



**18th General Assembly of CLC
Amiens 2023**

Publication of the **Christian Life Community**

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18th World Assembly of the Christian Life Community

Discerning paths for hope

‘You will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth’
(Acts 1:8)

August 2023 Amiens, France

Progressio Supplement # 77

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Borgo Santo Spirito, 4 - 00193 Rome – Italy**



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Prologue

Manuel Martínez Arteaga

Amiens, the historic French city where the famous writer, playwright and poet Jules Verne lived and died, and home to the majestic Gothic cathedral that marks the end of the era of classical Gothic cathedrals, hosted the 18th General Assembly of the Christian Life Community (CLC). Phileas, representing the CLC national community in France, welcomed 185 delegates from 75 countries to discern paths of hope.



Manuel Martínez Arteaga
Progressio Editor

Each CLC General Assembly is a unique opportunity for us, as a lay, apostolic and Ignatian community, to open ourselves to reality and, following the proposal of St. Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises, to "*seek and find*" God's will to continue our pilgrimage. At the General Assembly in Buenos Aires, the methodology of the ESDAC Team was adopted; this time, in Amiens, the discernment process was framed in the "U" Theory.

The first days of the Assembly were dedicated to attentive and active listening by the delegates, in a process of downloading. This period of downloading allowed the delegates to open themselves to the reality that each one brought, to open themselves to the different community realities and to open themselves to others: What has the spirit been doing with CLC in the last few years? The mind and the heart have been opening up, welcoming the community, letting go of our own in order to build a true communion with others and allowing the whole group to make God present, to connect with the source and thus to ask ourselves, first, what are we called to?, and then, how shall we act in the face of this call? Open to newness, allowing ourselves to be surprised by the God who is always ready to give and surrender himself and who needs us to "crystallise" the graces He wants to give us.

Progressio Supplement 77

This document that you have in your hands gathers together the materials that

nourished the experience of the delegates in their discernment process during the Assembly, taking us from the "I" to the "We". While it is impossible to convey here the totality of the delegates' experience, we hope that when the delegates return to their national communities, they will have been able to share their experiences.

In the supplement, you will find the message of Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, inviting us to be disciples of Christ, with lives transformed by the Spirit. The welcome from the CLC National Service Team in France encouraged us to learn from our differences and share diverse experiences.

The World Executive Council presented its report on "our being apostolic, lay and Ignatian community", a living document that explores and feels community in all its diversity and breadth. We trust that you will see yourselves reflected in this report and that it will continue to inspire reflection and the search for concrete responses to today's challenges.

On Sunday, August 6, the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, more than 900 members from various national communities met with the delegates. The day included a Eucharist in the cathedral, presided by Fr Arturo Sosa, SJ, Superior General of the Society of Jesus and World Ecclesiastical Assistant of CLC. He reflected on the threefold invitation of the meeting on Mount Tabor: to give thanks for the moments of clarity, consolation, consolidation and confirmation of our discernments; to set out on the way; and to listen to the Lord.

The following day, Fr Sosa addressed a message to the Assembly focusing on hope, inviting us to live in "hope mode" as a compass for our discernment. A hope anchored in Christ will help us to better find the paths towards our full vocation.

Fruits of the Assembly

Among the first fruits of this Assembly was the incorporation of four new communities as full members: Slovakia, Ethiopia, New Zealand and Sweden. In addition, the General Norms were amended and the creation of an international commission to revise the General Principles and General Norms was approved. The World Leadership Community in Discernment (World Executive Council) was also elected and the Assembly's final document, "Discerning Path of Hope as a World Community", was presented.

The final document offers a journey with concrete suggestions and recommendations, and needs the commitment of the whole community to be incarnated in reality. Like the disciples of Emmaus, we are called to set out and tell others what we have seen and heard, discerning concrete ways to be a community of hope.

A Key to the Future

The General Assembly of Buenos Aires left us with three key verbs, three calls that feed each other and each one makes the other grow:

- To **DEEPEN** our identity, through an interior conversion that allows us to be more faithful and to take better care of our charism in all its dimensions:
- To humbly **SHARE** with others the gift of Ignatian spirituality lived in our lay vocation. We consider Ignatian discernment, tools and methods as precious gifts that we cannot keep to ourselves;
- To **GO FORTH** to serve those most in need and to sow the seeds of mercy, joy and hope to follow Jesus more closely and work with him in building the Kingdom.

In Amiens, three other key words (3Cs) emerged for our response as a World Community: Connect, Cooperate and Collaborate.

In an ever-changing and interconnected world, we want to find new ways to collaborate, connect and cooperate to be more effective in our mission. Only by connecting, cooperating and collaborating can we feel that we are co-creators of hope.

This supplement is an invitation to deepen our identity, share our spirituality and move forward together in building the Kingdom. May these words guide us on our journey as a global community.

Original in Spanish

Message from Cardinal Kevin Farrell

Prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life

Prot. n. 2023/381



Cardinal Kevin Farrell

Dear Friends,

as you take part in the 18th General Assembly of the Christian Life Community, this message is sent as an encouragement for your efforts to strengthen the bonds that allow you to work together in transforming the world according to the Gospel.

During this Assembly you ask for *the grace to go forth*, and for the Lord to *show you the way*. The experience of the Apostles, also seeking the best way forward, was that Jesus revealed himself as the way, the truth and the life, the only path to the Father (John 14:6).

Be in no doubt that this fundamental truth is given as a rock for your own lives and endeavours.

The Apostles also experienced their relative powerlessness when faced with the scale of the task ahead, and to overcome this they received the Holy Spirit. The Scripture passage which guides your Assembly is, in its shortened form “*You will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth*” (Acts 1:8). The full citation of this is verse, however, is: “*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth*”. This passage, therefore, also presents the means which the Lord provides in order to go forth on mission. The power of the Holy Spirit is given to us in Baptism and renewed constantly throughout our lives. My prayer therefore is that your Assembly will become a moment when the Holy Spirit is poured out in abundance on each of you and, through you, upon each member of the Christian Life Community.

The passage from the Acts of the Apostles also reveals an itinerary. To the Apostles gathered on the Mount of Olives, outside the walls of the Holy City, Jesus says they are to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Proclaiming Christ in the city means announcing him in our daily lives and occupations, affirming that Christ is present to the daily lives and preoccupations of our contemporaries. Proclaiming Christ in Judea, the land where David ruled as King over a people who made and broke nume-

rous covenants with God, can be for us an image for the new evangelisation of lands where people have forgotten or learned to ignore Christ and the Gospel. Proclaiming Christ in Samaria, a land whose people recognised Abraham as their father in faith and awaited the Messiah, but were separated from Israel and its law, can be for us an image for the evangelisation of individuals and peoples who do not ascribe to our religious traditions and with regards to whom we often find ourselves culturally separated or even opposed. Proclaiming Christ to the ends of the earth, to places which go beyond our boundaries of knowledge and experience, can be for us an image for the evangelisation of every human heart, in every situation of joy, hope, sadness and despair (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1).

The chosen theme for your assembly is that of “*Discerning Paths of Hope*”. My own hope for you is that the Holy Spirit will help you discern new opportunities for his grace to touch human hearts, and will strengthen your faith in his power to transform all lives and situations, even those that seem beyond hope. It is indeed the Spirit given at Pentecost, the ‘father of the poor’, the best of all consolers, who — as the Pentecost Sequence reminds us — gives refreshing peace, comfort to those who toil, solace to those who suffer, healing to the wounded, strength to the weary, cleansing to the guilty, suppleness to the stubborn, warmth to the frozen-hearted, and guidance to those who have lost their way.

Spirit-filled evangelizers means evangelizers fearlessly open to the working of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, the Spirit made the apostles go forth from themselves and turned them into heralds of God’s wondrous deeds, capable of speaking to each person in his or her own language. The Holy Spirit also grants the courage to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness (*parrhesia*) in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition. Let us call upon him today, firmly rooted in prayer, for without prayer all our activity risks being fruitless and our message empty. Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God’s presence.” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 259)

My prayer for you, gathered in Assembly, and for the Christian Life Community, is that you might indeed be these disciples of Christ through a life transfigured by the Holy Spirit.



Message from the National Service Team of CLC in France

Dear delegates, dear friends,

It is with great joy that the Service Team of the Christian Life Community in France (ESCN) welcomes you to Amiens for this World Assembly.

Hervé, the ecclesiastical assistant

Pascale, the President

Jean Yves, the Treasurer

Michel, the secretary

warmly greet you: Welcome

As representatives and servants of the Christian Life Community in France, we are delighted to welcome the diversity of our worldwide community, and to discover your faces from the five continents, gathered together to "discern paths of hope" according to the theme of our assembly.

Over the coming days, we will be able to deepen our encounters, forge links, share our joys and hopes, but also our questions and doubts. The days ahead will be intense, demanding but certainly enriching. We will have the opportunity








The Service Team of the Community of Christian Life in France (ESCN)

to learn from our differences, to compare our experiences in order to deepen our common journey as followers of Christ.

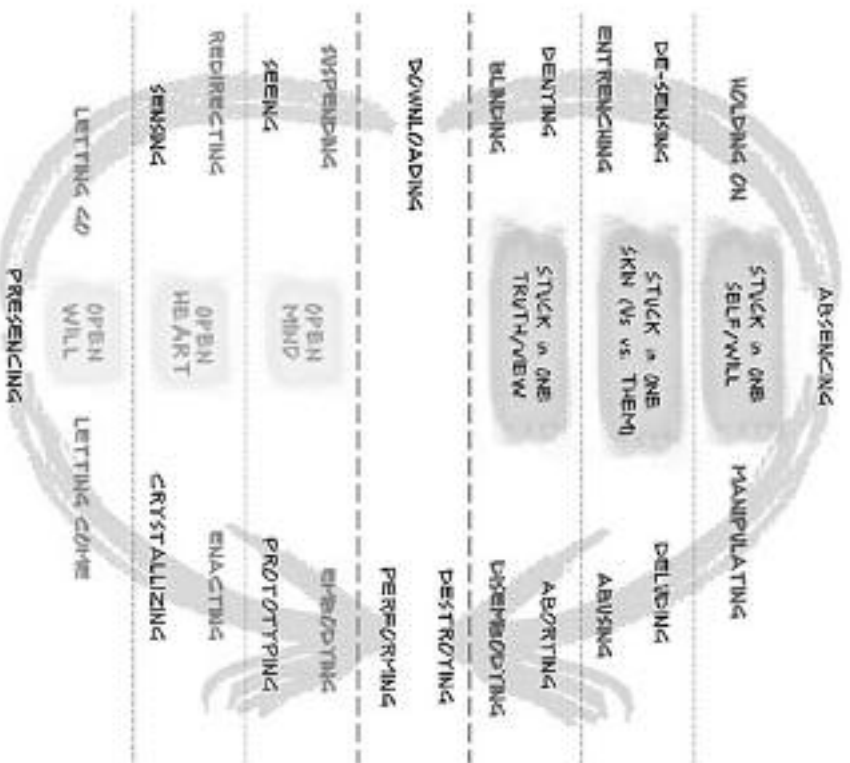
Once again, we wish you a wonderful assembly.



OUR U-JOURNEY

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
Opening myself					Fresh mind 				
	Opening to our realities			Open heart 			Opening to the future		
			Opening ourselves	Free will 					
How are we?	What has the spirit been doing?			Opening to God	What are we called to?		How shall we act on this calling?		

THEORY U PROCESS



Discerning in Common

Theory U and opening to the Spirit's invitation

Every CLC World Assembly seeks to discern for an unknown future. The COVID pandemic helped us to see quite how unready we can be for the future to take us so utterly by surprise. This first World Assembly since the Pandemic had a special challenge: to discern paths for hope in a new world climate, where the volatility and speed of change is matched only by our heightened awareness of the need for new ways of thinking. In the words of Pope Francis, “*We are not only living in an era of change, but a change of eras.*”¹ This World Assembly needed deep and collective sensing of the Spirit already at work; the Spirit that beckons us forward over a new and truly unknown horizon.

What form of Communal Discernment would be fit for such an Assembly? Each World Assembly belongs within CLC/ CVX’s long and vibrant history and journey with God. As well as refreshing the outcomes and focus of the previous World Assembly in Lebanon and Buenos Aires, we wanted this World Assembly as a body to confirm what remained relevant for the current time and discern how to take it into the future. We decided to frame the event through a kind of U Process to help us broaden our familiar mental models for spiritual conversations. When Otto Scharmer is teaching Theory U, in opening he will often quote this observation attributed to Einstein: “*We cannot solve problems with the same kind of thinking that created them.*” The second book in this body of work is entitled “*Leading from the Emerging Future*”. It is simple logic that the future is always unknown. It is also common for many of us, however, to live as though the future will be predicated on the familiar past.

It is hard to have new conversations, with big scale and unpredictable scope, if we stay inside comfortable and familiar ways of proceeding. The shaping of the Assembly through the methodology of the U Process was a conscious invitation to “*set out into the deep water and let down our net for a catch.*”² Just as the disciples on the road to Emmaus were in a familiar conversation when Jesus interrupted it, we hoped as a body to be interrupted by Christ in the limits of our view, in order to let a new and unprecedented future emerge.

How were we planning to adapt the U process? Theory U and Ignatian spiritual accompaniment are both founded on the centrality of deep listening in the fo-

¹ 2015 address in Florence

² Luke Chapter 5 v 4

stering of real change. The U process describes a cycle of ‘presencing’ that moves from standard, assumption-filled listening that simply confirms the perspective we already have, which they call ‘downloading’, into a more open-minded state. As the mind opens, we see more clearly, followed by an open-hearted state where we sense more clearly, and into an open-willed state where we become profoundly present. This ‘presencing’ completes the letting go that is needed for us to be truly in communion with each other, and to let the whole group experience the presence of God. Scharmer terms this ‘connecting to source’. From here, we can begin to allow the unprecedented to come. From here, we begin to crystallise together, and then we can prototype and subsequently take wise action. The temptation for a group is the mirror opposite cycle, ‘absencing’ which occurs when we close ourselves by increments. Staying in the ‘downloading’ kind of listening, when our mind closes, we deny others’ views and realities. We no longer allow the possibility that our analysis might be incomplete. It then becomes easier (and also seems more reasonable) to close our heart to others, justifying our desensitisation and loss of care, empathy or fellow feeling. From here, closing our will leads to a state of ‘absencing’, where there is only one right view (ours) and nothing fresh or unexpected is possible. We find ourselves stuck in a trap, an unfreedom where it seems possible only to blame, deny, manipulate, and even destroy. When we are in crisis or we feel attacked, we can get stuck in downloading and shut ourselves off. When we see this cycle of ‘absencing’ or ‘othering’, acted out in politics or in relationships, it is visibly ugly and deadening. But it more often takes place unconsciously, sometimes inside our own mind, heart or will. When we understand the ‘absencing’ cycle, ‘presencing’ becomes more urgent, as the natural antidote to common human states of desensitisation and stuckness.

Our U-influenced journey through the Assembly was planned like this. We hoped to create together day by day the conditions to ‘presence’, starting from each person’s lived experience and gradually growing our capacity to listen collectively. Arriving in ‘downloading’ on Day 1, having our own familiar story to share, we wanted the U-Journey to offer us time to refresh our minds and hear other’s realities



as well as sharing our own. So as ‘downloading’ moved into ‘open mind’ on Days 2 and 3, we were becoming more and more ready to open our hearts and wills to the Assembly as whole, as individuals and as a single collective, through Days 4 and 5. The Open Day in Amiens, and the presence and sharing of Fr General, Arturo Sosa S.J. (World Ecclesiastical Assistant), would be fertile ground for this opening of heart and will together. The giant perspective of these experiences would also help us let go of our assumptions that the future of CLC/CVX will necessarily look like the past. Spending Day 6 in silence, we should be ready to listen as a community the Spirit talking to us. Coming out of silence brought us from the phase of letting go to the phase of ‘letting come’. Days 6 and 7 of ‘presencing’ would prepare us to crystallise from what we heard and prototype the future.

So, from our focus question on arrival, “*How are we?*”, we would spend the next four days pondering “*What has the Spirit been doing?*”. In silence and then sharing the fruits of our prayer, we could focus on “*What are we called to?*”. And finally, the decisional phase, “*How shall we act on this calling?*” would act as the focus question of our final three days together.

The pivotal moment in any real U journey occurs at the time of ‘Presencing’, when only the combination of generous openness with yearning, or sacred discontent, will allow anything really new to emerge. This can be daunting in a group, and especially a newly formed body of people. Sacred discontent shakes the foundations. It questions, and names flaws and weaknesses, and speaks what has been felt but not yet been voiced. It speaks of what is missing or taboo, and it names pain. In the Amiens World Assembly, this began to be fully spoken on the morning of the 8th day. The retreat day had been important and fruitful for many, but somehow when we came to share it as a whole group on

the afternoon of the 7th day, we were sharing in generalities, creating a harmony that felt much less alive and vivid than what was really happening in our collective heart and collective gut, as witnessed in the smaller conversations of that morning. There, the cry of the world had been strong, and full of life and pain. It took us time to let it out. When we



did, an energy began to unlock which was welcome to some and disconcerting to others. That is ‘Presencing’. We see that shock on the road to Emmaus, as their downloading is met with “*Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe!*”. In fact, it is there in encounters with God throughout our scriptures; Isaiah in front of the throne, Peter in his own boat, Elijah petulant in the desert, Moses in the cleft of the rock. Perhaps we were hearing resonances with Pope Francis’s descriptions of ‘Squilibrio’, too:³

“We cannot do something good and evangelical if we are afraid of the squilibrio. We must take it in our hands: that’s what the Lord tells us, because the Gospel is ‘crazy teaching’ (dottrina squilibrata)...”

“*Take the Beatitudes: they merit a Nobel Prize for craziness! That’s how the Gospel is!*”⁴

The generous openness, yearning and sacred discontent that the Assembly was able to voice on Day 8 perhaps bore fruit most vividly in the co-creation plenary regarding the Final Report. The writing team brought a draft for the World Assembly to respond to. The Assembly responded with an extraordinary offering of insights, suggestions, additions, and paradoxes, all of them offered with a desire to deepen the truth and usefulness of the outcome. To me at least, mind and heart and will felt stretched wide open to offer back something as good as possible from the Assembly to the World Community.

The methodology of the Amiens World Assembly was influenced by the U process, certainly. But it was incarnated through a range of other elements too. The clowns who mirrored back to us what they were seeing and helped us open our hearts through laughter and embodied joy, were fundamental to the process. The cartoonist helped us to see the narrative while we were still weaving it together. Our prayers at the beginning of each day grounded the Assembly in the Lord and in our Ignatian Charism. Ignatius’s Contemplation on the Incarnation was offered as a deep entering into our context but became also a part of the legacy of this Assembly. The body prayer that took us into the silent day became a wordless language that grew our communion and led to an extraordinary and memorable benediction of the elections on the final day.

What we experienced in Amiens showed that understanding CLC’s vocation as One Lay, Ignatian, Apostolic Community through “presencing” to one another is core to the building of a synodal Church, which is already happening. We have just been stepping into the future.

³ ‘*Squilibrio*’ means disequilibrium, with an implication of insanity/ craziness

⁴ Pope Francis, May 9th 2019, to the Roman Diocesan Assembly

To the World Community on our being an Apostolic, Lay and Ignatian Community

Report of the World Executive Council 2018-2023

Introduction

Very dear friends in the Lord,

This document goes beyond a typical report. It is a living document that has the potential to explore and feel the community in all its diversity and breadth. We invite you to take each subtitle as an invitation to contemplation, to go beyond the words. The language used, together with the facts and figures presented, convey a reality you may only be partially aware of. However, rest assured that you are part of it. We encourage you to read imaginatively and to venture beyond the known.

