happened while I was driving him home one evening. We were in the car together so I stopped to read my incoming message and it said: ‘Ma, I’m gay’ – isn’t that crazy? ☺) So anyway, I began with the typical denial remarks like, ‘It’s probably just a phase.’ But he stopped me in my words and explained that he had been sure for a long time and he had just told all of his friends. Then he told me he had written ‘the famous letter’ some weeks before, which would explain everything I needed to know, once we got home.

Anyway, thankfully, when we arrived my husband (who I thought may react negatively) was fast asleep on the sofa in front of the TV. So as I read through the letter (my son always wrote very clearly, in fact he became a journalist later in his career) I felt I could fully understand the whole painful journey he had been through and, like St Paul, I felt the scales came down from in front of my eyes, and I was able to see it all so clearly: why he refused to come to Sunday Mass with us; why all the headaches; why the loss of weight; and why the many tissues inside his dustbin from nights of crying etc. Deep down I felt guilty that he had to go through all that uncertainty

<sup>1</sup> Lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender

on his own – it was not easy for him. Yet on the other hand, I felt a great sigh of relief since I had imagined many worse things like: drugs, terrible sickness, trouble with police, getting someone pregnant etc.

I knew something was wrong, but I never suspected this. So when it was clear that he was gay, I said to myself, “Aaahh! Ok, this I can do, because all that is needed is love! So I hugged him and assured him of my love. I felt privileged to have such a wonderful relationship with my son – one where he could trust me with something so intimate and special. It was a boost to my motherhood. But then he commanded, ‘I am telling you but I will not tell dad myself, because I don’t want to have it on my conscience if he drops dead with a heart attack. So if you think he should know, you can tell him yourself, not me’. So that night was the longest night of my life and I didn’t sleep a wink. I had to process all the implications of this new reality that had just landed onto my lap. I had to choose whether to stand by my 17 year old son or protect my marriage and my reputation in the Church. So I prayed for strength and by the morning I chose to stick with my son and be open about it, even if the whole world would turn against us. It was a difficult decision to take but I wanted to stand by my son, at such a vulnerable point in his life. So early that morning, I told my husband and the journey slowly unfolded and you would be pleased to know, that thankfully after this initial shock, my husband and I are both here.

It seems almost all parents feel this initial shock. Confusion and fear paralyze most parents. But for us Roman Catholics, an added concern is what the Church says about homosexuality. I realized that, when it comes to the LGBT reality, there are many misconceptions and myths that wrap people in doubt and fear. Although we may have some laws in place that protect the rights of homosexuals, there is still a long way to go until we see the change in culture and mentality that is needed. One of the very first challenges parents of gay children must face is: “What will people say?” In Catholic Malta, the second one is: “What does the Catholic Church say?”

Unfortunately, this is where many parents get confused and this is where pastoral care is felt most lacking. For instance, one of the members of our group is a separated mother of a 35 year old gay son. She tells her sad story of being rejected by her own brothers and sisters who before, were very close and supportive while she was going through her separation. But ever since her son ‘came out’ years ago, she and her son were no longer welcome to family weddings or Christmas reunions – they had been excluded by the whole extended family. This resulted in the son taking the blame upon himself and as a consequence, he is often suicidal. These are people who go to Mass every day and receive the Eucharist yet find it so easy to judge and to exclude.

I listen to many of these painful stories. To me, pastoral care is about meeting people where they stand and building a friendship with those who feel isolated, distant or cut-off from the Church or even their families – with those who are on the periphery of society – focusing therefore on emotional support and spiritual care. As Christians we must stand by the side of the poor and rejected, even if it causes us discomfort and humiliation. But there is still a lot of hostility and judgment out there. Our Christian communities need to build bridges and dialogue with those who are at the periphery of society. We need to offer them a SAFE SPACE where they can continue their faith journey: A SAFE SPACE where they can share their vulnerabilities.



So the more I was open about having a gay son, the more I became a magnet for people to approach me and these pastoral friendships began to unfold. In some ways I could offer emotional support and spiritual

accompaniment to parents who, like me, have experienced, overnight, that we have now become ‘the outsiders’, ‘the others’ who are under society’s critical gaze, ‘the talk of the town among friends and colleagues’, the misfits in society and the outcasts in our own church communities. This is something I experienced myself. I suddenly realised that I too am being judged and I too am being excluded but I would cling to the words from Isaiah: ‘You are precious in my eyes, you are honoured and I love you’ (Isaiah 43:4).

Anyway, I started to read many articles (eg: ‘Always our Children’) and books (some authors are here today) and to learn more about what the Church has to say about homosexuality. I felt however, that there were a number of contradictions in what my church said and what I know about my gay son.

I wanted to unite the two things I love most: my family and my Church. But while my Church refers to my son’s sexuality as ‘intrinsically disordered’, my son refers to my church as ‘judgmental and irrational’. And this interior dilemma is common among many Catholic parents who, like me, feel somewhat let down by our own church. So since there was nothing being offered in the Parishes, the Drachma Parents Group offered some pastoral accompaniment and helped parents deal with their

- denial: ‘It’s just a phase’,
- blame: ‘who’s fault is it?’,
- guilt: ‘what should I have not/done?’,
- anger: ‘why did God permit this?’,
- loss/grief: ‘we can’t become grandparents and must give up our dreams’,
- fear: ‘being excluded and judged’, ‘will my son die of HIV Aids?’,
- rejection: ‘should we risk telling family and friends?’,
- loneliness: ‘feeling abandoned even by the church’,
- and shame: ‘have I failed as a parent?’,

With regular bursts of tears and honest sharing in our meetings, we have moved toward a process of acceptance and reconciliation. Drachma takes its name from Luke 15 the parable of the lost coin. I think deep down we all want to be known, appreciated and ‘found’, and when our gay

children are no longer hidden but ‘come out’ in the open, then it is our turn to make our own journey of ‘coming out’ as parents.

## Dealing with the Catholic Church’s position on homosexuality

Despite my years of commitment and service in CLC Malta, I still tasted the stigma that LGBTs experience. Whenever I put to question the harsh language used in the Catechism of the Catholic Church such as intrinsically disordered, oh how I wish the Bishops would begin this Synod by changing that hurtful phrase! I felt I too was being stigmatized. I experienced rejection and exclusion from persons and institutions who knew me well. For instance, when I attended my first Gay Pride March as a guest speaker of the Family Group LISTAG in Turkey, some people in my community took it against me. I was misunderstood. When I attended the ILGA Conference in Turin some years ago, I had the chance to know how it feels to be in the minority (myself among over 200 LGBTs). I must have been the only Catholic heterosexual mother over there! It was not an easy experience for me but this propelled me to appreciate diversity and to continue to act as a bridge.

Church statements lacking in understanding and compassion towards the LGBT situation have pushed away many young people and the church is sadly ‘bleeding’. Priests and Popes have told our homosexual sons and daughters that they cannot express their sexuality in an intimate relationship, in a manner that would naturally lead towards a lifelong commitment. Their life is merely looked upon as an offering of oneself to God only by remaining celibate. These contradictions cause much pain and confusion for parents.

Pastoral care means that our Christian communities must go out of their way to make another feel cared for, to give the opportunity for people to feel special, more accepted, more loved as s/he is. We ‘are sent’ to the periphery to show hospitality and embrace diversity and in doing this, we should be radiating the merciful love of Jesus that goes beyond any family discord, any personal weakness, any community division and any human expectation. We ‘are

sent'; we do not go out of our own accord. It is all about 'being open' to the greatest needs around us and then, 'being sent' to places where we may be afraid to go. After His Resurrection, Jesus assured his apostles (and us) of His promise: "I will go before you into Galilee". Yes, I believe He is ALWAYS ahead of us, ready to accompany us in our pastoral journey.

## Dealing with my 'coming out' as a parent.

Like I said before, I too experienced being judged and felt the stigma LGBTs feel. The moment my son had 'come out' to me, I automatically started my own journey towards my own 'coming out' as a parent. This is also a very long and painful journey for us parents as much as it was for our children. While our children would have struggled interiorly for several years, the day we are told or find out our child is gay, we parents somehow have to be ready with the right answers and show the right attitude but this is not always the case.

In my encounters with parents having gay children, I note that for some parents this news would come to them as the final blow, after a series of several disappointments in life. They shut down or crumble, sometimes having to go on anti-depressants for several months. There is a deep sense of failure which leaves parents feeling paralyzed. These past six-and-a-half years, as a co-founder of the Drachma Parents Support Group, I have met many such parents who feel sorrow and regret about their initial response but they tell me that their child never really ever forgave them for the harsh words exchanged that first day.

In Malta, something that appears to be helping in this healing process is Drachma's monthly meetings. As I mentioned, we offer a 'SAFE SPACE' that welcomes parents who would be struggling with their child's 'coming out'. In the beginning, parents are typically quite lost and so we offer some leaflets with information in Maltese since very little exists. We offer encouragement so they can strengthen the bonds in their own family relationships. Sometimes the spouses take opposite positions and argue for months without any

progress. But when they come to Drachma they realise they are not alone, and this fills them with hope. They begin to explore new and positive approaches and to understand better this reality and understand their children too.

We learn from each other, we accompany one another during life's difficult and also happy circumstances. We offer safety, understanding, support and compassion. We pray together, we share experiences, we cry, we pass on good articles and books but we don't judge, we don't exclude and we don't give answers. We provide a vehicle where people are free to come and go, but after a number of meetings, they start to find themselves again and gain deeper perspective. They feel more ready to continue their faith journey in hope. Even if they choose to stop attending, they are still assured that we would still meet every third Thursday of every month! This stability is important in pastoral care.

Something else that works is sending emails to the Bishop. Whenever I listened to a priest's homily that was delivered with a prejudice tone against gays or whenever the Drachma Community celebrated a wonderful Christmas or Easter Mass, I would write to my Bishop to inform him and give him a most vivid description of the event.

Like me, other members of Drachma took different initiatives. Eventually, this led to building enough interest in the pastoral work of Drachma and some important follow-up meetings were held with the Bishops. Last February the Drachma Parents Group wrote a letter to the Bishop with specific recommendations for the upcoming Synod. And on May 17th IDAHO Mass was celebrated by the Bishop and was made public in the media. This was an important pastoral gesture by our Bishop which also helped to heal some wounds (especially after the Civil Union Law). Recently, I was also invited to give my input during a consultation meeting with the Bishop representing Malta at the Synod and I was one of 20 such advisors. So these humble initiatives are helping to build bridges, gain credibility and strengthen dialogue in the church.

Much of my time these days is spent meeting parents or answering their phone calls, listening and offering friendship. This is pastoral care. Although I feel I have little to offer them, yet there is little else where they feel they can turn to, to share their dilemma about linking 'gay and catholic'. I usually meet them alone first and they pour out their painful stories. This releases some of their anxiety and they are able to see some hope in that they are not alone in their journey towards acceptance.

When they attend their first monthly group meeting they often find solace in 'letting it all out' with parents who understand them since they share a common reality. It is God's active presence among us that begins the healing process of many, as we listen to one another's experiences. It is a joy to hear a husband express his gratitude and relief after finally seeing his wife smile for the first time in 12 years by the end of their first meeting.



It was wonderful to watch the elderly couple go home with some renewed hope in their hearts saying, 'We were afraid you would judge us and scold us for being bad parents, but you're okay. You people are nice people'. She felt SAFE.

And so, from my own 'coming out' process I began to realize:

- That it's ok to be identified as a parent of a gay child,
- it's ok to talk about it with others,
- it's ok to stand up in their defense during a casual conversation at a wedding,

- it's ok to stop people from passing unfair remarks or jokes about gays,
- it's ok to write something that shows what side of the fence I am on,
- it's ok to confront a priest about a homily or a Bishop about the words he used in his Pastoral letter in regard to gays.

Yes, it is a gradual but liberating process of becoming a parent, a second time.

St Ignatius of Loyola reminds us to ask: what is the most urgent and universal need? In my view, taking the hostility experienced by LGBTs upon ourselves, and choosing to defend them instead of judging them, is perhaps the need I see most urgent and universal right now in the life of the church. We need to help stop the bullying that goes on in schools. We need to help persuade countries to change their laws starting with those countries that still consider homosexuality to be a crime. The Church can lead by example. It needs to address this phenomenon by first showing it is on the side of gays and ready to defend them, with the same determination as when we defend the unborn child. It is important that we reduce the number of attempted suicides by educating people, so as to respect diversity. Immediately following the Bishops' Synod, the Catholic Church would do well to implement better ways of expressing its support in a concrete and outward way. We should insist on this. If we don't, who will?

## Conclusion:

Yes, our church is tired of pompous judgmental statements. It is tired of clashing symbols and empty words. People want to see real people, real testimonies of hope and love, people who listen, who make themselves available and who are ready to offer their time and their friendship.

So whoever feels lost, hidden or forgotten in the church would be pleased to find us busy right now, (like the woman in the Drachma parable) sweeping up the whole house of God and causing a household stir. They would be happy to know that we value and celebrate their worth and are doing whatever we can to build an inclusive Church. And hopefully, we will REJOICE with our friends, including the Bishops and the Pope!

## Journeying between the frontiers: An experience of mission in the Amazon

Being on mission in the Amazon is walking with the Lord full of expectation and constantly attentive to his voice and acts of providence. This, we have experienced and we are constantly discovering that each step on the way to follow the Lord invites us to go beyond ourselves, beyond our own selfishness. We discover how fragile we are and in need of his permanent inspiration, his closeness and tenderness.

In CLC, as part of an apostolic body, we feel a co-responsibility in reflecting about frontiers and to identify, in this corner of the world, how we experience those frontiers in a particular way. To us they are challenges: Globalization and Poverty, Family, Youth and Ecology. From our point of view, it is very difficult to speak of each of these in isolation and that is why we share our experience: a contribution that we hope can develop and expand the outlook of our community of the Amazons.

In this article, we aim to continue the same process of formulation of borders followed by the World Assembly of Lebanon in 2013 providing a specific vision of those frontiers based on our short experience with the children, the elderly, the women and the men with whom we have shared life in our district.