In this report you will discover the activities to which the World Executive Council (World-ExCo) has committed itself over the past five years. Difficult years, with many personal, community and global fragilities, but in which the World-ExCo has been able to develop its service to the World Community to the best of its ability. We would therefore like to extend a very special invitation to the delegates to the Amiens Assembly to read it in depth. You will be able to find out how far we have come, as well as together consider what is still missing, and where we want to go further. We need your active reading so that this report will not be an anchor of the past but a hopeful look into the future.



World ExCo
Report

The state of the community

The World-ExCo has been in constant dialogue with the community since the Buenos Aires Assembly, both formally and informally. The first part of this document gives an account of the state of Christian Life Community (CLC). It is both beautiful and fragile. Let us take care of the community and its members, no matter what concentric level we are called to serve at.

Christian Life Community as an apostolic body in search of self-development

The second part is devoted to the apostolic inspiration of CLC. The desire is necessarily embodied in the field, not in Rome, nor in the cloud. The concern of the World-ExCo has been to accompany and support what has arisen from the vitality of CLC, initiating long-term processes, beyond the 2023 deadline. The philosophy that guided us can be summarized in these key words: creation of international commissions to promote networking, sharing of experiences rather than production of reference documents, financial and media support for apostolic initiatives.

To go and stay on the frontiers ... in the way of Buenos Aires, that is our desire. However, its implementation is not necessarily easy. We have discovered that our weaknesses are at the root of our challenges for the future: the need for formation and the need to strengthen the structure of our institution.

- **Need for formation:** The realistic contemplation of the community has revealed an enormous need for formation, not for the comfort of the members, but for the full development of the community itself, as well as the sustainability and appropriateness of its apostolic efforts. In this regard,

Formation in CLC in the light of the final documents of General Assemblies

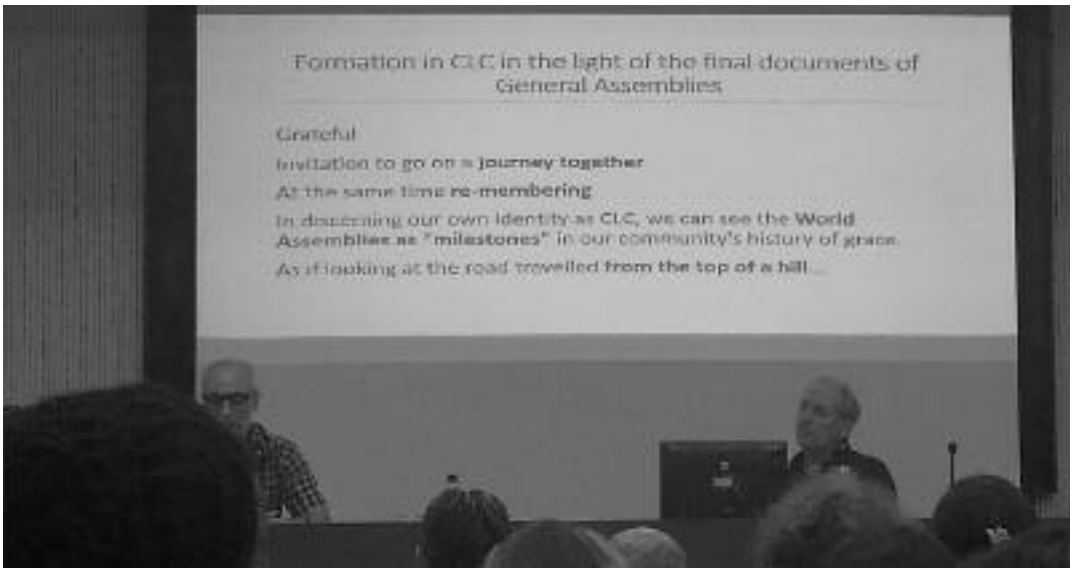
Grateful

invitation to go on a journey together

At the same time re-membering

In discerning our own identity as CLC, we can see the World Assemblies as "milestones" in our community's history of grace.

As if looking at the road travelled from the top of a hill...



too, the World-ExCo relied on a long-term coordination effort. In a world community, human resources and literature must be shared in a dynamic of "warm" solidarity, which includes meetings, personal exchanges and not only access to a common library.

- **Institutional structure:** The credibility of CLC as an apostolic community will also require a strengthening of its institutional structure. Our community is still too dependent on the goodwill of those who offer their service. However, in order to strengthen the memory, refine the intelligence and strengthen the will of the community itself, it is advisable to take care of the transmission of knowledge and experience, to ensure the continuity of the efforts undertaken.

For example:

- o The **regional teams**, which provide valuable support to the national communities, have no institutional recognition and are therefore constantly questioning the philosophy of their work and their position between the national and world executive councils. The World-ExCo's proposal for the revision of the General Principles and Norms is intended to address this challenge.
- o The same is true for **the international working commissions**. If the General Assembly believes that the interest of the community requires the perpetuation of certain commissions, regardless of the personalities of their members, the spirit of their work will change.

Some challenges the World-ExCo had to face

The World Executive Council devotes most of its efforts to serving. However, there are times when the World-ExCo is called to assume its responsibilities as a governing or representative body of CLC. Several unprecedented and complex situations have required a great deal of attention and energy.

- After the end of Fr. Herminio Rico's mission as Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant, and before the appointment of the new Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant Fr. José de Pablo S.J., we received an invitation from our Ecclesiastical Assistant, Fr. Arturo Sosa S.J. An opportunity was created for a fundamental reflection on the role and profile of the Ecclesiastical Assistant in general and of the Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant in particular. This work was done in close collaboration with our world EA, Fr. Sosa, who constantly encouraged us to consider this situation as an opportunity for growth.
- While the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life had expressly asked CLC -as well as all associations of the faithful- to promote a culture of pre-



vention of situations of abuse, this serious issue became very concrete during our mandate. In fact, we have had to respond to questions and calls for help in several situations: from members, from national executive councils, and even from the hierarchical Church. We have had to develop processes while trying to respond to the strong and sometimes conflicting expectations of those involved. At times, the only certainty we had was that there was no ideal answer. The cases that have emerged during this time in CLC have included lay people, members of our community, as plaintiffs and the accused. It is a sad and painful reality that we have to heal with transparency and decision, always protecting the most vulnerable people. It has been a learning process, sometimes painful, but indispensable. In certain circumstances, CLC must be able to count on its World-ExCo to make and assume decisions on behalf of all, especially when the circumstances are difficult. We want to believe that the journey -imperfect, but sincere and careful- will be fruitful not only for the members of the outgoing World-ExCo, but also for the community itself, should it be faced with similar situations in the future.

- The World-ExCo has witnessed situations of tension and even outright conflict within some National Executive Councils. These are eminently human realities, but sad because they divert a lot of energy. The World-ExCo has offered support, attempts at mediation, and guidelines, but has not been able to ease all the tensions. It is good that the community is aware of these realities and is not afraid to address them sincerely. Efforts will need to be made in the future to provide tools and frames for conflict management.

The promises of our community

Along with the world, CLC has been through a pandemic. We want to highlight the resilience and vitality of the community. In the most acute stage of the health crisis, in a period of containment, when life was almost at a standstill, we felt the immense desire to be in communion, especially in our digital and yet real prayer meetings. The pandemic allowed us to express that what unites us is not only visible, not only action. At the same time, the pandemic has reminded us how dependent we are on each other, with an obligation of solidarity, given the very unequal distribution of the resources of the common house.

In spite of the pandemic, the accounts of the World CLC have remained balanced throughout its course, and we are still amazed by this. This is indisputable proof of maturity.

The great availability of the national communities for the future work of CLC should also be highlighted. There was a very encouraging participation in the survey launched by the World-ExCo in 2020 (84,41%). Then the massive response to the invitation to participate in the world formation dynamic; clearly, the desire meets the need in this regard. Also, the availability of so many members with talents, to participate in the international commissions called to coordinate and network.

Finally, we rejoice that CLC has a great sense of the Church, ready to play its part in creating a new culture of synodality, that is, of sharing ecclesial responsibility between laity and clergy.

We invite you to enjoy reading this report and to look beyond the horizon, recognizing the road travelled, knowing that others will come and help us to continue to grow and move forward.

Part I. We are a World Community

“The communal nature of CLC reflects the tension that is to be found between what is individual and what is universal, between the local community and the world community. CLC is basically a sharing of life at the local level, but it also has a universal dimension... Thus, the universality of CLC is visible in our one world community. This universal dimension ought to be present in every member and in each local community” (The CLC Charism. N°149 y 153. Progressio Supplement N°56)

We are a World Community with a grace-filled history seeking to be creative and faithful to the Greater Service. As a community we have our own ways of being and proceeding that are specific to our identity. Since the General As-

sembly in Guadalajara (1990), when the current General Principles were approved, we have been moving forward, moved by the desire of being ONE single World Community. This is the community we belong to – it is to this Community that we commit ourselves, our local communities being only a concrete expression of this more ample Community. However, even though many years have passed since that distant 1990, our members continue to struggle about feeling that they belong to the Christian Life Community as a World Community.

That is why we have recently been experimenting with a new wording, that may feel closer to us and help keep our focus on what is most essential: we are no longer the CLC of a certain country (for example: we are not CLC Italy, we are CLC in Italy instead). We are CLC incarnated in every place we are. In this moment, we are CLC **in** Amiens. This is not just a semantic change but rather an attitude that predisposes us and, at the same time, reflects our identity as a single *lay, Ignatian apostolic community*. A Community formed by men and women who live their ordinary lives as mission and who are ready to be collaborators and co-creators of Christ's mission out of a discerned and assumed personal vocation: “*Since the laity, in accordance with their state of life, live in the midst of the world and its concerns, they are called by God to exercise their apostolate in the world like leaven, with the ardor of the spirit of Christ.*” (Decree Apostolicam Actuositatem. On the Apostolate of the laity. Saint Paul VI, 1965).

1.1 The Christian Life Community in numbers

Over the last five years, the World Executive Council has used different means to approach the National Communities and get to know them better. On two



occasions (World Community Survey in 2020 and Update of the National Community Profile in 2022), we have asked you to carry a demanding job of searching and systematizing information, of sharing with us the lights and shadows that accompany your life-mission. In both cases, we were pleased with your willingness to respond, hence helping us to have a better idea of the presence of the Christian Life Community around the World.

The quantitative data that we would like to share with you brings us closer to reality. We cannot yet say that it is an accurate statistical portrait. In some cases, there are National Communities that did not respond; in others, they did so partially or just with rough numbers; and in others, there is some confusion on the criteria or on the way the questions should be answered. There is still a way to go in this sense, in terms of defining certain criteria and common parameters that help us to keep some concrete figures up to date (for example: who we are, how many we are, average age range of our members, how many women / men; locations where CLC is present, what we do, how we live our CLC identity) that can help us better address our mission. Along with the definition of certain criteria, it could help to have a proper system of data collection at national level to be submitted to the World Secretariat.

As of 20 April 2023, there were 22,378 members in the World Community. This total corresponds to the 72 national communities that responded. If we were to take the 2018 data from the communities that did not respond and add it to those that did respond in 2023, the total membership would be 23,295. The Christian Life Community today has an active presence in 81 national communities, distributed as follows: 66 communities with full membership status (22,672 members), 13 communities with observer status (623 members) and 2 emerging communities.

The geographical distribution of the Christian Life Community can be summarized as follows: Africa 20.69% (20 communities); Asia Pacific 16.05% (13 communities); Europe 27.16% (22 communities); Latin America 23.46% (19 communities); Middle East 3.70% (3 communities) and North America 4.94% (4 communities).

Although the numbers here are slightly less certain, women in the World Community account for 60% (men, approximately 40%). Assessing the Community in terms of age group is even more complex. As a rough guide only, we can say that around 18,000 members are over 35 years of age (77.08%); out of that sub-total, around 13,500 members are over 51 years of age (or 75% of that sub-group).

The celebration of temporary and permanent Commitment in CLC, as foreseen in the General Principles, involves a journey of searches, encounters and di-

scernments that are laid out in *The Process of Growth in CLC*¹. The commitments are (or, at least, should be) a joyful and grateful expression of one's pilgrimage in the Community. They are a real and visible sign, assumed before God and the community, which expresses one's searching, sharing, deepening and willingness to integrate the CLC lifestyle as a personal response to the vocation to which one has been called. However, there is a perception that the process around the Commitments is not understood in depth and continues to generate significant resistance from CLC members. This is reflected in the numbers: only 4,821 members have made the temporary Commitment and only 3,630 have made the permanent one.

We are convinced that many CLC members do live their lives as fervently as if they had already made the Commitment. Nonetheless, these figures should invite us to reflect on the way this concrete expression of the CLC identity is being proposed in this moment, taking into consideration that it is meant to be a way to celebrate and invite us to "*continue to move forward in being the best version of ourselves for others, with others, with all of you*"².

1.2 Our signs of growth.

As an expression of the grace, we asked for at the Buenos Aires General Assembly -*a greater depth and integration in living our CLC charism in today's world*- we have witnessed a dynamic community committed to deepening, going forth and sharing faithfully and creatively. Although the last five years have been difficult for many communities, the Covid-19 pandemic presented an opportunity for members to demonstrate their commitment to society through their professional roles. Doctors, teachers, professors, social workers, psychologists and lawyers bravely ventured out to offer hope in times of pain, suffering and fear. This experience allowed us to rediscover the importance of everyday life



¹ Progressio Supplement N°64: *The Process of Growth in CLC. Guidelines for Formation.*

² CLC Formation Team in Spain (2023). *Being CLC. An Ignatian lay vocation to love and serve more in the world and in the Church. Chapter IV: Process of Growth in CLC. A spiral path of deepening.*

as a place of mission, and to live it to the full. In tandem with the proposals set by the Buenos Aires Assembly, it was a *'going forth' in service to those most in need and an opportunity to sow seeds of mercy, joy and hope in the World, to follow Jesus more closely and to work with Him in building His Kingdom.*

In preparation for the 18th General Assembly in Amiens, we invited National Communities to share apostolic initiatives in the mission fields (frontiers) that Lebanon 2013 defined as priorities: Family, Globalization and Poverty, Ecology and Youth. We received more than 60 responses, all of them signs of dedicated apostolic fervour. In the most diverse contexts, in extremely complex realities, where the presence of the Kingdom of God can be difficult to detect, these initiatives all had their roots in the encounter with the Lord, in looking at the reality and discerning the best way to respond.

1.3 Areas in which we still need to grow.

Throughout these five years, through different meetings, conversations or reports we have received, we have been able to witness so much life shared, given and sown in the Community. However, we have also faced challenges or questions that we have not yet been able to answer and we also feel confused about how to deepen and integrate our Charism. Through the lens of the Spiritual Exercises, we have noticed the passion and suffering of the Third Week in several of our National Communities. Several of them have expressed a spiritual desolation that engulfs them in certain aspects. It is also fair to say that this passion is often intertwined with the love, joy, hope, and life-giving of the Fourth Week.

As the World Executive Council, we are grateful that the National Communities felt encouraged to humbly seek our help and accompaniment. The first step to open ourselves to the Spirit, to find our identity and to be encouraged to experiment boldly, courageously and creatively is to recognize the aspects in which we are not yet at our best as a community. Our starting point must always be to remember that God keeps His promises. We must confidently give ourselves to prayer and continue to believe in the value of community. At the same time, we cannot be afraid to give names to the things that trouble us, challenge us or keep us from moving forward.

We know and deeply appreciate the diversity of our community as one of its striking features. In some occasions, diversity can be perceived in the ways members and groups gradually appropriate key aspects of CLC identity. In others, it is obvious that both the life of the community and the ways by which it expresses its CLC identity are actually influenced and shaped by its own specific cultural background. What we know for sure is that diversity is, simulta-

neously, a source of richness for the Community but also a challenge: it forces us to seek what really unites us and helps us to serve more and better as a community. Overall, we believe these growth areas can be seen as graces we have not yet received or have not yet fully developed but also that they will always be intertwined with the abundance of life happening in each community.

Based on the information we have received; we now present some concrete challenges the World Community is experiencing as of today:

- **In relation to the governance of the National Community:**
 - o Lack of members available to provide leadership service on the National Executive Council;
 - o Difficulty in generating engagement with the internal life of the National Community;
 - o Long-standing internal organizational structures but poorly defined functions;
 - o Different levels of strategic/organizational understanding.
- **In relation to our community life:**
 - o The pandemic meant that our community meetings were virtual. It was a solution and a blessing to keep us united and together. However, with the return to normality, it is clear community life has been affected. Accelerated rhythms and the need to balance family, work life, rest and social commitments have all given rise to the concept of "*lack of time*" in detriment of spaces for community meetings, formation, encounters and celebrations. This situation has repercussions on the community and apostolic climate;
 - o In some communities, there are members who end up leaving the Community because they got tired (especially after having served internally), because of divergences of opinion, or because CLC in their country does not motivate them enough to keep moving forward;
 - o There seems to be a greater resistance to temporary and permanent Commitments, especially from young people;
 - o There are members who have been left without a local community or have left CLC, for whom we have not yet found an adequate accompaniment process;
 - o Internal tensions and divisions within the National Community or within the National Executive Councils. Fear of dealing with complex or polarizing issues;



- o How to attract new members to the Community (not only young people)?
- **In relation to our spiritual life:**
 - o Create space and financial resources for members to experience the Spiritual Exercises;
 - o Centralize our experience of God through the Spiritual Exercises in order to focus our lives on Jesus through a fruitful community and apostolic life.
- **In relation to the Youth and their accompaniment:**
 - o The difficulty to faithfully inspire the CLC Charism to the new generations is a common denominator across various National Communities. Our communities are ageing and there is no generational renewal. This has an impact on morale, community life and mission;
 - o In some communities, this situation is further aggravated by the decision of young people to emigrate due to socio-political situations;
 - o Lack of accompaniment processes in the early years of CLC membership and during the transition to adult life;
 - o Lack of community involvement and participation of young people in formation experiences, as these are not always adapted to the life stages of young people.
- **In relation to Formation:**
 - o Formation in understanding, applying and accompanying common discernment processes along with the spiritual conversation method;
 - o Formation for mission, enabling communities to develop a mission-centred spirit capable of responding better to the demands and challenges of the current context in the Church and in society, that makes them able to analyse and respond to the emerging realities of today;
 - o There is a lack of people with specific training to undertake accompaniment in the early years of CLC membership;
 - o We have a great disparity in the resources available for formation on a

worldwide basis. A great challenge is to find people who can help systematise, classify and make those resources available on a large scale;

- o Several National Communities tell us they lack the resources to create the materials required to help CLC members in their growth and maturing process;
- o Lack of experiences which may help strengthen CLC identity in local groups;
- o Lack of a methodology to guide sharing in local communities. How should we understand and implement the DSSE process in local groups?
- o Lack of members with a vocation to accompany processes of communities.
- **In relation to financial resources:**
 - o Financial constraints make it difficult to participate in face-to-face meetings that require travel;
 - o It has been a challenge to identify effective ways to promote financial co-responsibility among Community members, mostly among those who face financial difficulties or who are not yet fully committed to the CLC body, even if they have been members for some time.
- **In relation to the Society of Jesus and Collaboration:**
 - o Some National Communities refer that the number of members of the Society of Jesus is decreasing in the country, making it difficult to find Ecclesiastical Assistants. Taking as a starting point our different particular vocations, how can we deepen our understanding of collaboration and working in communion drawing from our specific charisms (Society of Jesus - Christian Life Community) in order to better serve the shared mission?
- **In relation to the Church:**
 - o Some communities have expressed a sense of disillusionment with the Catholic Church among some of their members. In particular, in those countries where the topics of cover-up of abuses of power and sexual abuse have been high in the agenda, there has been a loss of confidence in the Church, with members stopping attending CLC meetings and even the Church;
 - o As members of the Church, we often feel the difficulty of being credible witnesses of a faith experience. Sometimes we become so focused on what to do or on what we do assuming we have clarity about who we are that we end up feeling lost.