### Family

As members of CLC, we are not always close enough to what it means to be family in the midst of poverty. Tauan's mother says he has a "stain" in the head that causes intense pain. We asked how about going for tests and she says she's broke. Wanderson's mother died at age 47 from cervical cancer and now he and his brothers have to go and live with their grandmother. Meanwhile, Jeneide has had to live 17 years in a wheelchair having suffered from eclampsia during pregnancy and childbirth while Mary her mother cares for her and her daughter. Luis's mother was killed by a man who had more money and who has never been brought to justice and now Luis lives with his grandmother in one of the houses in the district.

Speaking of family in this context goes beyond a discussion of the various family



Carmen Alicia Amaya & Jairo Forero

situations: talk of family here is to narrate how life prevails despite the difficulties. The lack of basic sanitation, poor access to health care, unemployment, and lack of a decent place to live, are all circumstances that aggravate dramas for families living in poverty. However, despite the difficult context of the various family situations, one can also observe that among these very poor people there is a relationship that makes life possible: solidarity between neighbours, grandmothers who take care of their orphaned grandchildren or casual encounters among the womenfolk who help each other to manage the suffering. This is the presence of God's love in pain.

In the presence of families in this corner of the Amazon, we can understand that above all they are in an environment where they must love life. Seeing how love can overcome the difficulties imposed by lacks of all kinds of

things and services, we ask ourselves: are we, as CLC, willing to be evangelized by these families living in the midst of poverty?

## Ecology

Developing sensitivity and respect for creation depends on one's perspective.

Many years ago, Maria Lourdes had to leave Tucuruí because the world's largest hydroelectric plant was to be built there. So she had to move with her family to an inhospitable territory where, with her husband, she built a barraco (shed, poor habitation made of rough materials) and worked hard to develop a productive farm. For this, they had to deforest the land they bought. After many years, beset by many difficulties, including the abandonment of her husband, Maria Lourdes just lives in the district in the midst of uncertainty with her two sons.

People living in this particular context of poverty do not have the "ecological sensibility" to reflect on the dynamics of irreversible and accelerated devastation and depletion of the Amazon, because they need to exploit natural resources to survive. Faced by poverty, survival makes the question of care of creation rather irrelevant.

For us who want to develop further the sense of care for creation, we must recognize the reality for those people who need to survive and how much our pattern as consumers generates demand for raw materials coming from these regions of the planet. Reflecting on our responsibility in relation to the environment, we can remark that this relationship can assume the same value judgments that the Pharisee adopts vis-à-vis the publican (Luke 18: 9 - 14). We "condemn" those who commit crimes against the Amazon, not acknowledging that these are the result of our thoughtless consumerism. We know little or nothing of how the goods we consume are produced, and if we knew we might have to describe them as "masterminds" of crimes against the environment.

In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, the publican is simple and humble, whereas, the Pharisee presumes certainty, thinking he knows what to do and how to do it. This 'sensible' rational, technical and economic approach contrasts with the attitude of reverence of someone who knows that to get something out of life a lot of effort and respect is required. Maybe we need to remember that tax collectors and prostitutes are ahead of us in the kingdom of heaven and perhaps those who have spent their lives struggling in this territory have no greater guilt than those who put a price on everything that those people extracted with hard work and humility.

## Young people

In order to promote youth in our community and in the Church, it is necessary to understand how and what young people are living. Aline is an 18 year old woman who long ago completed her primary and secondary education and would like to study social sciences at a public university but has not passed the examination required for this. She has decided to take some technical courses to find work and earn a living while preparing for the entrance



examination; but it is difficult because the education she received was poor. Daniela 16 years suffers from severe renal failure and goes to the hospital for dialysis every other day. She missed school education because of her illness, so she cannot read or write.

The poverty and living conditions of young people in this district are difficult and are characterized by the lack of opportunities for an all-round development. The precariousness of the education they receive does not give access to higher education and therefore a good job; limited access to health and nutrition does not provide the right learning environment. However, amid the circumstances of exclusion in which young people are raised, it is possible to see in them the fight effort to be fulfilled and develop as individuals.

In this context, pastoral work with youth can be for them a support tool that helps them identify their potential and dreams from the Lord. Equally, it can also create a possible danger in that these community spaces could be used as a way place to escape reality in which they live and thus avoid the vital tasks that they have to face at this stage of life.

## Globalization and Poverty

Reflecting the reality of this frontier, we realize that we must understand, act out and evaluate at a regional level. We discovered that the local must be strongly rooted in people so that they can fight against that which is imposed globally by resorting to the wealth of culture. The hope transmitted between generations becomes the wisdom of the peoples and acceptance of different ways of experiencing faith and community life.

To go deep in each of the frontiers, formulating from them our action as CLC, we must reflect on the option for the poor, the same option St Ignatius proposes in the Spiritual Exercises as a grace to receive (Spiritual Exercises 146, 147 and 157). In our training programmes, as well as in the experience of the Spiritual Exercises, the option for the poor must be always present. We cannot ask the question without a personal experience that allows us to opt for it, and you cannot do that in a more concrete way every day if it is remote or a distant reality. In our CLC life do we experience the "actual poverty" [Spiritual Exercises 157] as a focal point of our apostolate at the frontiers?



## CLC at the UN

### DPI/NGO<sup>1</sup> Conference 2014



Ann Marie Brennan

World Christian Life Community sponsored a UN Conference Workshop in August 2014 in New York! NY CLC member and ocean scientist Nicholas Kim presented on the climate issue of how rising water levels are impacting coastal cities.

This 65th Annual UN DPI/NGO (Department of Public Information and Non-Governmental Organizations) Conference was entitled: 2015 and Beyond: Our Action Agenda. It will be held August 27 to 29, 2014 at the UN Headquarters in New York City. Its objectives of eradicating extreme poverty and sustainable development align with our CLC frontier priorities confirmed at the Lebanon Assembly: Globalization/ Poverty and Ecology. Plus, it offers a very informative and impactful way to participate in international advocacy. “A major civil society gathering at the UN, the Conference will provide an opportunity for civil society, international networks and activists to develop an Action Agenda to mobilize messaging, advocacy strategies, partnerships and accountability frameworks in the lead up to the launch of

intergovernmental negotiations at the beginning of the 69th Session of the General Assembly for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, due to culminate at a summit in September 2015.”

Recall that the Millenium Development Goals were established in 2000 with a target date of 2015. Because of their significant achievements, the international community has been promoting a new set of goals with a greater emphasis on sustainable development. Members of CVX Peru participated in events contributing to these sustainability development goals at COP20 Lima in December 2014.

Also attended this conference in New York members of our CLC UN working group: Joan Woods, Marie Schimelfening, Mars Custodio, and Ann Marie Brennan.

The three-day UN Conference of NGOs concluded on Friday 29 August with a reading of the Outcome Declaration by two young adults. This declaration is the distillation of presentations and discussions involving civil society to address the urgent needs of people—and our environment--around the world. It addresses the specific goals of the recently proposed Sustainable Development Goals which are a follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals. While the MDGs did not reach their goals, it is generally believed that they have served as a very successful mobilizing tool in making substantial, positive strides. It is hoped that the Sustainable Development Goals will do more, that they will motivate governments and civil society to address—and solve!--the compelling problems facing our world, particularly eradicating poverty and achieving environmental sustainability.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Public Information and Non-Governmental Organizations

The keynote speaker, H.E. Samantha Power, US Ambassador to the UN, gave a comprehensive summary of the dire problems facing our world. Still, she expressed an encouraging belief that the sustainable goals are doable. She wants people to feel empowered, that “people can be drivers behind these global efforts...in changing lives and in changing the world.” She encouraged the conference to also consider recommending the promotion of peace and good governance in eradicating poverty, noting that those areas of conflict in our world have the most poor and the least development.

This outcome declaration will be presented to Secretary General Ban Ki-moon as he prepares for the Climate Summit in September as well as to the President of the General Assembly, John Ashe, as he prepares for the next session of the General Assembly which has representation of 193 governments. Both leaders spoke to the Conference via video about the importance and value of civil society! Ban Ki-moon mentioned that NGOs are critically important here because they know what’s happening at the grassroots. He encouraged all of us that we have a “duty to be bold! People want this. The world needs this!”

During the opening session, we heard several talks from people representing diverse organizations, including indigenous people calling out for self-determination, people with disabilities requiring inclusion, Hadiza Bala Usma who led the “Bring Back Our Girls” campaign in Nigeria, and young adults demanding that we act responsibly for future generations. We expected a young man named Casey Gerald, founder of MBAs across America, to speak on the value of entrepreneurship in creating jobs; however, in a daring mo-

ment he spoke to the world’s need for spiritual healing, that this is a vision that we might all subscribe to. “The world is a mess! ...We have fallen into a moral and spiritual slumber that has allowed (this)... The whole world calls us to Wake Up! ... We need the courage to forgive, to love and heal wounds... Feed not just bodies but also souls... We are all in this together... Turn our lives into a light... Put spiritual awakening at the core.” We were also treated to music and song by a Korean Rock Star! Lee Sung Chui, who is also known as the “Emperor of Live Music,” sang a Korean Song as well as “A Bridge Over Troubled Waters.”

Each of the three days held several “Roundtable” Discussions as well as a wealth of Workshops. The variety and number were a little overwhelming to sort through, but this also spoke to the strong commitment and compassion of so many people who so strongly desire that our world be a better place for others. Over 2000 people attended this UN conference, including 120 member state representatives. There were also 3.6 million social media “hits” showing the great interest among people worldwide in following the proceedings of the conference.

World Christian Life Community co-sponsored two workshops. We were fortunate to have CLC member Nicholas Kim speak during the workshop entitled: “Emerging Solutions for Rising Waters



Impacting the Infrastructure of Cities Globally due to Climate Change.” Nicholas is an ocean scientist who has used computer modelling to illustrate and predict rises in sea levels due to global warming that will impact—in fact already have impacted—urban areas such as New York City

areas that harvest rain water, more recreational areas, etc. These design solutions promote housing for the poor, public safety, healthy environments, etc., but they can be expensive and require public policies and financing from both the public and private sector.

## Storm Surge Protection in the NY/NJ Harbor System



**Nicholas B. Kim**  
August 29, 2014

The second workshop co-sponsored by WCLC was called: “NGOs and Indigenous Leaders are Key Stakeholders in Partnership Building for the Post-2015 Development Agenda.” This turned out to be a very lively presentation with young, enthusiastic speakers on using networks of businesses, NGOs and government to create opportunities for indigenous tribes, young people, women in Africa, and children with heart disease. Sachem Hawk Storm, UN/NGO Representative for Tribal Link, shared the

necessitating the building of barrier walls in four rivers around Manhattan. The other speakers consisted of architects, an engineer, and professors with the Earth Institute of Columbia University. The Earth Institute, directed by leading thinker, author and professor Jeffrey Sachs, mobilizes scientific expertise and “studies and creates solutions for problems in public health, poverty, energy, ecosystems, climate, natural hazards and urbanization.” The panelists voiced concerns about how the pumping of drinking water and of oil in nearby waters has caused the sinking of already low-lying lands. They shared design plans for projects in areas which experience flooding such as New Orleans; Jiaxing, China; and even the Silicon Valley in California where companies such as Google and Facebook reside. Their designs incorporate integrated infrastructure systems—more open land, wetlands, canals, elevated levies, redesign of streets, elevated housing, sheep instead of lawn mowers!,

challenges and hopes of his tribe in the US. He said that many of the problems of indigenous people include poverty, destruction of their homes and environment, and alcoholism. He feels that these problems occur because the people lack the understanding of who they are. Ms. Jennifer Kushell founded a company called “Your Success Network” [www.ysn.com](http://www.ysn.com) which reaches out globally to create “a marketplace of jobs, internships, volunteering projects, consulting, franchising “ for young people. The other speaker Noha Misra works for “Solar Sisters” <http://www.solarsister.org/> a company that strives “to eradicate poverty by empowering women with economic opportunity.” They provide “solar and clean cooking technology with a deliberately woman-centered direct sales network to bring light, hope and opportunity to even the most remote communities in rural Africa.” The value of a workshop such as this came to light when a participant noted the

potential for Sachem Hawk Storm's people to find support for their culture by networking in creative ways with organizations such as those on the panel. Sachem's reply? "I was thinking the exact same thing!"

Another workshop that Marie Schimelfening and I attended was entitled "Ethical and Spiritual Values and the Sustainable Development Goals." The panelists advocated for a spiritual dimension to the Sustainable Development Goals, not too different to what Casey Gerald was suggesting in his Opening Session remarks. One noted gap in the STGs was... the people! "Where are the people in the process?" "Development for whom?" Professor Vasisth identified the needs to decentralize, to localize, and to ecologize. Also noted among the panelists was the idea that as each of us deepens our own spirituality and religious traditions, we go deeper to the source of all, the One Source. Quoting Teilhard du Chardin, "All that evolves, converges." As we look to the One Source, there are common values that we all share. So, if we can shine the "spotlight" on these common values rather than on our respective creeds and dogmas, we can experience an awakening of humankind. This way, rather than working within "boxes of identity" which create boundaries and sometimes conflict, we emerge "naturally toward profound interconnectedness." This is a big shift. And it needs to happen fast!

Our CLC NGO representative to the UN, Joan Woods, noted the interdependence of all the various issues in the outcome document for the STGs. For example, if an indigenous tribe is forced to leave their homeland because of environmental destruction—be it rising water levels, nuclear disasters, or deforestation—the people then are forced to move. This causes separation of families, and they become refugees in other lands, where people may not have the skills to succeed. They face poverty. As immigrants, their children are at

high risk of not receiving adequate education nor access to adequate healthcare. Our CLC UN working group was able to meet briefly with the representative from Caritas International, Joe Donnelly. We spoke about possibilities for faith-based organizations at the UN and opportunities to meet and collaborate in the future. Additionally, it is worth noting that there is another branch of the UN that deals specifically with climate change; this called the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC). It was felt at this conference that these branches of the UN and their goals complement and support one another. There will be two UNFCCC conferences in the next year, one in Lima, Peru in December 2014 and the other in Paris in 2015. We hope to have CLC members attend side events at these conferences.