- **In relation to the World Community:**

- Often CLC members feel alienated from the sense of belonging to a World Community. There is a disconnect between the local and global levels;
- There is a tension between the efforts made by the World Executive Council to form, motivate and support communities and the difficulty communities have in following up. There is a perception that World CLC initiatives work in parallel and fail to recognize the local realities;
- The excessive number of issues the World ExCo needs to address at global and regional levels does not leave room for an adequate accompaniment of the National communities' journeys. As a Council, they feel overwhelmed and tend to distract the local communities.
- What would it take for us to have a greater voice as a global community in the challenges facing Humanity in our time?
- How can we ensure that the discernments of a General Assembly or the work of Global Encounters are adequately appropriated by the various local realities and have an impact there?
- How can we overcome the difficulty of achieving, in a concrete and effective way, an articulated community life that does not only share principles and identity? Does the global community have clarity and agreement for this?

- **In relation to Communication:**

- How to set up communication processes that give visibility to actions, ensure the sharing of good practices and inspire other members to go forth on mission?

- **In relation to the context of our National Communities:**

- Our communities are located in countries with very diverse contexts. In recent years, many of them have experienced greater internal difficulties: increasing poverty; greater exclusion and a wider gap between those who have access to services and those who do not; more insecure cities; corruption; a discredited political class that fails to provide concrete answers; increasing political polarization in society with repercussions within the Community.

In the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius of Loyola had a special concern if the retreatant was not being moved spiritually either by consolations or desolations. These challenges or areas in which we still need to grow as a community should

encourage us to continue to insist, to pray, to ask the Lord to give us His wisdom to move forward.

We must learn to recognize the Spirit who also speaks to us in areas of desolation.

To *discern paths for hope* is to open ourselves to God with the aim of seeking and choosing together paths beyond what the Community already is, beyond our comfort zones, to fulfill God's desires for us as a World Community. *What are those paths of hope that God invites us to walk in these areas where we have yet to grow?*

1.4 World Prayer in CLC's World Day

Every 25 March, on the feast of the Annunciation, we celebrate our World Day. In 2021, the World Executive Council created a "virtual" space for meeting and community prayer. It was a moment of encounter with members from various parts of the World in which we presented our challenges and concerns to the Lord but also celebrated together what unites us. In 2022 and 2023, this moment of celebration was prepared by two regional teams: Europe and Asia Pacific.

We hope this initiative will help us to get in touch with our global Community while acknowledging its heterogeneity as we pray and celebrate our day. We hope that it may be a concrete and simple sign that proves we truly are one World Community.

Part II. We are an Apostolic Community on Mission with Christ

“As members of the pilgrim People of God, we have received from Christ the mission of being his witnesses before all people by our attitudes, words, and actions... Our life is essentially apostolic. The field of CLC mission knows no limits.” (General Principle N°8)

Mission is what gives meaning to our lives. It speaks to us of an identity, of searching, of dreams. It takes us out of our own love, desires, and interests (Saint Ignatius) to meet the other. And it is not necessary to believe that only those who are doing fancy things or are perfectly organized have a mission. Daily life is a place of mission. And all it takes is an attitude, a word or an action that has the flavor of the Gospel.

However, at the General Assembly in Lebanon (2013), the assembled delegates decided to invite the World Community to focus its actions on four frontiers (fields of missions): *Globalization and Poverty, Ecology, Family and Youth.*

Ten years have passed since that decision. We have witnessed a lot of life given and fruits gathered. We have also experienced the difficulties involved in being participants in Christ's mission. The challenges are many, the resources are limited, and responding faithfully to what God asks of us is not easy.

During these five years, the World Executive Council has wanted to reaffirm that the fruit of the Buenos Aires General Assembly is transversal and is totally relevant in all the mission fields in which we are present. "*The call of Buenos Aires is both a way of seeking and finding where we are most needed, and a way of being at whatever frontiers we are called to*"³. (Projects 172)

Throughout Jesus' public life, his mission was the proclamation of the good news through attitudes, words, deeds. Our daily life is a space to continue to grow in our Christian being. Together we walk a path towards holiness, to which we are all called. We want to continue to live with our eyes open to reality. With passion and joy, we want to continue to make ourselves available to serve.

In these years we have wanted to look beyond the horizon. To project ourselves and contribute to setting the stage so that others can continue the work with confidence and enthusiasm, setting down specific tasks and helping the community to growth as a **lay, Ignatian, apostolic community**. The creation of international teams in key mission fields is a concrete step that must go beyond particular names.

2.1 Youth

Since the General Assembly in Lebanon (2013), Youth had been named as a frontier for CLC. Recognizing the needs of our global community, the World-ExCo experienced God calling us to make focused efforts on youth within CLC. In response, the World-ExCo wrote Projects 173 for World CLC Day 2020, with a desire to invite our global community to launch long-term efforts to communicate and offer the gift of CLC to young people:

*"We are starting a new way of understanding the apostolic work with and for youth... We find ourselves at a new starting point, but with a long-term vision of 10 years or more. We will work, innovate, collaborate!"*⁴

To innovate at the global level, the World-ExCo collaborated with CLC in Spain to organize the Loyola Youth Encounter, "*Embrace the World in an Igna-*

³ Projects 172 (2019). We believe God spoke to CLC in Buenos Aires. See the document in: http://www.cvx-clc.net/l-en/projects/Projects_172.pdf

⁴ Projects 173 (2020). Young people are an indispensable part of the CLC apostolic body. See the document in: http://www.cvx-clc.net/l-en/projects/Projects_173.pdf

tian Way". This event was held online over three days in July 2021, creating a space for youth from all over the world to share their faith in small groups, be inspired by each other, and experience solidarity as CLC young people. Subsequently, we announced a commitment to co-opt two young members to the World-ExCo. Daniela Ochoa Peralta (CLC in the Netherlands) and James O'Brien (CLC in Australia) were appointed to the World-ExCo in January 2022, expressing in a concrete way our desire to extend our efforts among young people, and bring their voices to our table.

Collaboration has also been a key focus for CLC's efforts with young people. In July 2022, a world youth team was convened, gathering two members from each region and four members of the World-ExCo. The team is currently in conversation to have representation from Africa as well. Their goal is to strengthen the presence and sense of belonging for young CLC members worldwide, acknowledging their role within the world community. The team has been working on building community and communication strategies, also promoting the participation of young CLC members in MAGIS and World Youth Day, which will be held in Portugal in July-August 2023.

Collaboration has also been established at regional level, notably in Europe and Latin America, where even the First Latin American CLC Youth Meeting was held in November 2022, with the presence of at least 14 countries from the region. The meeting was held thanks to the cooperation between World-ExCo and the CENAL⁵.

To sustain its work at the world level, the World Youth Team began, in April 2023, a communal discernment process



⁵ National Executive Councils for Latin America (CENAL).

about next steps for the team, and how to present its gift to the General Assembly in Amiens. Youth are a gift to our apostolic community, and the World Youth Team deserves ongoing support by the World Community and commissioning by the next World-ExCo. More than a frontier, young people centre us on what matters. Youth are fundamental to our world community's life, so being able to "work, innovate, collaborate" together is a shared blessing for us all.

2.2 Ecology

During the last five years we have witnessed even greater devastation to our Earth, and we see the need to do our part to change the course of destruction to paths of thriving, sustainable communities. The Earth is a wonderful gift to us from God. To help care for the Earth and indeed all God's creation, we have been moved to act in solidarity with others to mobilize our communities. This includes joining efforts with those in our Church, networking with EcoJesuit⁶ and the Laudato Si Movement⁷ (LSM), and most recently, forming a CLC International Ecology working group to help support these efforts.

In Solidarity with our Church. Pope Francis highlighted the urgency for our Church, indeed all peoples in our world, to care for our common home in his encyclical *Laudato Si'* written in 2015 and in the Synod on the Amazon in 2019. Many of our members have spent these last five years reflecting on these documents more deeply and discerning their response. The Vatican is also supporting the Laudato Si Action Platform, an ambitious initiative to help transition over one billion Catholics and others worldwide in ecological conversion, sustainability, and advocacy.

Networking. Encouraged to network on the ecological issue by our last two CLC General Assemblies, CLC has actively engaged two main networks: the Laudato Si Movement (formerly known as the Global Catholic Climate Movement) and EcoJesuit with the Jesuit Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat⁸. These are focused on mobilizing people -in our Church and among our Ignatian Family- towards care of creation.

Over the last eight years, the LSM has grown dramatically, now counting over 800 member organizations like CLC plus Laudato Si chapters, circles, animators, youth programs and more. At the international level, our Vice President

⁶ Ecology and Jesuits in communication. See in: <https://www.ecojesuit.com/>

⁷ See in: <https://laudatosimovement.org/>

⁸ www.facebook.com/groups/cvxcleecology/ Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat. See in: <https://www.sjesjesuits.global/>

Ann Marie Brennan has served on the Global Membership Council of the Laudato Si Movement. If you check out our Facebook group⁹, you can see how our members worldwide participate in actions for eco-conversion, sustainability, and advocacy, especially during significant moments throughout the year: Laudato Si Week (May), Season of Creation (September), Annual United Nations (UN) Climate Conferences (November/December), and Lenten/Advent observances.



Jackie Kariithi



Peter Okiemute



Yookyun Ha



Noreen Nicholson



Marielle Matthee



Hugues Ravenal



Xavier Chiriboga



Daniel Gomez



Carole Labaky



Sameh VictorTanos



Sharon Baker



Carol Gonzalez



Ann Marie Brennan



Catherine Waiyaki

With EcoJesuit, we have representation on their quarterly online meetings with others from Jesuit and Ignatian ministries worldwide such as Fe y Alegria, Jesuit Universities, Jesuit Refugee Service, Ignatian Solidarity Network, Jesuit parishes and Jesuit social ministries offices. CLC has co-hosted two Ignatian family events coinciding with United Nations conferences in New York City; for the one in 2019, Father General Arturo Sosa S.J. sent us a video to encour-

⁹ CVX-CLC Ecologie. Voir dans : <https://www.facebook.com/groups/cvxclcecology>

rage action in sustainability. CLC also connected with the Ignatian family to attend the UN Climate Conferences in Glasgow (2021) and Egypt (2022); some members participated in related webinars and even a pilgrimage with Jesuit Missions in United Kingdom to raise awareness of the climate crisis and needed action. CLC members from different national communities have submitted their ecological stories with photographs for EcoJesuit online publications.

CLC International Ecology Working Group. Beginning in 2021, the World-ExCo formed an international Ecology Working Group comprised of a dozen CLC members, two from each continental region plus World-ExCo members to support and inspire local efforts, to share resources, and to plan for global initiatives and networking on ecological actions and issues. The group has been meeting online three times per year since 2022, sharing stories, resources, and challenges. One such challenge was the flooding in Nigeria which was occurring during one of our meeting times. During the Season of Creation in September 2022, several regional communities organized meaningful programs such as webinars and meeting plans to help groups better understand the Season of Creation as well as provide ways to make sustainable lifestyle changes. During the

UN Climate Conference in Egypt in November 2022, several of the regions organized regional virtual prayer services to pray for impactful global climate action. Initiatives and other communications are shared on our Facebook group -allows for any CLC member to share programs, stories, initiative, advocacy.

2.3 Family

The family mission field is very active in the world community. It is a frontier that is near and dear to the members. The various tools that have been created by different national family teams are a source of richness and do a lot of good to those who use them. Following an effort and support from the World Executive Council, the translation of the Family Clock into French and English was achieved.



To celebrate the 500th anniversary of Ignatius' wound in Pamplona and the 5th anniversary of the publication of *Amoris Laetitia*¹⁰, the Mission Family Team in Spain invited to a meeting in Manresa: “*LOOK. They are new. Ignatian spirituality at the service of families*”. About 35 people from 12 national communities participated. It was a meeting to share the road travelled in the accompaniment of families in their different realities since 2017 when the International Family Encounter was held. In addition, the participants worked in different workshops to share their own experiences. The meeting allowed them to deepen and celebrate Ignatian spirituality together. As the World Executive Council, we were able to be present and accompany the reflection during those days between Barcelona and Manresa.

The CLC Family Mission team in Spain has been working in different specific areas of family life:

- **The Family Clock** is a method that boosts the family project in any circumstance in which it finds itself. In eight steps or times it provides a way and order to improve the capacities of life together.
- **The Four Seasons** is a guide for personal accompaniment to re-create life after processes of rupture. An experience that seeks to come to terms with grief, to live forgiveness and to experience a liberating rebirth.
- **The Clock of Life** is a programme that faces the challenges of ageing in order to take on the reality and live it in Christian fullness. It sees the older person not only as a recipient but also as a subject of change at this stage of life.
- **PADIS** (Sexual Diversity Pastoral) seeks to accompany families with sexually diverse children.

We know that these and other tools are very present in the apostolic life of many national communities. The world community has many people who have been trained to be able to give these workshops to others. We have a set of methodologies, inspired by Ignatian spirituality, which should strengthen our desire to offer them to the Church and the world.

The challenge ahead is to create a team that can give unity to this frontier as a world community, to unify the different tools available and their materials, and to continue to deepen our reflection.

¹⁰ *Amoris Laetitia* (2016). See the document in: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html

2.4 Globalization and Poverty

The General Assembly in Lebanon, when referring to the Globalization and Poverty frontier in its final document, called, on the one hand, for the development of tools from our spirituality to understand and address the challenges to be faced and, on the other hand, for the development of networks to share experiences and take action.

While we have not yet succeeded in developing networks at global or regional level to share experiences and respond jointly to certain global challenges, we are witnessing the number of apostolic initiatives that different national communities are taking forward to offer a dignified life to the people targeted by these apostolic projects. The areas that can be included in the development of this frontier are very diverse, including education, migration, and the proposal of spiritual exercises for people with limited resources.

We want to continue working on a conversion of our hearts, asking the Lord for grace to continue to be sensitive and to allow ourselves to be affected by the wounds of the world. But we must also be there, present, bringing joy, peace, hope, announcing the good news of the Gospel.

How can we in CLC generate spaces for reflection and sharing, to develop tools that will allow us to respond better to the challenges we face today? What are the characteristics that we can offer as a lay, apostolic and Ignatian community in our various apostolic initiatives to be bearers of hope?

2.5 Formation as an indispensable concern at all concentric levels for a sustainable growth

The formation of members and communities has always been a concern in our World Community. The previous World-ExCo expressed at Buenos Aires the necessity of “*studying the need and feasibility of a more permanent formation structure*”¹¹.

As a starting point, the survey launched to National Communities in 2020 was used as a high-quality input for a formation strategy. Some of the results obtained showed that: there is a very diverse situation on this topic in the different national and local communities; there are 52% of national communities that do not have Formation teams; national communities expressed their need, at various levels, in the main topics of interest in CLC Formation: discernment (personal, com-

¹¹ Progressio Supplement N°74 (2019). 17th World Assembly of CLC Buenos Aires 2018. Page 52. See the document in: <https://cvx-clc.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Suppl-74-eng-online.pdf>

munal, DSSE¹²), Spiritual Exercises, lay guides, leadership, CLC identity, interpretation of the keys, gestures, and realities of the universal Church.

The context described, guided a long reflection that led to understanding and defining a set of clear goals and needs regarding Formation in CLC:

- It is necessary to clarify a common sense of the meaning and purpose of formation (there is confusion in concepts). Unity is not uniformity;
- encourage and work so that each member goes to the heart of what formation means in CLC;
- we are experiencing times of transition that demand greater lay leadership in Formation issues;
- formation is fundamental to the deepening, sustainability, and development of CLC;
- receiving quality formation throughout the process of growth in CLC is essential to continue deepening, sharing the gift and going forth.

In 2022, as the pandemic was almost under control, the Global Formation En-



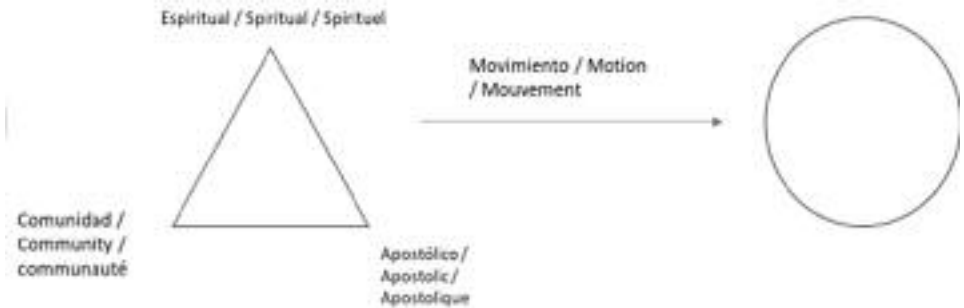
counter was launched in Manresa, the place where Saint Ignatius had a deep spiritual experience and started writing the Spiritual Exercises.

The Encounter was carried out as a process following previous virtual meetings.

The Manresa Global Formation Encounter (GFE) took place on August 8-13, 2022. The Motto of the Encounter was: "In following you, Lord, I will not be able to get lost" (St. Ignatius). It had an ambitious objective defined as promoting meetings of the World Community to exchange experiences and mobilize transformations in the formation processes of communities within the contexts they find themselves.

¹² Discerning-Sending-Supporting-Evaluating (DSSE)

The content of the GFE addressed the topics of interest that the national communities expressed in the survey and that we summarize in four axes or themes:



- A. Discernment.
- B. Spiritual Exercises.
- C. Process of Growth in CLC.
- D. Formation for the mission.

Those inputs raised reflect the CLC pillars, but there was a need for an approach that was not static, immobile, attending to each one separately, but that implied a movement, a new dynamic.

To respond to the challenge an experimental methodology was proposed: combining the thematic axes with the verbs of Buenos Aires (Share, Deepen and Go Forth). But in addition, and based on the experiences of previous encounters, the team proposed to generate previous instances of virtual meetings to prepare the group of delegates that would go to Manresa. The objective was twofold; to form a nucleus group of people with responsibility for Formation in the communities that did not have them; and to generate a channel through which the Manresa encounter would continue in time through this group of delegates, following the objective that the GFE would not remain just an experience for the few participants, but the experience would be replicated in each one of the small communities to which we all belong.

The GFE followed the verbs of Buenos Aires Assembly, experimenting with this methodology as a way of proceeding.

The delegates of the GFE shared their local Formation experiences in small groups. These experiences were documented on "posters" and made available for everyone to read during the meeting. In addition, some of the experiences were selected and shared as testimonies at the plenary.

In a second moment, the GFE started deepening. Taking advantage of the amazing place where we met, we set out to pray about the challenges that Worship poses to our communities. The GFE practiced spiritual conversations in reflection groups divided by language and ensured the greatest diversity of countries as possible.