There is so much more that could be shared on this UN Conference. It has been a very powerful experience. I noticed a comment on our facebook page: "as usual all their (sic) going to do is talk about it..and as usual nothing will get done to do anything about it.." This comment does highlight a common frustration. But I have to say that there was a strong sense among the Assembly participants in the call to action, to DO SOMETHING! One participant spoke with great passion that while we sit comfortably, talk-talk-talking, we have brothers and sisters at home who are suffering, who are hungry, who have no homes, who are being terrorized! It is time to ACT! Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, a speaker at one of the Roundtables, also spoke with great passion about the need for culture and the arts to open peoples' hearts and minds and understanding, to communicate the urgency and the message that "We are One Family. We share a Common House!" And we did indeed see multiple examples of people already engaged in significant action with great ideas that offer ways to make a great impact. Let's do our part to shine the light and build on these! AMDG!

### What can we do?

1. September 21st is International Day of Peace. On that day there will be a March for Climate in NYC, possibly other places too, to advocate for important climate initiatives at the Climate Summit being held by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and governments.
2. Hold your own governments—national and local—accountable to ensure basic human rights for all and to abide by responsible and peaceful practices and laws. Call them, email them, visit with them!
3. Evaluate one's own participation in the problems. For example, in the daily awareness examen, walk through the day considering attitudes, purchasing choices, food choices and other actions that might contribute to injustice, inequities, environmental destruction, division, etc.  
And also remember to give thanks for those blessings and actions that promote peace, life and unity.
4. Realistically, we cannot solve all the world's problems. So, in prayer and discernment, where can I—where can we--best use our gifts and availability, to meet the greatest needs before us, for the greater good, and with a multiplying effect?  
Know that we do not walk alone. We walk with one another, with Christ, with God's grace.

The year “2015 is recognized to be a once-in-a-generation opportunity for transformational change.”

### For more information:

1. Draft of Sustainable Development Goals:  
<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>
2. UN DPI/NGO Conference Outcome Declaration:  
<http://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/files/2014/08/DPINGOOOutcomeDoc-DeclarationFinal.pdf>
3. UN DPI/NGO Conference 2014 information:  
<http://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/conference-2014/>
4. Videos of conference talks during the Opening and Closing Sessions (look for :  
<http://webtv.un.org/>

# CLC-Asian Youth Day Workshop

## *Spirituality of Discernment for the Youth - With God in the World!*

In the Lebanon World Assembly, we discerned 'youth' as one of the frontiers that we need to stand on understanding the difficulty and necessity of youth formation. In the meeting of the Asia-Pacific (AP) region, we agreed that we need to do something for youth formation and need to find a concrete formation method for the region. However, it was not easy to make this vision into reality.

Then early 2014, CLC Hong Kong suggested that AP CLC look for the possibility of youth formation through Asian Youth Day (AYD) which was supposed to be held in Korea in August. Keeping the result of the discernment in the World Assembly in mind, CLC Korea tried to find out ways to materialize the suggestion on forming the youth through AYD. CLC Korea contacted the Steering Committee of AYD and got an answer that AP CLC might participate in the workshops on values of the AYD programs.

CLC Korea shared the process with AP national communities and world ExCo members, who happily expressed their sincere and active support for the AYD Workshop. As a host nation for the AYD, CLC Korea took a leading role in the process. It established a Task Force Team and a Content Team for the workshop. The Content Team discerned on how to share the treasure of CLC (Ignatian Spirituality) with the youth and drew up the framework.

CLC Korea officially submitted a proposal to the Steering Committee of AYD and got a confirmation that CLC would carry out a workshop on values for AYD participants. CLC Korea shared it with the AP region and Hong Kong, Taiwan and Philippines confirmed their participation in the workshops. As a whole, eleven CLC members from the AP communities were sent for the workshop. CLC workshops were carried out in three different languages (Mandarin, English, and Korean) but the theme and content was the same as we are one world

community. Out of 1900 AYD participants, 215 young people chose to participate in three CLC workshops. There were 100 participants in the Korean group, 58 in the Mandarin group and 57 in the English group.

In addition to the AYD workshop, CLC Korea used this opportunity to understand each other and deepen our identity and friendship with other CLC members as one world apostolic body. They visited the CLC Hope School, the National Secretariat of CLC Korea as well as a historical site of Korea. Each national community had been requested to prepare for the presentation on its community and when we shared it, CLC Korean members were also invited to listen to the activities of other national communities and feel that we are one world community. It was a great moment and we could experience again that sharing and having experiences together with member nations is necessary to live out our common mission.

The whole process of preparation, implementation and evaluation was carried



Group Photo in front of the Independence Hall

out not by CLC Korea alone but communally by all participants, the AP CLC and the world CLC. This workshop is an important milestone from the Lebanon Assembly to the Taiwan AP assembly (January 2015) in terms of Youth Formation. CLC Korea tried to carry

out this common mission through DSSE. We discerned the workshop as an AP common mission and carried out the whole process communally from discerning, sending, supporting to evaluating.

- Theme – **Spirituality of Discernment for the Youth - With God in the World!**
- Goal - Participants will understand the importance of discernment prayer which helps them to "be with God in the world" and experience a discerning life is possible to everyone through prayer.
- Content
  - <Part 1> **Lecture**
    - “In the world” - The world where we live in
    - “How does God look at the world and us who live in such world.”
    - “This world and God” - Who is God?
    - “How is God present with us in the world? How does He work?”
    - “With God in the world”
  - <Part 2> **Prayer and Sharing**

The most meaningful fruit of our engagement in the AYD workshop was the opportunity to respond to the challenge of reaching out from our roots of Ignatian Spirituality and go out to the frontiers. The CLC-AYD facilitators, were also blessed to have touched base with each

other’s national communities and to have worked together on a common Asia-Pacific CLC mission. We were also able to share with each other about our respective national communities. We also felt blessed by the generosity and kind-heartedness of our CLC-Korea hosts.



Group Photo in front of CLC Hope School (From left Vion NG, Agnes Shin, Charlene Tan, Tryphena Koh, Daphne Ho, Theodore Demaisip, Hui-Fang Hsu, Nichel Gaba, Serapia Jang)

The CLC-AYD session went very well because the concept and the activity perfectly fit the theme. It reflected the dynamics and travails of Christians (in general) and the youth (in particular) in the real world. The world is full of options but also distractions. The activity, in particular, mimicked decision-making in real life, where one has to choose within limited boundaries of time and space. When given more time for reflection and introspection, the participants usually followed and committed to gospel values. There

were also instances when participants would choose one gospel value over another, thus reflecting how people, when guided by gospel truths, do not choose between “good” and “bad” but between “good” and “better.”

Our activities fitted well with the theme of the AYD. The guided daily examen exercise has given the participants a good time to meet God in silence after a few days of excitement and consolidate what they had been through in the AYD. The youth also treasured the moments they shared in small group about their experience in the prayers. Some youth expressed that they were eager in meeting God during the AYD but the busy schedule has sometimes made them difficult to have a moment of silence to pray and to reflect. So, what we provided has just filled that gap.