The main motions were documented and shared.

In the final stage, the delegates planned how to go forth. Continuing the usual discussion in the groups, possible action plans were shared at the local, national, regional, and global community levels. All these actions were documented in shared files.

In addition to the final document¹³, valuable inputs were recorded in Google Sheets and Documents.



During the last Plenary, it was suggested that the World-ExCo create a Global Formation Team (GFT) to process the information and continue the process.

This team has already held a first virtual meeting with the Manresa Delegates in February and is preparing to continue the transition work towards the formation of a stable team to be endorsed by the new World-ExCo.

2.6 International Collaboration: CLC at the United Nations

For almost 50 years, CLC has maintained a humble presence at the United Na-

¹³ Final Document of the Global Formation Encounter. Manresa 2022. <https://www.dropbox.com/s/0a6v6c3vkn41yyy/Final%20Document.%20Global%20Formation%20Encounter.%20Manresa%202022.pdf?dl=0>

tions (UN) as a civil society member with non-governmental status. This presence has allowed us to be in solidarity with our human family throughout the world and our common home, especially with the most vulnerable, as we strive to support efforts for peace, justice, and sustainable development.

CLC continues to have a small working group based in the New York City area. Our main representative is Joan Woods who attends committee meetings on a regular basis, and she is supported by Mary Ann Cassidy, Nicholas Kim, Ann Marie Brennan, and Marie Schimelfening. The group seeks to be informed about major international issues, priorities, and actions, especially those relating to our CLC priority areas of ecology, globalization and poverty, family, and youth. The working group networks with other non-governmental and faith-based organizations through committee meetings and conferences; it gathers and shares the stories and concerns of our CLC community worldwide; and it communicates through email and social media.

Meetings and Conferences

Within the UN structure, CLC has taken advantage of the large network of civil society organizations through the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CoNGO). Our CLC representatives regularly attend monthly meetings for the following NGO committees and subcommittees: Migration, Climate-Induced Migration, Commission on the Status of Women, Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Mining, and the Amazon. Periodically, Joan Woods also meets with Catholic Religious at the UN.

Our working group also participates in forums and conferences which typically last a week or two. Over the last five years, members of the group have attended the annual NGO Forum of the Committee on the Status of Women (NGO CSW Forum), the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainability, the Forum on Indigenous Issues, the International Migration and Review Forum, and for the first time in forty-six years, the UN Water Conference.

During several of the above conferences, the working group were delighted to welcome CLC members attending from abroad, and to collaborate and co-host events with Jesuit ministries and our extended Ignatian family.

Ignatian Family Connections

In 2019, CLC helped to coordinate a week-long Ignatian family gathering at the UN High Level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals. In attendance were representatives from the Jesuit Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat in Rome, EcoJesuit, US Jesuit Conference, New York Social Justice Ministries Office, Loyola Chicago University, Jesuit Refugee Service, Ignatian

Solidarity Network, Fe y Alegria, and others from Ignatian family. We collaborated on an Ignatian side event citing stories of involvement and urgent needs; Fr. Arturo Sosa sent a video encouraging our sustainable action.

During the UN Water Conference in March 2023, the working group met up with CLC members, Jesuits and other Ignatian people from Africa, Latin America and New York City who were also attending the water conference. The working group co-hosted a side event to share dinner, conversation, and our mission supporting indigenous peoples, local sustainable fisheries, clean drinking water, healthy sanitation for all and especially for poor communities. The rounds of spiritual conversation were fruitful in affirming the presence of the Spirit moving among us, in affirming the value of our presence and action in situations of vulnerability and crisis, in supporting the energy of young people, in being people of prayer and hope.

Communications

In all that we do in New York City, we always hold our world community in our hearts and minds. With limited resources, we have tried to convey meaningful highlights on our Facebook groups with photos of events or articles describing issues of concern. This medium allows members to not only read but also to react, comment or share. Two-way communication is needed for sharing between our grassroots CLC groups and our UN working group.

Moving forward

One idea worthy of consideration involves setting up liaisons at the national and/or regional level to facilitate our two-way communications. A liaison would share grassroots stories which are valuable to help raise awareness among UN policy makers and government ambassadors. A liaison can also share relevant highlights from the UN with our CLC members to help raise awareness and/or to engage in action or advocacy. Even if our influence may seem small, together with many others, our support is much appreciated and can actually contribute to making a significant impact. The International Information Team that is being set up within the communications area of the World Secretariat can help to respond to this issue.

One further idea is to expand our working group and have an International CLC United Nation team. Now that many committee meetings are held virtually, it is possible that members from different continents can work directly with the New York working group. This team could arrange to meet virtually three or four times per year and develop a strategy for engagement such as attending various hybrid/virtual NGO UN committee meetings; and communicating with the entire world community.

Part III. We are a Lay and Ignatian Community

“...*Within the context of these universal sources, we hold the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius as the specific source and the characteristic instrument of our spirituality. Our vocation calls us to live this spirituality, which opens and disposes us to whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily life.*”
(General Principle N°5)

3.1 In dialogue and collaboration with the Society of Jesus

Document on the role and profile of the Ecclesiastical Assistant in CLC

After the Buenos Aires General Assembly, the members of the World Executive Council together with the World Ecclesiastical Assistant, Fr. Arturo Sosa, began a process of redefinition of the role and profile of the ecclesiastical assistant at all levels of CLC. The starting point was the same experience of communal discernment of the General Assembly. In dialogue with Fr. Arturo Sosa, the World Council’s desire emerged to rediscover and renew the task and qualities expected of ecclesiastical assistants in a community that wants to be lay, Ignatian and apostolic.

The fruit of this dialogue, which sought to open new paths based on synodality, hope and prayer, was the Document on the role and profile of the Ecclesiastical Assistant in CLC¹⁴, which was promulgated on November 20, 2020. This document was accompanied by a video message from Fr. Arturo Sosa to the World Community¹⁵, a letter from him to all the Provincials of the Society of Jesus and another document on the World Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant.

Following General Principle No. 14, which makes explicit that “*the ecclesiastical assistant participates in the various levels of community life according to the General Norms. Working in collaboration with other leaders, he has as his primary responsibility the Christian development of the whole community. He helps the members to discover the ways of God, especially through the Spiritual Exercises...*”, the new document insists that the assistant is there to assist, that is, to accompany the life and growth of the community. This implies facilitating and accompanying with discretion, always in collaboration, letting the

¹⁴ Document on the role and profile of the Ecclesiastical Assistant in CLC (2020). See the document in: https://www.dropbox.com/s/7u8im1hqu27lo18/2020.11.25_Document%20on%20the%20role%20of%20the%20Ecclesiastical%20Assistant%20in%20CLC.pdf?dl=0

¹⁵ See the video in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YTUGvPmRVQ>

Creator work with the Community and guiding the Community with its Creator (Spiritual Exercises Annotation N°15).

The second part of the document defines the profile of the Ecclesiastical Assistant, what is expected from the development of his task: participation in the life of the community, in its formation from Ignatian spirituality and from the reciprocal contribution of CLC to the Church. This document asks us for creativity and participation in all community processes, including in the appointment of the Ecclesiastical Assistant, and in the responsibility of carrying out the tasks that we previously left exclusively in their hands. Knowing that changes in leadership styles are slow and personal, and seeking a united pilgrimage that helps each person and community to be what we are called to live. We invite the entire world community with its Ecclesiastical Assistants to return to this document and orient their mutual collaboration from it.

World Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant

After the Buenos Aires Assembly and as a result of the discernment of the World Council with the World Ecclesiastical Assistant on the collaboration of the Society of Jesus with CLC, the service of the World Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant (VEA) was also reconfigured within the framework of the Document on the figure and profile of the Ecclesiastical Assistant in CLC and was concretized in the appointment of Fr. José de Pablo S.J. in September 2020.

The novelty of this work of accompaniment to the World Community is that the VEA combines its collaboration with the World Council with other tasks proper to its Jesuit province where it will reside from now on, being in charge of the CLC General Secretariat in Rome the Executive Secretary of CLC. They work in close collaboration with the President and the other members of the World Council. The VEA is always in contact and at the disposal of the World Ecclesiastical Assistant and serves as a liaison for the needs of the World Community and the World Council. He travels to Rome and elsewhere when necessary to deepen the institutional dialogue with the Society of Jesus and to advise and accompany CLC's relationship with the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life.

This new form of accompaniment by the World Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant means assisting, helping and facilitating CLC to come closer to fulfilling its vocation as a **lay, Ignatian and apostolic community**. Being assisted in its challenges and responsibilities, the World Council finds in the VEA a strong support to live more fully the General Principles and to deepen together in the formation and living of Ignatian Spirituality.

After three years with this model of work and collaboration we can say, as World Council, that it has been a step forward that has involved new challenges and new solutions in the creative development of ways of working and coordinating tasks for the good of the CLC body, in close collaboration with the Society of Jesus. The VEA has been present at World Council meetings, face-to-face and online, accompanying to deliberate and discern situations affecting the world community, regional teams and national councils. In experiencing this new form of collaboration, we feel that we remain open to explore and evaluate the road we have traveled in order to put our skills at the service of community building in this new time for the Church and for the world.

World CLC Secretariat - General Curia of the Society of Jesus

During these five years, the World Secretariat in Rome has been invited to work together with the various offices of the General Curia in various projects: the discernment of a new Apostolic Plan for the General Curia and the integration of one of the working commissions, numerous activities related to the

Ignatian Year, participation in the event of presentation of the restored historical manuscripts in the handwriting of St. Ignatius of Loyola. We have signed agreements that give a way and order to the use of the account that CLC has in the General Curia Treasurer, and we are in dialogue with the Curia Archives for the custody and care of the documents, aiming at a better preservation of the documents.

Dialogue and closeness have been woven together in a frank manner for which we



are very grateful. We feel that it has been a true experience of working in communion, respecting the different particular vocations. We feel that both the Society of Jesus and the Christian Life Community have put the accent on what unites us, and the two institutions put themselves at the service of orienting their talents, their graces, their charisms to the mission.

Dialogue and collaboration between the Society of Jesus and the Christian Life Community

The dialogue and collaboration between the Society of Jesus and the Christian Life Community is very diverse depending on the region or national community (or province in the case of the Society) to which we refer. In some cases, the two institutions have incorporated the idea of working in communion, being true partners in mission. In others, there is still a degree of dependence that invites us to continue working on formation and the culture of leadership in order to assume the vocation fully. The reality of many communities is changing and some are considering the need to restructure internally, how to make our work in common more virtuous.

The number of Jesuits present in CLC (more than 630) in different roles such as ecclesiastical assistants, group guides, accompanying people or retreats is a blessing that makes us feel very happy. In the same way, we have been able to verify that around 1,100 CLC members are working directly in some work of the Society of Jesus. For us they are not just numbers, but men and women who give their time, their skills, their gifts, what each one is at the service of the mission.

Both CLC and the Society of Jesus have decreased in the number of members in recent years. And although we have been talking for many years about collaboration between one and the other, we believe that it is time to look together in our concrete realities how we can better serve the mission of Christ and, from there, see what each one can contribute, what are the needs of one and the other so that we all feel co-responsible in the task of evangelization, feeling all of us at home, each one putting our "loaves and fishes". From the vocation that each one of us has received, going on pilgrimage together serving the Lord.

3.2 In communion with the Church

"Union with Christ leads us to union with the Church, in which Christ continues here and now his saving mission...This sense of Church impels us to creative and concrete collaboration in the work of advancing God's reign on earth..."
(General Principle N°6)

CLC as an international association recognized by the Holy See has direct contact with the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life. Going out on the road, seeking to open new horizons, we feel attuned and united with what the Church, through its documents and invitations, invites us to live, reflect and commit ourselves more in this time.

The report presented at the General Assembly in Buenos Aires gave an account of CLC's participation in the Pre-Synod Assembly on "*Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*." Following the Synod of Bishops that took place in October 2018, Pope Francis published the *Apostolic Exhortation Christus Vivit*¹⁶ which proposes a new and essential apostolic framework for reflection and work with and for young people. In June 2019, CLC was represented by a young member at the XI International Youth Forum, when Pope Francis spoke of a Church that opens spaces to listen to young people, that expects them to *make a contribution*: "*Dear young people, I repeat once again: you are the today of God, the today of the Church! Not only the future, no, today. Either you play today or you lose the game. Today. The Church needs you to be fully herself*"¹⁷ (Pope Francis, June 2019).

Many young people from CLC have responded to Pope Francis' invitation to practice a different economy, building from multidimensional perspectives, by participating in the Francis' Economy event.

In January 2019, members of the community participated in the World Youth Day that took place in Panama. We are currently looking forward to the next World Youth Day which will take place in Lisbon, Portugal, August 1-6, 2023. The International Youth Team has been working on the preparation and encouraging CLC members to be part of this world event. We know that many will be present at the MAGIS¹⁸ experience and then join the World Youth Day to share, from their vocation, the encounter with others who are and are part of the same Church in which we all walk together.

Very shortly after the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the First Interna-

¹⁶ Christus Vivit (2019). See the document in: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html

¹⁷ Pope Francis (2019). See the document in: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/june/documents/papa-francesco_20190622_giovani.html

¹⁸ MAGIS is a worldwide gathering organized by the Society of Jesus, which brings together the youth of the Ignatian Family between the ages of 18 and 35, from all over the world. This great event takes place every time a World Youth Day is announced and is held in the ten days prior to the World Youth Day. These days are full of experiences and activities, which help to celebrate faith and service in a space of sharing and prayer



tional Congress on the Pastoral Care of the Elderly was held in Rome. We had the generosity of two CLC members to represent us. Magdalena Palencia (CLC in Mexico) and Marcos Morales (CLC in Spain) were the living experience of that intergenerational embrace that we need so much in our world. When we talk

about the Family Frontier, we also want to refer to how to face the culture of discarding the elderly, the role they have in the family and their special vocation in the Church: to transmit the faith, to dialogue with young people and to guard the roots of the people. The Clock of Life, created by CLC in Spain, was shared by Marcos during the Congress and received the recommendation of the Episcopal Conference of Spain.

In October 2021, the Synod For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission was opened. Unlike other instances, the proposed process is longer and has given the possibility to consult all the people of God and to listen to all baptized people who want to contribute. As a World Community we have been actively participating in the process at different levels. If in Buenos Aires we pointed out that we are a gift for the Church and for the world, this was an opportunity to live it. From the World Executive Council, we were promoters inviting everyone to be part of the process in their communities, parishes, dioceses. As a World Community, with the contribution of 27 national communities we sent a report to the Synod Secretariat as part of Diocesan Phase.

One of the activities proposed by the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life in relation to the Synod we are living, was an International Conference "Pastors and lay faithful called to walk together". In this activity CLC was present, represented by its President and Executive Secretary. The central message of this Conference was a defense of the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council. Emphasis was placed on the added value of the lay faithful, who have an original and complementary contribution. From our being baptized, and therefore with the spirit in our lives, we are co-responsible for the work, mission and

structures of the Church. We are all called to humility and to recognize that neither the laity nor the clergy can do it all alone.

The Continental Stage of the Synodal journey has now concluded and the *Instrumentum Laboris*¹⁹ has been published to help the Church prepare for the meeting that will take place in Rome during October 2023. This road we are traveling makes us co-responsible for the life of the Church and its mission and we are invited to respond with joy, generosity and a willing heart, contributing with the joyful proclamation of the Gospel.

In June 2022 CLC participated in the X World Meeting of Families in Rome. A couple from CLC Malta was representing us. The theme of the meeting was "Family love: a vocation and a path to holiness". With the contemplation of the Wedding at Cana, the meeting was an invitation to fill the jars with the multitude of gestures that couples live in everyday life and there to rediscover the beauty of the couple welcoming and appreciating others. With the presence of more than 2000 families in Rome, the event was also held in every diocese of the world. We hope that many CLC families were able to participate.

A healthy habit we have acquired is our frequent contact with the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life. Not only by participating in the various initiatives to which we are invited, but also by having periodic meetings with its authorities. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, this World Executive Council in full or through its Executive Secretary had the opportunity to meet on three different occasions. These meetings are an opportunity to share with them a general overview of the World Community, emphasizing some aspects that are relevant for the current period. We always do so from our sense of communion and fidelity in our service to the mission of Christ entrusted to the Church.

Part IV. Other themes that we contemplate and concern us

4.1 Culture of Safeguarding

In 2018, the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life urged all international associations of the faithful to ensure that each implements a safeguarding policy of vulnerable persons.

The World Executive Council wrote a reference document *Protection for minors and vulnerable persons against abuse*²⁰ (Standing Order N°16), which

¹⁹ *Instrumentum Laboris* (2023). See the document in: <https://www.synod.va/en/synodal-process/the-universal-phase/documents.html>

²⁰ Protection for minors and vulnerable persons against abuse. See document in: Standing-Order-N16

was submitted to the Dicastery for approval and thereafter distributed the document to all national communities.

This document provides a framework, while each community has been asked to put in place more specific measures that are in line with local civil legislation. After a year of sending the document and asking the national communities to elaborate a protocol with the guidelines foreseen in the Standing Order N°16 and according to the characteristics of each country, only nine national communities have responded by sending the finished document. We use this report to encourage all the National Executive Councils to study the issue and elaborate the corresponding document and send it to the World Secretariat.

A "policy" and texts are only tools to establish a real culture of prevention because we cannot be content to remain reactive when a case occurs in our community. We must encourage the world community to be proactive to prevent the risks and support the victims in cases of abuse. And if, unfortunately, the community is confronted with suspicions or proven facts, the reference texts must help those who bear the responsibility for the community to react adequately, respecting the law, but always with great availability for those who suffer.

The World-ExCo itself has experienced how difficult it is to take a position in concrete situations. However, difficulty can never justify passivity or silence. Our commitment must always be to the protection of the weakest and the emergence of truth with transparency, without which justice and reconciliation would remain hollow concepts. We assume and invite all to show a clear CLC commitment to the transformation of the Church and our community to it into a safe and secure place for those who come to it. We are facing a problem to which we are not oblivious; we must become aware of it, establish new ways of proceeding and work coherently from an ethic of care.

4.2 Financial Co-responsibility

“Consider that financial co-responsibility is an essential expression of our belonging to a World Community and a necessary means for becoming an apostolic body. Being responsible for one another is an essential aspect of life in community.”²¹

The period 2018-2022 has been very positive with regard to financial co-responsibility²². Despite some external and internal difficulties (in some national communities), the degree of commitment and generosity of each

²¹ Progressio Supplement N°63. XV General Assembly. Fatima 2008. Final Document. Page 98

²² A more detailed report on the Financial Letters sent during these years is provided in Annex 1.

community is worthy of recognition, gratitude, and joy. We have been able to respond positively to all the commitments that have been undertaken in the budget approved at the last General Assembly in Buenos Aires (2018). Every year we exceed 95% of the contributions by paying the corresponding dues.

We have used the World Community Fund on several occasions during this time period, to support various initiatives: The Global Formation Encounter; the Kenyan CLC Zaida Center for Spirituality; the Meeting of Youth of CLC Latin America; a CLC project in Columbia regarding the promotion of Ignatian Spirituality through the experience of the Spiritual Exercises; the Magis IV Formation Program; the Ignatian Year.

From an operative point of view, we have acquired accounting software to track daily incoming and outgoing in a more orderly, clear and trustworthy fashion.

In particular, during this time period, it was necessary to pay special attention to the care of the CLC property in Rome - Casa Jose Gsell. The problems with structural humidity directly affect two rooms in the property and the decision about carrying out important insulation work or to sell and buy a new property are turning out to be difficult to make.

After carrying out an evaluation, the World Executive Council will present to the General Assembly an Operating Budget for consideration for the period 2024 (January) – 2028 (December). That is to say, it will be a closed year. This will avoid what was happening until now, and it is that, in the year of the Assembly, an adjustment would be made that required some communities to make two transactions a year.

You will find the Operating Budget 2024-2028 in the Appendices 1, that the World Executive Council has prepared according to what it understands will be workable for the next years. In it, three possible alternatives are reflected to be studied and submitted to consideration.

- **Option 1:** We propose to increase the cost of personnel cost to 35,000 euros and the fees the same amount, to keep a balanced budget. In this option the contribution to funds is covered by the ordinary budget as it has been until now.
- **Option 2:** We propose and increase the cost of personnel/individual cost to 35,000 euros, but increase the fees only to 15,000 euros, using the 20,000 euros previously dedicated to the annual contribution to the funds, while the next World Executive Council has to find at least 20,000 euros for funds through fundraising.
- **Option 3:** No additional/ increased means for personnel and no changes to the contribution to funds.

The increase previewed in option 1 and 2 in the item on human resources had as an objective to give the World Secretariat extra support (whether it be partially in Rome or in other countries) in specific areas determined by need.

4.3 Regional Teams

Africa Region

The present coordination structure of CLC in Africa dates to 2011. It was confirmed in 2016, during the Pan-African Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda, and comprises a Coordinator, a person in charge of Formation, someone in charge of Finance, an Ecclesiastical Assistant, and a member of the World-ExCo appointed to serve as a link with our national communities. It was set up to support coordination between the region's twenty-one communities, with thirteen full members, four observer communities and four emerging communities. It is made up of both French-speaking and English-speaking communities.

The current coordination team, elected in 2016 for a period of five years, has operated sporadically. It has struggled with the resignation, declared or silent, of many elected or appointed members, the lack of a defined procedure for their replacement and the lack, by the national communities, of a common understanding of their role and support required. The minimal animation of the regional team is too dependent on the sporadic or opportunistic goodwill of the members who are still present as well as that of certain national leaders. Some of its members have responded to requests for information, training and support made by national communities with which they have been in contact. Just as they contributed in writing or by videoconference to the reflections initiated by the World-Exco on the Covid pandemic and on the life of the Region.

A great need has been felt for structuring the regional team to support functionality. Meetings have been initiated to discuss a regional team structure that will assist the region coordinate. The meetings are held by the leaders of the various national communities. The delegates to the General Assembly in Amiens are also meeting alongside those of the leaders. A representative for the region to the assembly has been elected and will work with the team after the assembly. The national communities have supported the delegate to attend. The discernment that is underway at these two levels, on zoom, invites closer leadership and should continue after the General Assembly, for which the team agreed. A magazine on the history of the communities, a project that had been started earlier, is being produced.

Observer and emerging communities need regular monitoring from the communities that area designated to accompany them. For all communities,

visits from members of the World-ExCo and/or Regional Team would be beneficial.

Asia Pacific Region

An Asia Pacific Assembly is held every five years -in the year immediately after a General Assembly-. Since the most recent assembly in Seoul, Korea, in 2019, a regional Animating Team has been in place composed of Agnes Shin, Jeraldine Ching, Greg Tjaijadi, Cosmas Tsao and James O'Brien, with Daphne Ho as the World-ExCo link. In 2019, discerning under a theme of "Living Faith in the Crowd", the regional assembly named its desires for community, collaboration, and communication to deepen over the forthcoming five-year period.

The Animating Team therefore had the encouragement to meet regularly to organise quarterly zoom gatherings for the region during the worst of the pandemic. From April 2020 until 2022, the thirteen national communities were thus able to gather and share at these meetings and reflect on how to "deepen, share and go forth" together.

There is a system in place whereby the team members communicate with one "AP-Link" person from each of the thirteen national communities in the region. The Animating Team members relay information to the AP-Links and through them to the National Communities. Over the course of the pandemic, these lines of communication helped foster a regional sense of solidarity, friendship, and community.

The Asia Pacific region prepared a global CLC prayer to celebrate the World CLC day in March 2023, revived and full of hope for a better world after the pandemic experience. The region was able to prepare a reflection on Projects 179 and assist the world community with the General Assembly preparations.

The next regional assembly will be held in 2024, when a new animating team will be elected. These initiatives serve to deepen friendship and collaboration among national communities in Asia-Pacific, giving World CLC initiatives a regional flavour.

Europe Region

During the last five years, the Europe region has experienced an intense time in which graces received are recognized while at the same time some challenges or issues are gaining importance. The current Regional Team (Euroteam) was formed at the 2019 Regional Assembly in Lithuania. It consists of Angelika, Kasia, Chris, Jean-Benoit and Nikolaas as Ecclesiastical Assistant.

As in other regions, CLC in Europe is characterized by its heterogeneity. A region with communities with a level of development that allows them to

engage in various fields of mission, with the capacity to integrate younger generations and other communities that are in a situation of vital risk if one considers the age pyramid.

Some lights and shadows recognized by the Euroteam in these years:

Lights:

- Cooperation/ Community:
 - o Growing cooperation between the national communities, meeting of National-ExCo's, projects in cooperation.
 - o More space to meet, share, exchange experience, cooperate – online tools have created new opportunities.
 - o Very good community of the “Eurolinks” (representatives of the national communities within a European forum).
- ***Networks:***
 - o New networks: Youth Network, Ecology Network
 - o Migration network – Project: At the frontiers

Shadows:

- Some small and almost disappearing communities.

At the same time, important challenges for the region are perceived:

- War in Ukraine.
- Polarised societies; more aggressivity in the countries; the gap between the rich and the poor is increasing.
- Migration.
- Church:
 - o Relationship with the Society of Jesus: It would help to have a closer contact with the Jesuits, especially in the communities that are struggling and even the new communities. This sometimes needs the intervention of the World Vice-EA as he holds a special role in the Society of Jesus and has special access to provincials. He can sometimes open doors of communication for us which sometimes is the beginning of understanding the “on the ground” difficulties.
 - o Sex abuse and church crisis
- Youth → creation of a Youth Network.

How can CLC in Europe – and in the world – go towards young people, find new ways to serve them, to offer the Ignatian spirituality as a gift to them?

- Family/ family realities that are very different from the teaching of the Church
- Ecology → creation of an Ecology Network

In Europe, the regional team has a closer link with the national communities. As a service team they facilitate the implementation of the directions received from General Assemblies and guidelines or orientations than came from the World-ExCo. They work in their capacity as a co-ordination service team.

Although they think that the world community would not create an official structure, it could be helpful to draft a short regional team profile document to help the teams and the World-ExCo understand their different but complementary roles. In their reflection, the Euroteam push for more visibility and “glue” of each other’s work and service. They considered it important to designate a World-ExCo member as regional link for the regional teams.

Latin America Region

Since 2008, a small group of community members has been playing a crucial role in supporting national communities to overcome challenges that arise during the Fatima Assembly. During the last five years together with the regional team, this service has been essential in animating, accompanying, articulating, and collaborating with the mission in the region. The regional team, which comprises three members (Flor Alicia, Daniel y Celso), is selected through an election process similar to that used in the World-ExCo to elect members of the Council.

The Latin American regional team has worked to strengthen the region and advance topics such as family, youth, inclusion, and spiritual community experiences. Such efforts have been concreted in the regional encounter in several actions, direct support to local communities and the encounters held in Cuba in 2019 (Regional Meeting) and the First Latin American Youth Encounter in Colombia, in 2022. The region has also participated in worldwide initiatives such as the Family Encounter and the Formation Encounter. It is worth mentioning that these actions have been done for the last five years within a very challenging context, where social and political difficulties have exacerbated historical wounds in the region. Consequently, the team has received high praise for their support in the region.

To improve communication and avoid confusion, the team recommends the World Community move towards greater clarity in the role of these teams and better communication between the World-ExCo and national communities. This will allow for the effective dialogue of national processes or news that require the attention of the World-ExCo. Regarding this endorsement, it's important to note that while regional teams should not be necessarily a part of the structure of the Worldwide Community, they do serve to integrate and facilitate communication and coordination between the World-ExCo and national communities and therefore their formality should be considered. The regional team in Latin America has fulfilled the role of accompanying tasks and maintaining close relationships with communities, working in coordination with the Worldwide Secretariat.

Middle East Region

In the Middle East Region, there are three national communities: Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. It is true that Egypt is in Africa and Syria and Lebanon in Asia, but these countries form the Jesuits' Near East Province, together with other countries. Each country has its culture and specificities, but they have the Arabic language in common.

The Middle East Team (MET) is made up of the three national presidents and the three ecclesiastical assistants. The coordinator is one of the presidents, in turn, by rotation of three years. In its statutes, the MET must meet once a year, each time in a different country, in the presence of the World-ExCo link person if possible. But due to the Covid pandemic and the severe economic crisis, meetings are held online, on a regular basis, once every two months, to share experiences and to support each other. However, communication is continuous through a WhatsApp group.

Many apostolic initiatives are undertaken, whether on a personal or national level, in different mission fields and in collaboration with others, especially with Jesuits. It is difficult to participate in each other's activities as in the past due to the high cost of travel. However, many members from Egypt, Syria and Lebanon participate in online retreats organized either in Lebanon or in Egypt, and some are in international commissions.

The most important remains the translation of world documents that a country takes care of and transmits to others. However, the goal is to have a translation team with at least one person from each country.

On the international level, delegates from each national community participated in CLC Global encounters on family, youth, and formation. On the other hand,

the Euroteam invites each year one member from one country to take part in its annual meeting. These are opportunities of openness to the global dimension of our community.

MET is a link between the World Council and national communities to communicate the goals and vision of the World Council. It also tries to ensure communication and support among the national communities of the region which suffers from several difficulties and continues facing various challenges with hope.

North America Region

There have been some wonderful developments in our CLC in North American (NA) region over the last five years, notably in developing friendships, deepening in our collective discerning sensibilities, feeling more united in the Spirit, and sharing this mission of Christ in our Church and in our world. The North American regional team has continued to meet online about three times per year using Zoom in addition to sharing email and text communications between meetings. The team consists of representatives from six national communities from Canada (English and French), Haiti, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and USA. They have found the sharing on topics of formation, apostolic initiatives, resources, challenges, discernment, etc., to be useful. In general, the team has affirmed the value of meeting and working together as a continental region for both practical reasons as well as in feeling greater connectedness and integration with our larger world community. Below are some noteworthy initiatives and engagements.

Formation and Spiritual Ministry

The North America community has demonstrated wonderful collaboration and creativity in conducting three major year-long programs: Guides Training 2021-2022, Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life 2021-2022, and Leadership Training 2022-2023. All programs were very popular and well-received. The training programs had 75 to 125 participants for each session. For the Spiritual Exercises, there were over 60 retreatants and 30 spiritual companions; the US team is currently gearing up to offer it again next year 2023-2024. Noteworthy is that these programs were led by lay people; we are blessed that more of our CLC members are being educated and trained in these spiritual ministries. While we continue to have beloved Jesuit brothers working alongside us, as their numbers and availability are diminishing, we realize the necessity of empowering our lay members with skills and confidence to take on greater responsibility. There is also a Formation Materials team with members from Canada and USA who are collecting and organizing CLC resources for diverse levels

of formation, preparation for commitment, meeting plans on specific topics.

Synods.

Both the Synod For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission and the Amazon Synod were graced opportunities for many CLC groups throughout North America to engage in the synodal processes promoted by Pope Francis and our Church using meeting plans developed by CLC members in collaboration with Ignatian ministries and the Laudato Si' Movement. These synods proved to be wonderful opportunities to practice the process of spiritual conversations and to deepen in precisely the way recommended at our CLC General Assembly in Buenos Aires. Additionally, with the North America Jesuit Conference and Ignatian Encounter Ministries, CLC co-hosted synodal conversations for diocesan groups, parishes, and other associations, with many CLC members from NA serving as facilitators and recorders of these conversations.

Youth.

The North American regional representatives discerned participation in the various international youth gatherings. These include the Youth online gathering in Loyola in the summer of 2021 and the International Youth team; one of these participants will attend World Youth Day in Portugal 2023. At our next meeting we will discuss how the region can best support these participants.

Ecology.

CLC North American Ecology Network was formed last year in June 2022 to discuss the ecological concerns specific to the NA region, to share initiatives, and to provide a way to support the NA liaisons to the CLC International Ecology working group. Representatives from the six national communities on this network meet three times per year and share stories, programs, resources on our international Ecology Facebook group.

CVX in Haiti.

Our dear brothers and sisters in Haiti have suffered overwhelming challenges in recent years including the pandemic, earthquake, serious conflict, lack of security, and limited access to electricity. The leadership in both Haiti and Canada are currently discerning next best steps and ways to support the community in Haiti as they work towards CLC incorporation.

Indigenous Issues.

Awareness of indigenous peoples, their wisdom, and their rights, has been a topic of concern for the three countries of Canada, Mexico, and USA. Several Canadian CLC groups are working closely with Canadian Jesuits to raise awa-

ness and to promote education, listening and discernment in response to the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to support decolonization and the dignity of the First Peoples. In Mexico CLC members have been encountering and helping indigenous forced to leave their lands; they have also celebrated Mass together.

Cultural Group Network.

The Korean communities in Canada and USA along with the national CLC leadership underwent a discernment process to assess how best to support the ongoing formation of the Canadian communities while still honoring the spirit of communion. They decided to extend the US network to include the Canadian communities and to re-evaluate this situation in 2027.

4.4 Communications

Communication has become an increasingly important issue. It has become a fundamental factor in the development of CLC. The presence of digital communication is significant, and, today, one only needs a smartphone to be able to be up to date with everything and to communicate with whoever we want. The World Council is aware of the need to take deep and meaningful steps. It is time to make a transformation in this area that allows us to be more efficient in our communications and to share what we are and what we have.

In 2022 The World Executive hired a Processional Consulting Service in the field of communications with the objective of helping us carry out an internal diagnostic, form a strategy and an action plan for the coming years under their supervision, and in constant dialogue with the Executive Secretary.

Presently the World Community has:

- An up-to-date **website** with regards to its presentation, functionality and usefulness. It is not a space that is utilized very much, and it is very focused on internal communication. At the time of writing this report, a new website for Christian Life Community is under construction.
- **Social networks.** We have created accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. Often, due to a lack of resources, lack of adequate bi-directional communication, (World Secretariat □ national communities), we do not have enough material to feed the various digital platforms.
- **Progressio.** The process of publishing Progressio is complex. During the pandemic we had several difficulties with the sending of publications. In 2021 and 2022 only one edition of the magazine came out. We are looking to become as enterprising in the topics and interests as possible, considering

the world community. Each edition from this time period addressed topics like Family, Youth, Globalization and Poverty, Ecology, the Ignatian Year, Formation, Covid-19, the regions, Father Nicolas S.J.

Progressio Magazines

N°1&2 – 2019 – We believe God spoke to CLC in Buenos Aires

Link: [Progressio-En-2019](#)

N°1 – 2020 – Our creativity at the service of an intergenerational embrace

Link: [Progressio-En-2020-1](#)

N°2 – 2020 – Called to fill our world - with the language of wisdom

Link: [Progressio-En-2020-2](#)

N°1&2 – 2021 – Embrace the world in an Ignatian way

Link: [Progressio-En-2021](#)

N°1&2 – 2022 – Our life as mission

Link: [Progressio-En-2022](#)

With regards to the Supplement, we have only produced two: 1) an up-to-date printing of the General Principles and Standards; 2) a book on Synodality that came out of a contribution from CLC for this synodical path we are living; its printing is expected this year, 2023.

Communications Consulting Service

After the diagnosis was done, an action plan was presented, that has the objective of generating a community exchange that is creative, open, dynamic and useful. Our community is a large human and evangelical activity, and we want to project our true being as a community. This will make it easier to “promote” and “sustain” the community itself.

Our horizon is to communicate the good news of Christ Resurrected, with hope, contributing to reflection, formation, and action:

- Use a style and esthetic appropriate for these times.
- Find better signs to the graced name of CLC. Being hospital and fraternal.
- Reflect the sense of a single World Community. A One World Apostolic Body.
- Generate more attraction, above all, among younger generations.
- Achieve greater visibility as an apostolic lay Ignatian community within the church and the world.

At the start of 2021 we started to develop some actions. We are at the stage of formulating some ideas that are the basis for moving forward. On the one hand, the construction of a new website that, as we already indicated, is in progress; and on the other, the corporate image. In the diagnostic, it was expressed that we have an image, (logo) that is outdated, and has little impact. We don't have a logo that identifies and unifies us as a world community.

A new logo for the World Community is needed that corresponds to who we are today: a Lay Ignatian Apostolic Community. A logo can have a universal look, (adaptable in each national community). Are we willing as a World Community, to take steps to move forward in this regard?

Communications within CLC demand, increasingly, a responsible, competent team, experienced in this field. We wish to be able to create this team, coordinated by our advisor, to negotiate the main channels of communication and offer advice to the world community regarding internal and external communications.

Conclusion

The World Executive Council Report 2018-2023 reflects the Christian Life Community's journey as a global community, embracing the diversity of its national communities across six regions. It represents just a portion of our community's richness and aims to provide a broader vision of our progress, received graces, and areas for continued growth. The report's uniqueness lies in its collaborative approach, with each Council member contributing their perspectives, knowledge, and sensitivity.

We are a worldwide community incarnated in many places, united by the same charism which gives us identity as lay, apostolic, Ignatian and where community is essential. Our vocation is a response to God's call, recognizing the need for others who share the same vocation to better witness and serve in mission. Understanding our lives as a mission, we place ourselves at the service of others. We serve society in an active way, seeking to make this world a more dignified, more humane, and more just place. At other times, through apostolic initiatives, communities address areas such as family, poverty, ecology, youth, demonstrating their commitment to transformative action. Regional teams play a crucial role in coordination and collaboration, offering valuable insights to improve communication and understanding between teams, the World Council Executive Council, and national communities.

Over the past five years, we have encountered challenges and learned valuable lessons in areas such as addressing abuse situations, managing tensions within National Executive Councils, and the role of the Ecclesiastical Assistant. Tran-

sparency, decision-making, and conflict resolution have emerged as essential elements for our community's resilience, vitality, and solidarity. Sharing these lessons, we aim to inspire active participation in CLC's future work.

While CLC flourishes, we acknowledge obstacles hindering its growth, such as leadership difficulties, resistance to commitments, limited engagement of young people, and insufficient financial resources. Continuous learning and development are crucial to unleash the full potential of our members' apostolic efforts. Strengthening our institutional structure, recognizing regional teams and international commissions, and providing support are necessary steps to ensure the continuity of our community's mission and reduce dependence on individual goodwill.

As we move forward, sustained efforts are necessary to address these challenges, fostering a stronger, interconnected CLC. Together, we embrace the opportunities ahead, united in our shared vision of creating a better world. We have experienced the presence of the Risen One in our community during these five years (who is the Crucified One) in the world community. It is this experience that has led us to ask the Lord, in humility, for the grace we have chosen for this General Assembly: **Lord, help us to go forth; show us the way.**

Renewed by the presence of the Lord who has accompanied us during these five years we want to ask Him to give us the courage, the enthusiasm, the creativity, the hope, the joy to keep going forth. There is so much to continue to grow in being and doing. To ask the Lord to show us the way is to ask Him to continue to guide us in the process of better articulating the three pillars of our charism (spirituality, community and mission); and to combine the three calls of Buenos Aires (to deepen our identity; to share with others the gift of Ignatian spirituality from the lay vocation; to advance in the service of the most needy by sowing seeds of mercy, joy and hope) as three inseparable dimensions of our commitment. Three calls to apply to the three pillars.