After the activity, we felt very blessed (and relieved!) because it turned out very well. The participants’ engagement with the session and with each other was very rich, deep and meaningful. The discussions in the small group sharing were very eager, profound and personal. It was very heart-warming.

Giving out of souvenir bands, which had the inscription: “Finding God in all things,” was a good way of summarizing and ending the activity. It was really popular among participants and thanks to that inscription the participants can remember the theme later in the daily life. It was the first time we introduce the Ignatian Spirituality to young people outside CLC. So, we tried using simple language, as Fr General had reminded us in the WGA in Lebanon, in our presentation and many of them have enjoyed the time and way they prayed. Their response has strengthened our faith in introducing our spirituality to more young people.

This collaboration among the AP team was actually a formation for us. We did not only learn a lot more about our spirituality from working and sharing together, but also strengthen our CLC identity as one body. We



CLC AYD Workshop (English Group)

could feel the Holy Spirit has been leading and guiding us through this beautiful experience.



Group Photo at the National Secretariat of CLC Korea

## Diseases and temptations which weaken our service to the Lord<sup>1</sup>

**T**he Community is called constantly to improve and to grow in communion, holiness and wisdom, in order to carry out fully its mission. And yet, like anybody, like any human body, it is also exposed to diseases, malfunctioning, and infirmity. These temptations are naturally a danger for each Christian and for every community, congregation, parish and ecclesial movement; and they can strike at the individual and the community levels.

**1. The disease of thinking we are “immortal”, “immune” or downright “indispensable”, neglecting the need for regular check-ups:** A Community which is not self-critical, which does not keep up with things, which does not seek to be more fit, is a sick body. It is the disease of the rich fool in the Gospel, who thought he would live forever (cf. Lk 12:13-21), but also of those who turn into lords and masters, and think of themselves as above others and not at their service. It is often an effect of the pathology of power, from a **superiority complex**, from a narcissism which passionately gazes at its own image and does not see the image of God on the face of others, especially the weakest and those most in need. The antidote to this plague is the grace of realizing that we are sinners and able to say heartily: “We are unworthy servants. We have only done what was our duty” (Lk 17:10).

**2. The disease is the “Martha complex”, excessive busy-ness:** It is found in those who immerse themselves in work and inevitably neglect “the better part”: sitting at the feet of Jesus (cf. Lk 10:38-42). Jesus called his disciples to “rest a while” (cf. Mk 6:31) for a reason, because neglecting

needed rest leads to stress and agitation. A time of rest, for those who have completed their work, is necessary, obligatory and should be taken seriously: by spending time with one’s family and respecting holidays as moments of spiritual and physical recharging. We need to learn from Ecclesiastes that “for everything there is a season” (3:1-15).

**3. The disease of mental and spiritual “petrification”:** It is found in those who have a heart of stone, the “stiff-necked” (Acts 7:51-60), in those who in the course of time lose their interior serenity, alertness and daring, and hide under a pile of papers, turning into paper pushers and not men of God (cf. Heb 3:12). It is dangerous to lose the human sensitivity that enables us to weep with those who weep and to rejoice with those who rejoice! This is the disease of those who lose “the sentiments of Jesus” (cf. Phil 2:5-11), because as time goes on their hearts grow hard and become incapable of loving unconditionally the Father and our neighbor (cf. Mt 22:34-35).

**4. The disease of excessive planning and of functionalism:** When the apostle plans everything down to the last detail and believes that with perfect planning things will fall into place, he becomes an accountant or an office manager. Things need to be prepared well, but without ever falling into the temptation of trying to contain and direct the freedom of the Holy Spirit, which is always greater and more flexible than any human planning (cf. Jn 3:8). We contract this disease because “it is always more easy and comfortable to settle in our own sedentary and unchanging ways.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the address of His Holiness Pope Francis in the presentation of the Christmas greetings to the Roman Curia. December 22nd, 2014

**5. The disease of poor coordination:** Once its members lose communion among themselves, the body loses its harmonious functioning and its equilibrium; it then becomes an orchestra which produces noise: its members do not work together and lose the spirit of fellowship and teamwork. When the foot says to the arm: “I don't need you”, or the hand says to the head, “I'm in charge”, they create discomfort and scandal.

**6. The “spiritual Alzheimer's disease”:** It consists in losing the memory of our personal “salvation history”, our past history with the Lord and our “first love” (Rev 2:4). It involves a progressive decline in the spiritual faculties which in the long or short run greatly handicaps a person by making him incapable of doing anything on his own, living in a state of absolute dependence on his often imaginary perceptions. We see it in those who have lost the memory of their encounter with the Lord; in those who no longer see life's meaning in “deuteronomic” terms; in those who are completely caught up in the present moment, in their passions, whims and obsessions; in those who build walls and routines around themselves, and thus become more and more the slaves of idols carved by their own hands.

**7. The disease of rivalry and vainglory:** When appearances, the color of our clothes and our titles of honor become the primary object in life, we forget the words of Saint Paul: “Do nothing from selfishness or conceit but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Phil 2:3-4). This is a disease which leads us to be men and woman of deceit, and to live a false “mysticism” and a false “quietism”. Saint Paul himself defines such persons as “enemies of the cross of Christ” because “they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things” (Phil 3:19).

**8. The disease of existential schizophrenia:** This is the disease of those

who live a double life, the fruit of that hypocrisy typical of the mediocre and of a progressive spiritual emptiness which no doctorates or academic titles can fill. It is a disease which often strikes those who abandon pastoral service and restrict themselves to bureaucratic matters, thus losing contact with reality, with concrete people. In this way they create their own parallel world, where they set aside all that they teach with severity to others and begin to live a hidden and often dissolute life. For this most serious disease conversion is most urgent and indeed indispensable (cf. Lk 15:11-32).

**9. The disease of gossiping, grumbling and back-biting:** It is a grave illness which begins simply, perhaps even in small talk, and takes over a person, making him become a “sower of weeds” (like Satan) and in many cases, a cold-blooded killer of the good name of our colleagues and confrères. It is the disease of cowardly persons who lack the courage to speak out directly, but instead speak behind other people's backs. Saint Paul admonishes us to do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent (Phil 2:14-15).

**10. The disease of idolizing superiors:** This is the disease of those who court their superiors in the hope of gaining their favor. They are victims of careerism and opportunism; they honor persons and not God (cf. Mt 23:8-12). They serve thinking only of what they can get and not of what they should give. Small-minded persons, unhappy and inspired only by their own lethal selfishness (cf. Gal 5:16-25). Superiors themselves could be affected by this disease, when they court their collaborators in order to obtain their submission, loyalty and psychological dependency, but the end result is a real complicity.

**11. The disease of indifference to others:** This is where each individual thinks only of himself and loses sincerity and warmth of

human relationships. When the most knowledgeable person does not put that knowledge at the service of his less knowledgeable colleagues. When we learn something and then keep it to ourselves rather than sharing it in a helpful way with others. When out of jealousy or deceit we take joy in seeing others fall instead of helping them up and encouraging them.