The grace we ask for is to make space for the Lord to move our discernment. May the living God give our CLC World Community the path to walk and assure us of His presence as we walk it with Him.

OPEN DAY





Discerning the paths of hope

Fr. Arturo Sosa S.J.

Introduction

It is a great joy to share with you this meeting at the eighteenth World Assembly of the CLC in Amiens. At our first meeting as ecclesiastical assistant in Buenos Aires, I spoke to them about the importance of discernment as a privileged tool for building a community of Ignatian lays in the world. Today, five years later, I can say that we have used this tool of discernment and that we feel grateful and once again in God's hands.

As we contemplate the work of the world community in the different frontiers of its apostolate:

- ◆ In the growth of the spiritual life facing the indifference.
- ◆ In the care of the vital processes of families in all their diversity.
- ◆ In the help of young people facing the intra-descending models.
- ◆ In the work with the excluded and the poor facing the dynamics of social exclusion.
- ◆ And in the initiatives of care of the Common Home facing the selfishness and the exploitation.

In all these frontiers, I see that the world needs men and women, like you, who know how to enter into the same dialogue that Saint Ignatius presents to us in the contemplation of the Incarnation. A dialogue in which he discerns the situation of the world and we come up with a choice: *“let us redeem the human race”*. A daring choice that seems impossible at first sight, but is made possible by placing all hope in the affirmative response of a small and wonderful woman from Nazareth.

The discernment and hope go hand in hand in God's relationship with the world. Just as it may



be in our journey as a Christian Life Community. By choosing “*Discerning the paths of hope*” as the motto for this World Assembly, you wanted to unite discernment and hope, which today allows me to deepen with you the meaning of this union in Ignatian spirituality.

Hope in the life of Ignatius.

If we take a journey together through the life of Saint Ignatius, we see that throughout his pilgrimage, the hope is the compass that guides his steps. Let’s remember how, on his journey to Jerusalem¹, in the year 1523 – 500 years ago now – Ignatius did not want to bring companions to help him, nor did he want material subsistence...; He wanted only to have God as refuge and thus to grow in the three theological virtues: the charity, the faith and the hope. Ignatius repeated on his travels that “*this confidence, this affection and this hope, he wanted to have them in God alone*”. For Ignatius, the hope was a way of travelling, a pilgrimage both on the roads of life and in the spiritual experience. Today, we put our mobile phones on “*air plane mode*” for our travels or so that no one disturbs us. Ignatius put himself in “*hope mode*” in order to follow the paths that only the Lord could take him.

The “*mode of hope*”, at the beginning of the life of Saint Ignatius, was a personal spiritual apprenticeship between God and himself. Later, it became a communal experience, a shared hope, communal and institutional. When the first companions met in Venice, years later, to try to go together to Jerusalem and spend their lives for the benefit of souls², their plans failed, but their hope in Christ prevented their lives from being paralyzed and they moved to Rome to make themselves available to the Pope. Because they had put themselves in hope mode, the Society of Jesus emerged.

¹ Autobiography 35: And as such, at the beginning of the year 23, he left for Barcelona to embark. And although he was offered some company, he only wanted to go alone; that his whole purpose was to have God alone for refuge. And one day, when some people were urging him, because he knew neither Italian nor Latin, to take a company, to tell them how they would help him, and thanking them very much, he said that, even if he were the son or brother of the Duke of Cardona, he would not go in his company; because he wanted to have three virtues: charity, faith and hope; and bearing a companion, when he was hungry, he would look to him for help; and when he fell, that he would help him to rise; and thus he would also have confidence in him and affection for these respects; and that this confidence, this affection and this hope he wanted to have in God alone.

² Already by this time, they had all decided what they should do, it means: going to Venice and Jerusalem and spend their lives for the benefit of souls; and if they could not obtain the permission to stay in Jerusalem, returning to Rome and presenting themselves to the Vicar of Christ, to be used in what He judged to be of the greatest glory to God and of the greatest usefulness to souls.

This hope of the first Jesuits was crystallized in the Constitutions as the best mean for the union and the preservation of the Society of Jesus. Saint Ignatius left us a legacy of hope in the Constitutions as the best mean of perpetuating the body of the Society. Thus, “*placing hope in Him alone*”³ proves to be the best way to preserve and advance what He deigned to begin.

When the World Council of the CLC, following its discernment, chose the grace it wanted to achieve in this World Assembly, to ask the Lord to show it His ways, it wanted to look for a path of creative hope that would help it to move forward in the pilgrimage that the CLC has been developing since the last World Assemblies, particularly the most recent ones in Beirut and Buenos Aires. This hope in Christ will be a spiritual guarantee if it is both creative and discerning.

Hope in God the Creator

In the Spiritual Exercises, Saint Ignatius presents the hope as a sign of consolation, along with the other virtues of the faith and love. Where there is an increase in these three virtues, there is God. And where there is no hope, there is desolation, mistrust and agitation. That’s why, in his Spiritual Diary, Ignatius links the hope to the reconciliation with God, as a return to the lost devotion, an overcoming of spiritual lukewarmness and a new openness to intimacy with God⁴.

The hope is a spiritual guarantee of the presence of God. It is at the same time the root and the fruit of the experience of God. But Saint Ignatius warns that the hope must be placed more in things “above” than in things “below”, more in the Creator than in created things, or rather, not in them. And it is here that Ignatius asks us to deepen our spiritual life, because if the hope is the guarantee of the confidence, of the faith, in God, it is a hope that refers not only to the spiritual, but also to the material.

In the words of Pope Francis: “The discerned hope impels us to act with courage and boldness, trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the wisdom He gives us to make decisions in accordance with God’s will”⁵.

³ Const 812 It is enough to place in Him the hope that He will preserve and advance what He has deigned to begin for His service, His praise and His help of souls...

⁴ Spiritual Diary 73. ...begging Jesus for forgiveness from the Holy Trinity, a devotion in growth, with tears and sobs, and the hope of attaining grace, finding myself proud and confirmed for the future.

⁵ Pope Francis. Speech at the International Conference "Theology after Veritatis Gaudium in the actual context", 29 June 2019.



The Hope in God the Creator is an invitation to overcome the contradictions between living confidently in God and using material means. Rather, it is an invitation to live these poles in creative apostolic tension. If we are not rooted in the true hope, we will end up putting all our confidence in the created things and not in their Creator. We will make the means the ends. But, at the same time, we need human, material and institutional means to carry out our apostolates as collaborators with the mission of the Lord. To live creatively the tension between the total dependence on God and the need for material means is possible, according to spirituality, if we militate under the flag of the poor and humble Jesus. The poverty as the detachment of love, as decentralization that leads to give one's life, even to accept the humiliation in order to achieve the humility of gratuitous service, is what makes it possible to contribute to carrying the cross of the Lord.

Hope and poverty

For Ignatius, the poverty is one of those things before which we must “become indifferent” in order to follow the Lord⁶. But this Lord that we serve, it is Jesus Christ, poor and humble, so in the spiritual life, the poverty is a driving force that strengthens us in our authentic hope in God. For Ignatius, an affective poverty, of detachment, is not sufficient, but an effective and real poverty, in which faith, hope and love go hand in hand.

When hope in God is lived out in real poverty, inspired by the Gospel, chosen, not imposed by the unjust structures of society, the use of means is lived out in the dependence and the security: dependence on God and security in His Providence. The evangelical poverty makes us dependent on God and gives us the security in our mission, because he will help us to find the means (material and spiritual) to carry it out properly. The evangelical poverty makes our hope of working for justice credible, as the General Principles of the CLC indicate:

⁶ Ex. 23. Principle and foundation.

With particular urgency, we feel the need to work for justice, with a preferential option for the poor and a simple lifestyle that expresses our freedom and our solidarity with them. (PG 4).

Hope reunited the meaning of the divine providence and the ineluctable discernment in choosing the means we need for the mission, for the CLC support and for our professional and family life. Hope is a virtue that deepens our relationship with God, our trust in Him and His providence with us. As such, all the material and institutional means can be used, or not, insofar as they bring us closer to God and closer to the meaning of the vocation to which we have been called and which we have chosen to follow.

Upon the recognition of the spiritual consolation, prayed for and accompanied, hope is presented to us as a necessary driving force for discernment about the means we should use in the mission: on the frontiers, in community life and in our personal and family commitment in the world. What the Christian hope promotes and requests from a community is a correct intention in the use of means, with the Ignatian indifference, without trusting only in things, but without burying the talents and goods received.

The anchor of our hope

In his letters, Saint Ignatius liked to speak of “setting the anchor of our hope in God”⁷ as a necessary attitude in difficult moments that required a discernment. To cast the anchor, it is to anchor ourselves in the depths of God, it is a call to the radicality of hope in the Christ, to attain the grace of being what He has called us to be. The more radical our hope will be, the more it is anchored in Christ, the better we will find the paths that lead us to live out the plenitude of our call. It means, that if the CLC lives the grace of hope in Christ, it will be what it is called to be: a community of Ignatian and apostolic lay people.

- **Community.** A group that feels united, in communion, with God, that is a gift to the Church, because it celebrates the life of faith and is unified from the most local, familiar and close, to the worldwide community. A community that discerns and sends, but also accompanies and examines (evaluates) the best service that each of its members can provide. A community that knows how to put in place the human and institutional means to remain in communion throughout the entire world, that discerns national, regional

⁷ But in this part what has been said is sufficient, that is to say in brief: to use human means in their time, directed solely to their service, is not bad, when in God and in His Grace, we have the firm anchor of hope; but not to use them when God, by other means provided, excuses them, or when we do not expect them to help in their greater service, on this point we are all agreed... [Epp II,483].

and world structures to concretize a universal charism called to be present at the frontiers of the world.

- **Laity.** A community of people identified with the People of God, lays, men and women, who find their place in the Church and in the world. No one is defined by what he/she is not, but by what he/she is. A lay person, far from being a non-ecclesial, a non-priest or a non-nun, is a person committed to the Church from the most radical baptismal vocation of the Christian, who lives in the profession, in the family and in all the private and public facets of life. The lay character of the Vatican Council II and the synodal process that the Church is currently living make us all aware of being the People of God, in its unity of faith and apostolic commitment, in its diversity of charisms, and far from the rigorist uniformity of an exclusive clericalism that can affect all the members of the People of God. Organizing ourselves as lay people, finding the material and institutional means necessary to live our vocation, it is building the Church.
- **Ignatian.** It is a community rooted in the experience of God of the Spiritual Exercises. The belonging to the CLC is the individual response to the question of the Spiritual Exercises, “*What must I do for Christ?*”⁸ And he/she finds in the community other people who have in God their Principle and their Foundation: a community that knows and wants to praise, venerate and serve God our Lord. And for this, he/she will have to discern the personal and institutional means, of the personal and community prayer, in the Spiritual Exercises: enjoying the proximity to God in the consolation and not to abandon his vocation in the desolation.

Saint Ignatius taught us a way to follow the Lord that distinguishes between gaining and losing one’s life in the style of Jesus. For this reason, a community of the CLC will be in permanent formation, using the Ignatian tools so that, through the prayer, the examen and the spiritual accompaniment, it can seek and find God’s will.

- **Apostolic.** Recalling the general principles of the CLC: “Our life is essentially apostolic. The mission field of the CLC has no limits: it extends to the Church and to the world, to make the Gospel of salvation present to all and to serve the person and the society, opening the hearts to the conversion and striving to change oppressive structures”. (PG 8)

This apostolic essentiality of the CLC is rooted in hope. Living the radicality of our commitment in the world is not a commandment, but a grateful

⁸ Ex. 53

response to so much good received from the Lord. We do not give a glass of cold water in the heat because there is a promise of reward, but we give it as the best we can, escaping into our hands, but giving a little of the water of life that we have received from Jesus. This water, which has irrigated our vital lands, which has flooded us, satiated us and filled us with our spiritual experience, cannot remain within the limits of the Community, but must reach those who are most thirsty for God and his justice.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude by recalling the Letter to the Hebrews, when it speaks to us of the hope as a guarantee of the promises of God, and states: “*God cannot deceive, and He brings powerful comfort to those who take refuge in Him to maintain the hope to which we are destined. A hope that is for our lives like a firm and sure anchor, and that penetrates to the very depths of the sacred*”⁹.

As such, hope is a condition without which we cannot enter into the discernment, just as a ship cannot anchor without dropping the anchor. At the same time, hope holds the community’s boat firmly together and unites the creatures to their Creator and Lord.

God has not promised us an easy path, but he has promised us that he will always be with us. When the doubts hit us, when difficulties rock our boat, when it’s harder to make a decision, that’s when we need to pray the most, to put all our hope in God. Only in this way, by following the poor and humble Jesus, will you be able to discern the new institutional channels required by the international reality of CLC and weave together the networks required by the apostolic frontiers to which the world Community feels called in unity. The Lord will help us to discern and to find the human and institutional means so that we can once again cast the net, even in waters where we have never fished before.

Living in an Ignatian and apostolic lay community, it means collaborating in the “*redemption of the human race*”¹⁰ with the same “*May it be done to me according to Your Will*” of the Virgin Mary in the contemplation of the Incarnation. Practicing the discernment of hope is a way of acknowledging so much good received for bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world, by repeating in the plural and with Saint Ignatius a prayer of thanksgiving, of gift and of radical trust in God... “Give us your love and your grace that it may be enough for us.”

⁹ Heb. 6:18-20.

¹⁰ Ex. 101.

The Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord

Homily of Fr. Arturo Sosa S.J.



Dear brothers and sisters of the Christian Life Community.

A warm greeting to the delegates of each national community, to the World Counsel and to the Ecclesial Assistentes, we are sharing this Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord in the magnificent Cathedral of Our Lady of Amiens, which as the tallest gothic Cathedral in France, reminds us that we are temples of God for his greater glory.

In the framework of the eighteenth CLC World Assembly, the Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord invites us to stop in the middle of the road between Galilee and Jerusalem to meet the Lord in a new and luminous way. This meeting on Mount Tabor has a triple invitation for us:

- An invitation to give thanks for the moments of clarity that we have lived in the community.
- An invitation to go forth.
- An invitation to listen to the Lord.

The Transfiguration reminds us that the path of the Christian there are also moments of clarity, consolation, consolidation of our discernments and of confir-

mation. They are times when we feel God more closely and we can clearly see the luminous presence of God in our lives. In fact, in the gospel story the ones who appear beside Jesus are Moses and Elijah, the characters from the Old Testament who saw God up close on two mountains, the Sinai and Horeb.

Also the disciples Peter, James and John, represent all of us. They walked with Jesus in the successes and failures of the times in Galilee, but on Mount Tibor they were able to look beyond the everyday to see Jesus as the Son of God. In these moments of closeness to God, faith is simpler and connatural for the person, it is easier for us to see God in others, in creation, in the kindness that surrounds us.

For this reason, the first invitation of the Transfiguration is to remember and be grateful for moments of clarity in our personal life (your calling to faith, your Christian vocation, your family life, professional life, your commitments ...) and also as a local, nation and world Community.

Throughout history, since the beginnings of the Marian Congregations, up to becoming a World Community of Christian Life, men and women with Ignatian Spirituality have felt a call to life in the Church as a lay apostolic community. Since the General Principles were approved in 1990, you have been experiencing numerous moments of clarity in your vocation, as demonstrated in the World Assemblies. A clarity that happens in the middle of the challenge to respond to the need for justice and for reconciliation in the world.

From all the continents on the planet, CLC has felt the call to live a Common Mission to be part of the Church of Christ in the world, affirmed in three pillars: Ignatian Spirituality, life in community, and the apostolic mission.

It is time to remember with peace and gratitude, the moments of light, of grace and of consolation, to ask the Lord to confirm this vocation.

The second invitation of the scriptures is to go forth. The moments of clarity are a gift from God as we journey. "Make our tents" on some beautiful embers on our way is a temptation to overcome. The moments of clarity confirm in us the way of continuing. They help us to look towards Jerusalem and, trusting, resume the journey.

The disciples, high on the mount, experienced the grace of spiritual conversion from their deepest roots in the tradition of Moses and Elijah, to the word of the Father in the middle of the clarity of the cloud. But that "assembly" of the disciples with Jesus is not to be left in the past, or in the present, but must be converted in a source of inspiration and daring to look forward and continue

the journey towards the promised future, filled with Hope. To climb the mountain is to walk towards an encounter with God, in the places where we know He resides. However, Lord Jesus invites us to not remain on the mountain top, but to come down to Jerusalem, where the future is more uncertain, but where God's plan is fulfilled.

In the experience of the Spiritual Exercises, it would be the step between the second and the third week. The person who does the exercises has already lived the call of the Eternal King, and has contemplated the Incarnation and has experienced the Two Flags,... and now needs to arrive at the Last Supper, at Gethsemane and at the Passion. While at Tabor there was confirmation and clarity. Times are coming when "divinity is hidden". Here it is necessary to resort to the Ignatian tools: the Spiritual Exercises, the examen, spiritual accompaniment, so that we gather strength in consolation, and we do not abandon the Lord in desolation.

To be on your journey is to step out of oneself. It is to open oneself to encounters and to reconciliation with oneself, with the community, and with God. To be on your journey is daring to take a step beyond the obligation to enter into the field of devotion to living in the style of Jesus of Nazareth. To be on your journey with Jesus is to be willing to risk overcoming obstacles: a crisis of meaning, the means to follow without assurances, the installation of the comfort of results obtained. It is the apostolic risk, that is experienced in a real encounter with God and with the world.

And the third invitation, is the one in God's voice on the top of Mount Tabor: "this is my beloved son, listen to him". God keeps talking to the world, sometimes he whispers, sometimes he shouts out of pain and injustice, from exploitation and from the need to "redeem all





of humanity”. The encounter with the Lord requires attentive and true listening.

A listening that requires interior silence, silencing my own noises, those of my community, in order to be able to listen to the world and to God in the world.

Only from our interior silence, will the listening that will open a dialogue from heart to heart, be possible. Not from the complacency of making three tents in the consolation of Tabor, nor from the fear of what will come in Jerusalem. God keeps talking to us today through his word, in the celebration of the sacraments, in the community of the Church, and above all, in the world as the place of the universal people of God in need of reconciliation and justice. God talks to us through the

people we meet in life and through our interiority.

In Ignatian prayer, we cannot move on to dialogue without God reaching us first. It would be our own monologue. Well, the same as listening to the world and in the world, to God, we find the strength to respond with all that we have.

We ask then, all the Apostles, Saint Peter, Saint James and Saint John, who accompanied Jesus to Tabor and Our Lady, Mary of Nazareth, that they teach us to listen to God as they did, that they help us to discover today what motivates us to repeat the song of praise of the Magnificat, that we can keep in our hearts, the strength to walk with Lord Jesus, and specially with Mary, that it be her who shelters us and puts us with her Son.

Amen

Homily of Mgr Gérard Le Stang Bishop of Amiens

Good evening everyone.

Having just returned from the World Youth Day in Lisbon, I am happy to join you, as Bishop of Amiens, to pray with you, CLC delegates from around the world, as your assembly draws to a close. I hope that your quest for new paths of hope has been fruitful and will be even more so in the times ahead.