### **12. The disease of a lugubrious face.**

Those glum and dour persons who think that to be serious we have to put on a face of melancholy and severity, and treat others – especially those we consider our inferiors – with rigor, brusqueness and arrogance. In fact, a show of severity and sterile pessimism are frequently symptoms of fear and insecurity. A heart filled with God is a happy heart which radiates an infectious joy: it is immediately evident! So let us not lose that joyful, humorous and even self-deprecating spirit which makes people amiable even in difficult situations. How beneficial is a good dose of humor!

**13. The disease of hoarding:** When an apostle tries to fill an existential void in his heart by accumulating material goods, not out of need but only in order to feel secure. To these persons the Lord repeats: “You say, I am rich, I have prospered and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked. So be zealous and repent” (Rev 3:17, 19). Accumulating goods only burdens and inexorably slows down the journey!

**14. The disease of closed circles, where belonging to a clique becomes more**

**powerful than belonging to the Body and, in some circumstances, to Christ himself:**

This disease too always begins with good intentions, but with the passing of time it enslaves its members and becomes a cancer which threatens the harmony of the Body and causes immense evil – scandals – especially to our weaker brothers and sisters. Self-destruction, “friendly fire” from our fellow soldiers, is the most insidious danger. It is the evil which strikes from within; and, as Christ says: “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste” (Lk 11:17).

**15. The disease of worldly profit, of forms of self-exhibition:** When an apostle turns his service into power, and his power into a commodity in order to gain worldly profit or even greater power. This is the disease of persons who insatiably try to accumulate power and to this end are ready to slander, defame and discredit others, even in newspapers and magazines. Naturally, so as to put themselves on display and to show that they are more capable than others. This disease does great harm to the Body because it leads persons to justify the use of any means whatsoever to attain their goal, often in the name of justice and transparency!

We need to be clear that it is only the Holy Spirit who can heal all our infirmities. It is the Holy Spirit who sustains every sincere effort at purification and in every effort at conversion. It is he who makes us realize that every member participates in the sanctification of the Body and its weakening.

# 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Migration Network of CLC Europe

*Luxembourg, 14-16 November, 2014*

In November 2014, the CLC Community in Luxembourg and the Ignatian Group for Migration (GIM) were invited to the 6th Meeting of the CLC Europe Network for Migration. It aimed to provide an opportunity for sharing experiences and for deepening our knowledge and understanding of the Roma people in Europe.

In all we were 28 from 8 national CLC communities from across Europe: Austria, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, France, Spain, and Hungary.

## **Saturday, November 15**

We enjoyed the knowledge, skills and commitment of Nathalie, Marie-Colette and Catherine of CLC-France who accompany the Roma population in France (St Denis, Nantes and Grenoble), Bulgaria and Romania. The presence of Barbara and Stephen, co-workers with the Jesuits in Hungary in Projects for Roma people, was a blessing to all participants. We are now aware that the Roma are a nation of 12 million people - without having their own country - are full citizens of the European Union with the same rights and duties, including the right to free movement.

We made time to learn a little history and trajectory of Roma communities. Originating from Northern India, they were for centuries slaves or agricultural workers and had no access to land and were manufacturers of various iron objects. Integrated as unskilled workers in the socialist countries of Central and Southeastern Europe, Roma are now the biggest losers as a result of the fall of communism. Because today's enterprises often lack flexibility, they have not been integrated into the capitalist market system. For example, in France, though they have knowledge about recycling they do not have access to garbage collection as this is considered theft. This lack of economic security nurtures further increase in crime,

criminal networks and trafficking. It seems urgent to provide better care and recognition of their ability to survive in poverty, with hope and strength to continually rebuild despite rejection and continued failures. To support Roma communities, it is important to deal with and support their leaders, who then will have long term success in changing attitudes and living conditions. As members of CLC, we must think globally and act locally. We cannot change a society or an entire macroeconomic system: just seek to do everything possible to find and accompany gypsies, seeing in them a gift from God.

## **Sunday, November 15**

Denis Dobbstein, a member of CLC in Belgium and consultant to the World CLC Executive Council, shared his thoughts on the mission of CLC in Europe in the field of migration, on the Migration Network and its role, and his suggestions and criteria for growing as an Apostolic Body.

Adelaide La Casta, Eurolink CLC Spain, then spoke of the World Ex-Co Invitation to CLC Spain in recent months, to take over the coordination of the Migration Network in Europe until now led by the CLC Community in Luxembourg, specifically Agnes Rausch. CLC in Spain passed the request to the national Apostolic Migration Team, who after discernment decided to accept the invitation in



collaboration with the Eurolink. Adelaide said they are very grateful and excited about this new challenge. She quoted some excerpts from the document of Malta on the subject and thanked Agnes and the team in Luxembourg for their work.

As a result of one of the recommendations of the last Assembly in Regensburg, the Euroteam sent a questionnaire to all national communities enquiring about their activity in this field. Not all communities responded and others have no particular involvement in this mission field. Those present shared their experiences. The Communities of France, Luxembourg, Italy and Spain described what they are doing. Along with Malta, these are the communities most involved with real migrants. In France they run the "Atelier de l'etranger", in Luxembourg there is "GIM" and in Spain a National Apostolic Migration Team. In Italy there are quite a few members involved but are not specifically organized. Finally, in Germany and Austria, some members are involved in some relevant activity in a personal capacity.

For the rest of the morning we shared our future dreams and desires for the Network and what it could offer. The following are the possible ideas put forward for the strengthening of the CLC European Migration Network:

1. Raise the awareness of the reality of migration: to inform, educate and enable experiences of contact with real life situations... Especially for CLC members and communities in Europe unfamiliar

with this reality.

2. Help CLC members and communities to practise DEAE commitment regarding migrants. Being present in this social situation as CLC.
3. For CLC members and communities in Europe already involved in this work:
  - a. accompanying and meeting them to provide emotional effective support;
  - b. exchanging personal and community experiences;
  - c. providing training and information;
4. Discerning a (Europe-wide) project or common mission;
5. Organizing advocacy at European level

Carlo Cellemare, CLC Italy, shared his desire to organize a volunteer experience in the South of Italy, together with the immigrant population.

Both the Euroteam and Exco offer us their support and solidarity on our journey.

We return to our lives with gratitude and hope in our hearts.

***"When we forget compassion,  
we forget God.  
God is a God of compassion"***

*P. Nicolas*

*Agnes Rausch, CLC Luxembourg, former  
Coordinator CLC-European Migration Network*

*Maria Morales, CLC Spain, CLC-European  
Migration Network*

*Adelaide La Casta, Eurolink CLC Spain*



# CLC at the service of Persons Living with HIV/AIDS in Rwanda

At the end of a process of communal discernment, and in the spirit of the Nairobi World Assembly, CLC in Rwanda chose to work for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS [PV VIH in French] as their communal or common mission in 2005.

We remember that Rwanda experienced an extremely dark period in 1994, with the genocide of the Tutsis, which killed hundreds of thousands. Rape was used as a weapon of war by some of the perpetrators, so HIV became widespread among those who escaped the genocide and among those in the refugee camps of the region around the Great Lakes.