My joy at joining you is all the greater because it reminds me of the years when I was a local community guide in Rennes, being a member of the priestly institute of the Cor Unum family of Ignatian spirituality.



Mgr Gérard Le Stang

Today we celebrate Saint Lawrence, deacon and martyr of the 3rd century, who, in response to the Emperor's injunction to hand over the treasures of the Church, showed the Emperor the poor, the sick and the excluded, stating: "These are the treasures of the Church". May this man (Saint Lawrence) who had accepted great responsibilities to serve the Church's mission inspire us to remain faithful to the role of servant of our brothers and sisters, in the name of Jesus.

Let us prepare to celebrate the eucharist by acknowledging that we have sinned.

To speak of his mission as a servant, and of the fruitfulness of our mission, Jesus speaks of a "grain of wheat that fell into the earth". In this region that welcomes you, this image speaks for itself: farmers are currently harvesting hundreds of hectares of cereals, so precious to human life, on very rich soils and despite the vagaries of the climate.

The war between Russians and Ukrainians is also a wheat war and a global food issue. The future of many people depends on the grains of wheat that have fallen to the ground.

A sad fate of the grain of wheat: to fall into the earth and die there. The prospect is not a pleasant one. And yet, isn't returning to the earth the best way for us to experience the hope of heaven? The (recently deceased) philosopher, Bruno Latour, wrote a book entitled "*Where am I?*"¹ A strange question. "*On earth*", answers our author. "*Who am I?*" "*An earthling!*". Past generations, who thought they were 'foreigners' beyond the limits of their village, are now succeeded by a man who appreciates the smallness of his planet, and who discovers,

Jesus is from a specific land and is marked by this belonging. He spoke of corns of wheat because he himself see them grow and ripen

worried that the earth conquered with great difficulty, is very small and very fragile. Adam, formed from the earth, before whom God was ecstatic, finally says to himself: Hasn't the time come, then, for me to readjust to the earth where I am planted? The time to 'put down my bag' after so many wanderings, to rediscover the smell

of the trees, the clarity of the water, the song of the birds, the closeness of the brother, the need for others, the rhythm of his breath, the time to remain in my body, to close my eyes to escape the saturation of images, and to perceive eternity in the present. Adam, the earthling, too often neglecting his native land and exiled from himself, is looking for a home. So, "*where am I?*" But on earth, and not elsewhere! Isn't it time to accept it, since God is waiting for you here and invites you to bear fruit, before it dies?

Jesus is from a specific land and is marked by this belonging. He spoke of corns of wheat because he himself see them grow and ripen. He knows the lilies of the field and observes the birds of the sky. He shares the days and nights, the customs and laws, the religion and practices of a people and a land. It was in a concrete land that his hu-

¹ Bruno Latour, *Où suis-je ? Leçons du confinement à l'usage des terrestres*, 2021

manity as a son of God took shape. He is from a place, and by praying the Word, we are constantly sent back to it. Pope Francis often says Time is superior to space. That is a good point. But the fact remains: to find our place in this world, we need space. It's even said that we need third places, between work and home, to encourage free and fraternal encounters, creativity and solidarity, and the surprises of hope. Time is undoubtedly superior to space, but what is the point of having time if we do not have the vital space we need to grow, to bear fruit and to learn to die.



The seed falls into the earth, just as we fall in love. It disappears silently in the gift of itself. It learns to die in order to make the earth bountiful and golden with wheat. The Church, too, is always growing in a specific place, on a specific land. The WYD or your world assembly may bring together the whole world, they are not above ground. Their richness and success lie precisely in the incarnation and particular culture of their participants.

When you came to Amiens, you did not just join a prestigious Jesuit school with impersonal buildings. You have come to a local Church, a diocese where grains of wheat have been falling into the earth for more than fifteen centuries, ever since St Fermin - who came from Pamplona - sowed the Gospel here. Here, St Martin shared his cloak with a poor man at the city gates, and the anecdote has survived the centuries. Here too, St Vincent de Paul was converted to the service of the poorest of the poor when he met a dying peasant, and the Lazarists took their cue from him. From here, too, a parish vicar, St Antoine Daveluy, went to Korea to become a bishop and be buried there as a martyr. From here, too, a simple woman, Bibiane Leclerq, who became a missionary

nun of Our Lady of the Apostles, welcomed a mission to Algiers where she gave her life for a suffering people, now included among the martyrs of Algeria beatified in 2018. On a less serious note, allow me to finish by quoting my predecessor Saint Honoré, 8th bishop of Amiens (I'm the 104th), whom tradition has made the patron saint of bakers and whose name refers to a delicious French pastry! "*Anything can be done with good wheat that has fallen into the earth!*".

Through the men and women of this small diocese, we admire the Church as it lives everywhere. Humble roots open up to the ends of the earth, to the universality of salvation in Jesus, to the root of the offering. God's grace gives growth to what is accomplished in goodness and justice (1st reading), and brings hearts into unison.

Today, God still inspires our Church with the courage of hope. Our hearts are made for the faith in his promise, the faith that reawakens the memory of the covenant, the faith that gives rise to the prophets of the present, the faith that overcomes the anxieties of the future. "The presence of hope" writes the American theologian James Keenan, is not explosive, brutal or noisy. It does not suddenly transform darkness into light, or silence into eloquence. Hope is as light as a zephyr. It respects our freedom, our intelligence, our emotions. Hope does not deprive us of our critical spirit, of our experiences of the desert or of our deepest fears. It penetrates gently, assuring us of the Spirit's presence in the midst of turmoil. This gentle presence is full of strength, not in its intensity but in its depth. It is the breath of the Spirit that comes when we wail, assuring us that when we know the moments of greatest weakness, when we are at the end of our strength, God will not abandon us"². May this hope be given to you. Thank you for coming to draw it from this blessed place. Amen.

²James Keenan, *Les vertus*, ed. atelier, may 2002.

The Anchor of Our Hope

*Homily at the Closing Eucharist of the XVIII CLC World Assembly
Amiens, 12 August 2023*

As we come to the end of our world assembly, I would like to put into images what we have experienced during these days, and so to look to the future with hope. I would like to thank Estela Cameirão, from the Portuguese delegation, for her help in drawing the pictures that will fill with images what we can feel today. A picture is always worth more than many words. Today we can express ourselves in this way so that the pictures speak to our hearts.



The first reading, Elijah's prayer on Mount Horeb, reminds us of how we came to this assembly. We wanted to meet God in the midst of the trembling and noise of our journey to Amiens. We come from all over the world, each with the noise and trembling of our own reality, our own community and our own country. As we gathered in Amiens, it seemed impossible to understand anything amidst the fires, earthquakes and hurricanes of the outside world. Inside we also felt the fatigue of the journey, the noise of the different languages, and we asked ourselves like Elijah "Where is God?"

The images of the earthquake, the hurricane and the fire reflect for us the initial noise of an assembly that wants to find paths of hope. An assembly that wanted to discern together from the reality of the world in which we are a community.

Just as it was difficult for Elijah to reach the top of the mountain and find the cave where he could wait for God, we have travelled a path through recent world assemblies that confirmed for us that the encounter with God takes place on new paths, which call for personal and community discernment, going beyond the known frontiers, and entering into the terrain of the unknown.



God's response was not long in coming. Within the initial noise, the hopeless situations, the seemingly irreconcilable diversity of the fires, earthquakes and hurricanes of the world, once again God tells us: "Yo estoy contigo", "Je suis avec toi", "I am with you". In English, U = you, which is the method and process we have been following these days in Amiens. The gentle breeze of feeling and tasting the presence of God is the first step to discernment. We thank God for all the people who have made it possible.

Today's Gospel for the whole Church also gives us a profound reading of our experience at the CLC World Assembly in Amiens. The first image is that of Jesus praying on the mountain. First he urges his disciples to embark quickly, then he bids farewell to the crowd who are already satisfied with the bread and the word of Jesus, and then he goes to the mountain to pray.

Jesus' prayer on the mountain is different from that of Elijah. For Jesus, prayer is again a dialogue of the Trinity, as in the Ignatian contemplation of the Incarnation. The Trinity is represented as a tree with three branches of which Jesus is also part and light. From the mountain, Jesus can see the disciples' boat in the middle of a stormy sea. That boat, small and fragile in the midst of a violent sea, is like our CLC world community. The storm that raises the sea with fury is the incessant swell of the cries of the world. A sea where too many men and

women drown in search of a better future. A sea of broken families, of wounded fraternity, of victims of exploitation, of abuse, of poverty, of the pain of a planet that does not find equal justice. A sea where war, senselessness and death are all around us. And Jesus contemplates that sea darkened by pain, shaken by suffering and tossed by injustice, a sea where too many people are already sinking. The Trinity, as in the Incarnation, continues to have in every human situation, in every moment of history, a response: “Let us redeem humanity”.



Jesus comes to us in the midst of the storm of our troubled world. From our boat we can hardly recognise the Lord and we are afraid due to the swell of human situations around us. Jesus’ first words are “It is me, do not be afraid”, the most repeated phrase following the Resurrection. It is an affirmation that God is present and close to us in the difficult situations of the world.



Homily

From the little boat of our community, it can happen to us like Peter, that we want to do things as God does them: walking on the water. We get caught up in the most miraculous things of the moment without realising how close God

is to the problems of the world. We are even capable of challenging Jesus by saying “If you are the Lord, make me walk on water”. We do not only want evidence to prove to ourselves that God is present in the world, but we also want to do things as God does them; and we are not God. We want to save those suffering in the sea of injustice, as Jesus did; but we are not Jesus.

Jesus’ response is still surprising: “Come”. There is a certain irony in Jesus’ gesture. It is as if he is inviting Peter to try to do things as he did, so that he might see his own reality in the attempt. And Peter, between courage and confidence, gets out of the boat and wants to reach Jesus; but soon the sea makes him feel the fear of human suffering. Peter gives his all, just as we as CLC give our all in our work on all apostolic frontiers. As an open hand towards Jesus, we have in these days confirmed our five fields of apostolate. As a Christian Life Community we want to work for the poor in a globalised world, we want to help families and be with the youth, we want justice that respects the Common Home we inhabit, and we seek the human and spiritual means to advance towards the Lord through this sea of darkness. But if, like Peter, we look only to ourselves as a reference point, then the sea will flood us, making us lose our hope.



And Jesus waits and allows Peter to come into contact as much as possible with the difficulties of the sea that is the world. Jesus allows him to get wet, to get soaked, to get involved, to feel the fear of so many painful situations in the sea of life. When Peter feels small in the face of the problems of the world and stops looking at himself, then he can cry out: Lord, save me!

It is the same process that takes place in the Spiritual Exercises and in personal

and communal discernment. It is the way in which we cease to be our own point of reference and discover a God who is always new, who is always ready to reach out to us. We find our place before God when we have allowed ourselves to be touched by the problems of the world and have discovered that we can only walk if we go hand in hand with Jesus.



Jesus does not care that we have doubted - he knows that we are men and women of little faith - but he continues to invite us to walk with him, no longer alone but in community. Because Jesus gets into the boat with Peter, then the storm calms and it is the whole community of disciples who exclaim: “Truly, you are the Son of God”. It is no longer the voice of one, but the voice of all those in the same boat.

In Peter’s experience we discover that we want to walk in the storm, but we cannot do so if we put our trust only in ourselves. The anchor of our hope is Jesus. We, in these days at the World Assembly in Amiens, have lived the desire to anchor our life in Jesus. That is, to put one hand on Jesus, the other on the community that is the Church, and the heart in contact with the world. In this way we will be able to feel the sea in all its storm and calm, without floating miraculously and without sinking in difficulty. Always saying to the Lord, You are the anchor of our hope.

*Text: José de Pablo S.J. – CLC World Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant
Artwork: Estela Cameirão – CLC in Portugal*



AMIENS 2023
18th
CVX-CLC WORLD
ASSEMBLY

Discerning paths for hope

FINAL DOCUMENT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY AMIENS 2023



Discerning Paths for Hope as One Community

Grace: *Lord, help us to go forth; show us the way*

Scripture: *“You will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth”*

(Acts 1:8)

Summary

The Christian Life Community assembled in Amiens to Discern Paths for Hope in our rapidly changing world. We felt a strong confirmation of our vocation as One Lay, Ignatian, Apostolic Community. We reached a mature state of being one community, feeling connected in all apostolic activities that we had undertaken over the past decade. We recognised that the mission of one is truly the mission of all. Our Anchor of Hope, the Trinity, looks at the world we live in and of which we are part, and inspires us to respond in companionship with Christ. Feeling safe in the hands of God, we desire to go forth and deepen our mission. We confirmed communal discernment and DSSE (Discerning Sending Supporting Evaluating) as our way of proceeding. We confirmed the frontiers as defined in Lebanon, complemented by a new one: Spiritual Ministries. We recognised that Integral Ecology is transversal to all other frontiers. The Assembly strongly affirmed mission within the Church, which involves building Synodality and becoming a safe, all-inclusive space, where there is no room for abuse or discrimination. Concrete means to respond as One Community to the call received in Amiens have been suggested. The decision to appoint a commission to work on a comprehensive revision of the General Principles and General Norms was formally approved. We need formation for mission to enable us to hold our three pillars (spirituality, community, and mission) in a creative balance. The recurring need to connect, cooperate and collaborate on a world level was named. Corresponding priorities to find an adequate technological platform and to continue the international apostolic teams were defined as important ways to enhance networking activities for our world community.

Invitation to Each Reader:

We invite each reader to join our Assembly pilgrimage with gratefulness and hope. We give thanks for all God is doing among us to build up goodness and grace in our world. With Christ’s eyes of love, we name the grace we received in this Assembly: Discerning Paths for Hope as One Community. General Prin-

ciple 2 teaches us to read with “the interior law of love, and the spirit of the Gospel”. We invite you to read this text in the same way.

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DISCERNING PATHS FOR HOPE AS ONE COMMUNITY

Introduction

God is calling the Christian Life Community to be a people of hope. Our world has been changing rapidly: from climate crisis, different forms of injustice, war, pandemic, to the communications technology revolution, and a church facing challenges. Each of these elements bring new realities to us as CLC. The changing situation leads to different cries being heard. It is time to look for God who is already at work in our realities. Discerning paths for hope, we ask the grace “Lord, help us to go forth; show us the way”, so that we can follow You.

Part I: Contemplation of the Incarnation Gives Us a Vision of Reality and a Way of Doing

Guided by Saint Ignatius, we contemplate the Trinity looking upon our world with great compassion: humanity (of which we are part) and the earth that groans (SE 101-109). We see some of us rejoicing, courageous and consoled; we see some of us who are in pain, need and desolation, and this breaks our hearts. We see many needs: among the poor, migrants, war-torn families, all young people trying to build their dreams, vulnerable children, victims of discrimination and violence also within the church, the situation of women in each society, polarisation within societies; we hear a creation which groans with natural disasters and global warming.

Contemplating the Trinity who sends a child to be born for us in Jesus, we want to join them to respond concretely to these cries. We also see that God’s love is total and for all people and creation, preparing a steady cause of hope. We see our apostolic commitments and how God works through us; signs of hope and resurrection. And above all, we experience the loving gaze of God, encouraging us on our way. Christ is with us, and we feel entirely in his hands.

As One Lay, Ignatian, Apostolic Community we seek to act in solidarity with all creation and human beings. We remember that Mary’s “yes” was essential to the incarnation. “A small and wonderful woman of Nazareth” (Fr Arturo Sosa S.J.), a young woman of simplicity and hope, gives us courage that we may also say yes to God’s call to us as a world community.

Gathered Together in Amiens to Listen to the Spirit

In Amiens, France, city of Saint Vincent de Paul and Jules Verne, 185 delegates gathered as one community. We went on pilgrimage from our respective na-

tional communities to one worldwide community, readying ourselves to discern with the Spirit of God. Listening deeply, we sought to engage with the question “how shall we go forth?”

Walking as One Community

Through a facilitation team, the World ExCo invited us to go on a pilgrimage from the “I” to a “we”. Starting at a personal level to open ourselves to the Spirit, we were invited to share our meditations in spiritual conversation with others in various types of small groups. We faced some challenges such as the diversity of backgrounds, languages and cultures, and the layout of the space in the plenary venue did not allow us to face each other, which made communication difficult. However, these challenges brought us deeper into our desire to connect, and the translators allowed us to understand one another. The sign language, introduced by the facilitators during a body prayer, helped us to meet each other beyond words. We looked each other in the eyes, and saw that the same Spirit dwells in each one of us.

The facilitators led us through the Theory U Process, seeking to move towards “presencing” by listening to the Spirit. Hence, we discovered deeper levels of communication and exchange and truly experienced the Spirit bringing unity in diversity (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). We experienced that we were no longer delegates of national communities, but an assembly of the World Community gathered in one place. And so “we” became the 18th General Assembly of CLC in Amiens, a visible sacrament of the World Community. We entered this process with generosity and enthusiasm, desiring to experience God’s love and grace moving among us as CLC.

We welcomed new communities into the World Community: Slovakia, New Zealand, Sweden, and Ethiopia. These communities were introduced by their godparent communities: Malta, Australia, Germany, Kenya. It was a grace to welcome eight observer communities also: Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Haiti, Macao, Panamá, Tchad and Togo. Congo Brazzaville, Singapore and South Sudan, new observer communities, were welcomed in absentia. Five other national communities were absent.

Deepening Apostolic Commitments

We shared on apostolic commitments we have developed and worked on in the five years since the 2018 Buenos Aires Assembly. A diversity of dynamic apostolic experiences, across five priority fields of mission (Family; Ecology; Youth; Poverty and Globalisation; Spiritual ministries), opened up before us in “apostolic rooms”. We let ourselves be touched by how the Spirit is present in our efforts to “go forth”, share and deepen our frontiers.

Embracing our Anchor of Hope

At the open day we continued to discover apostolic activities, this time alongside one thousand CLC members from France and beyond. Fr Arturo Sosa S.J. joined us at Amiens Cathedral. The next day he invited delegates to focus on hope as a central compass for our discernment on the theme of the Assembly. He encouraged us to switch on the “hope-mode” of our hearts - just like the “airplane mode” of our mobile phones - and to find the anchor of hope (Hebrews 6:18-19) for our CLC community.

Fr Sosa S.J. invited the Assembly to reflect on discernment as our precious tool as we engage on the five frontiers. He reflected on how we as CLC lay men and women can join in Saint Ignatius’ journey of hope. He called us to deepen our walk with the poor and humble Christ, who empowers us to hopeful and courageous action towards justice for all. Fr Sosa S.J. invited us not to be afraid of the apostolic tension between serving Christ and engaging with practical material means. He invited us to explore new ways of doing the Spiritual Exercises to support the faith of the people of our time.

We were invited to prepare drawings showing different expressions of the Anchor of Hope as present within our CLC graced histories (drawings are included in Annex 1). As solid signs of God’s fidelity, we recognised in these images and stories foundations on which we can build. With an open heart, mind, and will, our community asked God to open paths for hope we can walk together; we entered into the day of silence and prayer.

Empowered in the Silence

After the day of silence, during which we meditated with the question “To what do you call us, Lord?” we were invited to empathy walks. Starting in pairs, like Emmaus pilgrims (Luke 24:13-35), continuing in groups of four, and ending with groups of eight, we shared what we had lived during our day of silence. We discovered how the Spirit had spoken to us, through scripture, poetry, experiences, our graced history, and nature. Together in the plenary, we started “crystallising” the invitations to our world community we heard from the Holy Spirit.