The fabric of social and family life was destroyed, and despair drove many to dangerous behaviour in a period of extreme poverty. In spite of the efforts by public authorities and different NGOs in the fight against HIV, there were still needs not met; and we sought to find exactly where Christ was waiting for our cooperation. That is how we kept on with this common mission for those living with HIV/AIDS. The aim at the beginning - spiritual guidance - has developed into an integrated support (psychosocial, educational and financial), that takes account of the deep needs encountered in these areas.

Since the sending on mission of the first CLCs committed to the communal mission in December 2005, the project has developed. This has been a journey with saw toothed edges, highs and lows, times of consolation and desolation, but after taking everything into account, the results are positive and encouraging.

The creation of “ Centre CVX IREME: Centre for integrated support of persons living with HIV “ which was inaugurated in 2013, has made tangible the efforts of the national CLC with support from World CLC and many other friends.

We note that “IREME” is a word in kinyarwanda that signifies “ the foundation, the essence”; its use reminds CLC Rwanda that they are called to help the individual affected and infected by HIV, to find and to strengthen the foundation and very essence of a life centred around the Love of Christ. The verb “KUREMA” signifies “ to create, to build, to restore”. We want to restore a sense of life to the individual (find again one’s zest for life); arouse in the individual the certainty that he or she has value in the eyes of others, and especially in the eyes of God.

The communal mission today forms part of the apostolate of CLC, from the first welcome sessions, continuing during the period of formation, right up to the achievement of a committed community. The taking on or belonging to the mission increases by degrees.

The operation of the Centre is ensured administratively by a financial secretary, and technically by a counsellor qualified in clinical psychology and a background in nursing, and supported by volunteers from CLC, who provide spiritual guidance to the beneficiaries.



Yvonne UMURUNGI



The Apostolic Commission of the National CLC ensures the supervision of the Centre. After faltering beginnings, the Centre is operating more and more smoothly.



The premises are rented from the Urumuri Centre; a social and cultural Jesuit Centre located in the grounds of the Christus Centre, at Remera, Kigali. The number of beneficiaries who receive these services at the Centre is now 107 (without counting dependants). We have decided to keep to this number for now, taking account of the Centre's limited financial resources. All the beneficiaries who enrol at the Centre are evaluated by the counsellor/psycholo-

gist, who decides if they need deeper psychological support, or if they are able to continue just with their spiritual CLC guide, while having recourse to occasional supervision by the coun-

sellor. At the present time, 36 of the 107 beneficiaries are receiving regular psychological support. The children of the poorest families receive moderate financial support for buying school stationery (37 pupils). The Centre has also paid the health insurance for 62 beneficiaries and their dependants, thus giving them access to health care in the public health system of the country.

The great majority of the beneficiaries are living in difficult financial situations. In order to lighten their difficulties, the Centre

supports fund raising activities [AGRs in French] initiated by groups of beneficiaries, one of which is linked to the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary. Up to the present, 4 projects (43 beneficiaries) have been selected and have received starter funds. From the outset these beneficiaries receive training in the running of small AGRs to ensure that they will be able to sustain these projects while also meeting their own needs.



First Lady of Rwanda, Madam Jeannette KAGAME

As mentioned above, from its beginning, the communal mission has been supported financially by the dues of CLC members, a contribution from World CLC, and fund raising activities organised regularly by CLC (concerts, dinners with auctions, dinner dances, etc).

The purpose of the last fund raising activity organised on 5 December 2014 was to collect funds for the operation of the Centre IREME over the next few months, and to increase the number of AGRs for the beneficiaries. This fund raising dinner was enhanced by the presence of the First Lady of Rwanda, Madam Jeannette KAGAME, who had graciously accepted to be the Distinguished Guest of the event.

The choice of Madam Jeannette KAGAME as distinguished guest follows from her involvement in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Indeed, she has not been blind to the suffering caused by HIV/AIDS, especially at the time when the epidemic reached its height and wreaked devastation. Since the beginning of this decade she has been among the pioneers in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Rwanda, with the initiative PACFA (Protection and Care of Families against HIV/AIDS), working to obtain a global approach to the prevention of HIV/AIDS and the protection of families. She was also the Co-founder of the Organisation of the First Ladies of Africa against HIV/AIDS, where she was President from 2004 to 2006. Over time, PACFA has integrated projects in different areas; and this has led to the present organisation “IMBUTO FOUNDATION”. The Foundation, which is identified by the nature of “seed” aims not only at access to health care and economic support for the families affected by HIV/AIDS, but also the dissemination of information and the changing of behaviour around reproductive health, and the protection of youth from HIV/AIDS. Imbuto Foundation also works to nourish the abilities of young Rwanda girls, especially those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, by encouraging them towards a culture of excellence in their studies, mentoring them to acquire skills as entrepreneurs and leaders.

In her message addressed to the assembly called by the CLC on 5 December, Madam Jeannette KAGAME showed that she knew CLC very well, its charism and its apostolate in Rwanda. She emphasised the role of organisations like CLC in the research into the wellbeing of the most disadvantaged. She told us that Ignatian spirituality had a place in society, and had much to give to the people; so she encouraged us to continue working with our mission.

In the conversations during

the meal, Madam KAGAME requested the CLC as well as the Jesuits to become deeply involved in the education of children, and the present young people who are confronted by many difficulties. She insisted that the problems in society, which we are facing today, have their origin in the family. She deplored the fact that values such as the traditional beliefs of the community about the education of children are lost. “So you have much to accomplish and you have the duty to do so”, she declared.

Such a message and such a request echoes “to the frontiers of the family and of youth”, as they were identified by World CLC during the World Assembly of 2013 in Lebanon, and taken up by CLC Rwanda. This also comes back to wider movements at the heart of the Church, notably in relation to the Synod on the family.

Our sincere thanks to Madam Jeannette KAGAME, the personnel of the Imbuto Foundation, to businesses, to state and para state organisations, private individuals, and to the CLC, who have contributed to the success of this fund raising. May the Lord our God bless all those men and women who seek to rekindle in individuals affected by HIV/AIDS the desire to live and to serve, the desire for the Kingdom of heaven!

*Dr Yvonne UMURUNGI,  
President of CLC Rwanda*



St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582). Doctor of the Church. She was canonized in 1622 with Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier.

## I was born for You

I am yours, I was born for You:  
What do You want me to do?

“Celebrating the Fifth Centenary of Saint Teresa is, above all, setting out to discover that among the ashes of this world, the embers of another possible world still smolder, a world that is much more just and much more humane. Remembering her has the power to

make you aware of how much you can do to change things, if you decide to change yourself, to choose another life that is simpler and more committed, more in line with the Gospel of Jesus, the Gospel of love.

In that way, we can ensure that the Centenary will not be just a simple “archeological celebration” or a romantic escape to a glorious past which is wistfully longed for, and we will be able to make it a time of renovation and spiritual reactivation, of rejuvenation.

Celebrating this commemoration in this way will help us, from Saint Teresa’s hand, meet the present and future with courage, creativity and decisiveness, wagering for a world that is more just, more caring, in which every person can discover that he or she is unique and unrepeatable, is loved and is called to be joyful, but who will not come to be that if closed up in oneself and unable to open up to God and others”



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