We were invited to deepen our responses and to look into our burning desires that had neither been expressed nor been heard. Allowing each other to name and express our sacred discontent, and listening deeply to one another, opened us to new paths for hope.

Part II: Going Forth on Paths for Hope

We affirm our identity as a lay community and confirm the relevance of our frontiers as the way we live our apostolic life. We now desire to deepen them

as paths for hope. We commit ourselves to action for the good of the world while at the same time realising our limits. We wish to take small steps with courage and hope. We can be present without solving or seeking to solve, asking God to move among us. In so doing, we seek to tend the inner fire to move deeper into our realities, trusting that our “five loaves and two fish” (Mark 6:41) are more than enough for God to act.

We also acknowledge that the mission of any person, local or national CLC group forms part of the mission of our community as a whole. We emphasise that our shared apostolic life is founded on a search, as lay people, to live fully our vocation. We can facilitate action and reflection for mission, relying on the Spiritual Exercises and DSSE (Discerning Sending Supporting Evaluating), and in so doing be more effective witnesses to God’s action in the world.

Confirming Our Call as a Lay, Ignatian, Apostolic Community

We joyfully live our vocation as a lay community. In this Assembly, we affirmed the importance of the call to be lay people. This vocation to be the People of God connects us with the life of our societies and families, and grounds us in the life of the Church as a community of faith and synodality.

We need to hold our three pillars in creative balance: going to the realities on mission and committing ourselves, building up the body of our community, and sharing our spirituality in a deep way.

As a lay community, we seek to see, hear, feel and respond with compassion for the needs of the world. We are grateful for opportunities to share hope in places of burning need. Our community is already working in the frontiers to respond to the needs of our world, and these experiences were shared at this Assembly. Working at the frontiers helps us to deepen our spirituality. For instance, the challenges we experience through our vocation become living tensions which help us move into apostolic creativity, like playing the strings of a musical instrument which are tuned at the correct tension in order to achieve a harmonic sound.

Confirmation and Deepening of Apostolic Frontiers

We therefore acknowledged that the Frontiers continue to be essential elements of our community’s life, because “our life is essentially apostolic” (General Principle 8). We confirmed the four frontiers from the Lebanon General Assembly of 2013 (ecology; family; globalisation and poverty; youth), and recognised spiritual ministries as a fifth frontier. We embraced a new mission, mission within the Church.

We now encourage our World Community to a deepened engagement with the Frontiers. The criterion for selecting the priorities of the CLC World Community is what is most urgent and those that are also most universal. The frontiers that follow are the updated intuitions of the General Assembly.

Integral Ecology

A cry underneath all cries is that of the earth, in which we hear an urgent call from the Spirit in our time. Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* provides us with a foundation for our response, with Integral Ecology being the best term for our efforts in this frontier. Indeed, the Assembly prioritised Integral Ecology, and recognised that it is a transversal frontier affecting all others. As the climate crisis unfolds, God calls us to care for our common home. This also means opening ourselves to ecological conversion. Revising our personal lifestyles to be in tune with the gospel, respect for creation must be accompanied by communal actions of hope for creation.

Our communities must reflect and act towards solving the structural causes of ecological problems. We ask God to deepen our connection to all creation and the poor most affected by the climate crisis. We seek to live the creative tension between addressing our needs and listening to the earth groaning for our transformation.

Poverty and Globalisation

Meeting the needs caused by poverty and globalisation is a priority for our community. Migration has our particular attention, and a desire to respond to the needs of people in this area was repeated within the Assembly. We need to deeply understand the causes of poverty and forced migration. We seek practical ways to advocate and serve the needs of vulnerable people, including Indigenous and native communities. We want to stand with the marginalised, saying “we see you, we hear you, and we are with you”.

At times we can feel frustrated by socio-political structures which cover poverty with slogans and turn people against those on the margins. Indeed we feel called to be people of reconciliation in the midst of social and political crises. Skills of socio-political engagement are always required within our community and its work in this frontier. We are advocates for dialogue in societies which are fragmenting, and advocates for peace in situations of war. All members and communities are invited to speak out with courage in situations of injustice.

Youth

We desire to deepen our intergenerational connections, walking and working

with young people amongst us. They can convert our hearts for the needs of a rapidly changing world. We seek to support them on their road through encouragement and hope when needed.

The youth frontier is not a way to catch young people; it is rather a space we need to provide hope in reaching out to youth in our societies. We can build connections with youth who, like us, search for purpose, and the meaning that comes with care for creation. Such efforts can bring us together on our paths of spirituality and community.

We seek to walk with, listen, serve and reach out to young people in our national contexts, recognising that both young people and we have gifts to share. Ignatian wisdom can help young people face the significant challenges of integrating faith and life, being discerning in relationships, and taking significant decisions.

Family

In this changing world, families are constantly adapting to new circumstances. The family in all its forms is a “domestic church” in which life and faith are shared and celebrated in a personalised and profound way.

We recognise it is important to support families in an inclusive way so that no-one feels outside of the church. In the intimacy of family we have a unique opportunity to look into each other’s eyes and so reveal God to one another in the concrete reality of our daily lives.

We want to “lovingly care for the lives of all families”. Continuing to consolidate and deepen our journey of learning, we seek to offer accompaniment that affirms the fruits of love and helps to bring about healing in areas of pain and need (Amoris Laetitia 7).

Opening to a New Frontier and Mission

Spiritual Ministries

Our community seeks to respond to the spiritual quest of people of our time. We offer a spiritual apostolic community life of coherence, joy and hope. We have tools to accompany persons seeking deeper purpose, meaning, and integration between faith and life.

The Spiritual Exercises are for us “the specific source and characteristic instrument of our spirituality” (General Principle 5) and a gift to share with the church and the world. We are invited to be creative with how we share the Spiritual Exercises to respond to the realities of today. We feel called to live an attitude to discernment based on the Spiritual Exercises as a tool for sharing and

accompanying those who seek a purpose in life and who seek to make informed decisions.

Personal and communal discernment are expressions of our mission. Introducing people to tools of personal discernment is an important way we share our gift. Moreover, communal discernment as experienced at this Assembly is an important tool for a synodal church in its work of transformation to conform to the voice of the Holy Spirit in our time.

Situations and needs are diverse in the different regions and countries. Our responses in spiritual ministries are therefore diverse but always rooted in our identity of being a lay Ignatian apostolic community and in collaboration with our partner the Jesuits and the Church.

Many of our local, regional and national communities have already focused on and worked with the frontier of spiritual ministries for quite some time, as many initiatives shared during the first days of the World Assembly have shown.

Mission within the Church

Mission within the Church emerged as a new area for engagement by the Assembly. As CLC, we were re-founded as a community after the Second Vatican Council. In the ecclesiology that emerged, as a Church we conceive of ourselves as the People of God (*Lumen Gentium*), on pilgrimage in history and in different realities.

In all our diverse contexts, building an inclusive Church is an essential part of our mission. We affirm the equal dignity and role of women in the life of the Church. We are moved by the cries of people among us who have been discriminated against or abused within the Church. Where discrimination and abuse has been present, we seek to be in solidarity with victims. We can be a community of generous hospitality, where there is no room for discrimination, and where joy abounds.

We welcome people at the edge of the Church who are searching for community and spirituality. We echo Pope Francis at the World Youth Day Welcoming Ceremony, Lisbon, Portugal, August 3, 2023, who said: “Everyone, everyone, everyone! In the Church there is room for everyone.” We want to work for, belong to and be a Church which welcomes and includes everyone, every person in their diversity of gender, sexuality, marital status, affectivity, and ways of life, and every other marginalised and excluded person. We acknowledge differences in cultural and social realities in different parts of the world. We desire to be a friendly and safe space for all people to explore their faith in the context of daily living. We encourage communities to open paths for dialogue and hope.

We give thanks for Pope Francis' leadership guiding the Church in its response to the Second Vatican Council, implementing synodal processes, opening the doors of the Church, and sending us to everyone. His ministry offers us many signs of hope. We can be a voice for interreligious dialogue and ecumenism, co-existence and cooperation across differences.

Part III: Means to Respond as One Community

Our assemblies in Guadalajara (1990), Hong Kong (1994), Itaici (1998), Nairobi (2003), Fatima (2008), Lebanon (2013), Buenos Aires (2018) and Amiens were necessary and progressive steps to becoming One Community. Being one community means that any mission of a member, local or national CLC group forms part of the mission of the whole community. DSSE remains a key way we can respond to this mission as one community.

Need to Connect, Cooperate and Collaborate

Between assemblies, we want to continue sharing our experiences and accompanying each other as a world community. We face common challenges and desire to connect, cooperate and collaborate. We would like to support and empower each other, sharing resources, stories and experiences. National Communities are encouraged to support each other in embracing the frontiers, and meeting human, financial, relational needs. We need to search for new ways of collaboration and connection to serve the community at local, national, regional and world levels. This will help us deepen our awareness that the mission of one community is the mission of all.

Need for Formation

The needs of the community for formation call for greater collaboration and networking among us as a world community. Reflecting on the Global Formation Encounter at Manresa (2022), we can revisit our formation programs from a lens of how to best prepare our world community and its members for mission in these times. We need to make our resources more accessible across our different contexts. A desire for regional formation encounters emerged. Additional common documents and formation materials from a world community perspective could enrich our members and communities.

There is a need for formation that helps us to live the three pillars of our identity in a deep, integrated, and balanced way, especially considering the tensions of apostolic life and living these in a creative way. This Assembly highlighted the need to develop tools to help us live together: this means building our skills in conflict resolution and finding ways to reconcile differences within our community.

A Tech Platform for Networking

The smartphone application used for the Assembly was a major success. The “Amiens 2023” app was used for voting in the ExCo elections and voting on amendments to the General Principles, for completing surveys, for sharing schedules, for sharing photos and insights, for distributing important documents, and for messaging by person and region. The app truly simplified the work of the Assembly.

Flowing from this, a very practical proposal that emerged in the Assembly and that is connected to being One Community, is the proposal to build an international platform for networking. It shows the mature state we have reached in our desire to be one community. A technological platform would be a space where we can connect and collect resources. This space would help us to know each other, communicate about our needs, and exchange reflections on experience. Such a technological platform would allow us to freely share documents and share experiences.

Financial Co-Responsibility

The Assembly voted to increase the financial contributions (known as Dues) sent to the World Secretariat. This decision on contributions was a visible sign of the community taking financial co-responsibility for its common life. The Assembly desired for the World Community to be more effective in its global mission, both through increased Human Resources, and by continuing the contributions to the Apostolic Fund through which to select and make projects viable.

Part IV: Suggestions and Recommendations

Suggestions to the National Communities

There are many things we could do, but we must prioritise according to national and regional needs and means. This is a discernment of each national and regional community as part of the one body of CLC.

- 1 This Assembly encourages each National Community to do a review of their reality, using the contemplation of the incarnation as a key resource. Using further tools of communal discernment, social and ecological analysis, and spiritual conversation, we invite you to a dynamic consideration of your reality and the needs and pains that are present. The Contemplation of the Incarnation will help the community to encounter God’s love calling us to meet the needs of the world on mission with Christ. While going through this review, we invite each national community to collaborate with one other community in this process in a twinning way, specific to the process of review.

2. This Assembly suggests communities adapt and offer the Spiritual Exercises in new and helpful ways, naming the importance of annual renewal for our members, and the need for creative offerings to meet the needs of people of our time.

Recommendations to the World Executive Council

Throughout the Assembly there were numerous proposals for the World Executive Council (W-ExCo). Some of these were formally adopted by the Assembly plenary. Others emerged in different ways, such as web-surveys, small group work, regional group work. Of the latter, we have prioritised those that emerged most strongly and were sustained until the end of the Assembly.

These recommendations must be read by the new W-ExCo with respect to their own capacities and limits. A step-by-step approach to discernment will see what is possible and what must be prioritised for the good of the community.

This Assembly formally approved:

1. That the World Executive Council appoint an international commission to work with the World Community on a comprehensive revision of the General Principles and General Norms.
 - ♦ Connected to this, the Assembly approved the CLC Australia proposal, that integral ecology (according to Laudato Si') be included in this revision process and for that purpose that the international working group on ecology be consulted.
 - ♦ The Assembly affirmed that the proposed amendments from the national communities of Congo and Spain be included in deliberations during the revision process.

This Assembly recommends that the W-ExCo:

2. Continue the international apostolic teams set up by the 2018-2023 W-ExCo:

- ♦ Formation
- ♦ Ecology
- ♦ Youth;

and create one for

- ♦ Family
3. Build a technological platform to promote and support networking. This would be accessible to each national community, and potentially our members, as a privileged means to facilitate being and doing as One

World Community.

4. Encourage and support the Formation team to:
 - ♦ Prepare common formation materials from a world community perspective.
 - ♦ Build community skills in conflict resolution and reconciling differences.
 - ♦ Promote regional formation encounters on a periodic basis.
5. Strengthen two-way communication between the W-ExCo and National Communities. Increase W-ExCo presence and outreach especially to the most vulnerable observer and new national communities.
6. Define a systematic way for discerning use of the apostolic fund that includes “the magis” as a criteria for decisions: what is most urgent, what will allow us to bear greater apostolic fruit, and what will make a more universal contribution.
7. Speed up the implementation by each national community of a protocol for the prevention of abuse, according to Standing Order #16.

This Assembly has additional suggestions for the W-ExCo:

- ♦ Consider building spaces or networks for Public Advocacy (especially regarding major global issues). An Advocacy team could network with other institutions to bring a strong CLC voice to the public square.
- ♦ Consider how our community can reflect and have a larger voice on mission within the Church, and to facilitate conversation and discernment.
- ♦ Consider bringing members from across the world community together to reflect on and respond to the suffering of people on the edge of the Church who are searching for community and spirituality.

Conclusion

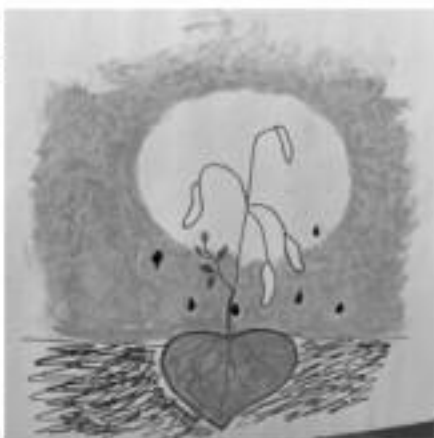
The Amiens General Assembly recognised the many graces received during our encounter. We confirmed our identity as One Lay, Ignatian, Apostolic Community, which is being called to unity in diversity. Living our lay vocation in every time and place, we seek to incarnate God’s love as one community. Moved by the Spirit and discerning his call, we place all that we are into God’s hands. In humility, we entrust ourselves to Mary, who with her “Yes” made God’s dream possible.

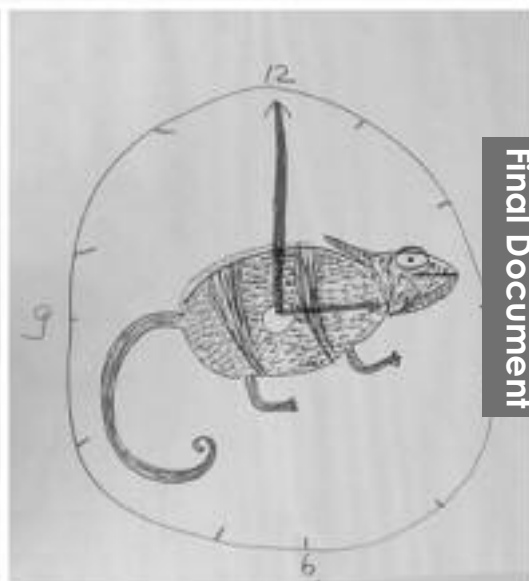
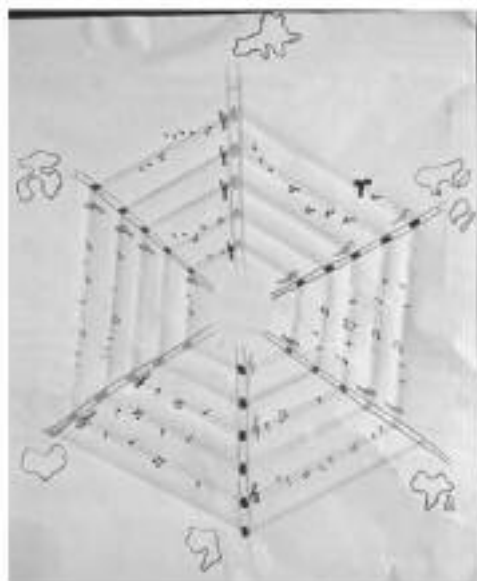
We look to God as our Anchor and ask him to show us the way to go forth. In Amiens, God again called us to go to the frontiers, deepening these with hope. We embrace these frontiers with renewed enthusiasm. Our feeling with the Church sends us forth with feeling for the world, and a desire to continue “Discerning Paths for Hope”.

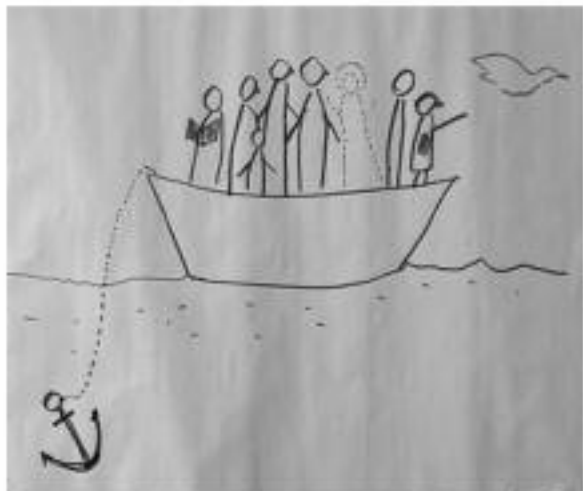
Annex 1: The Assembly in Drawings

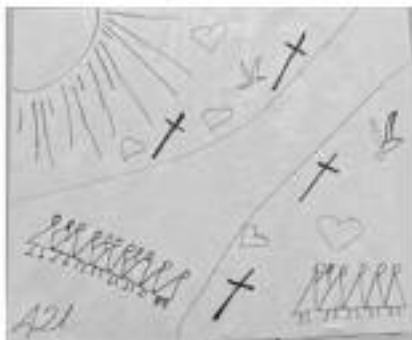
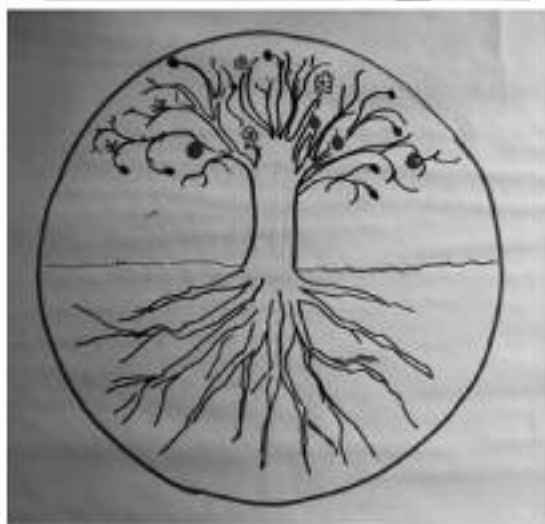
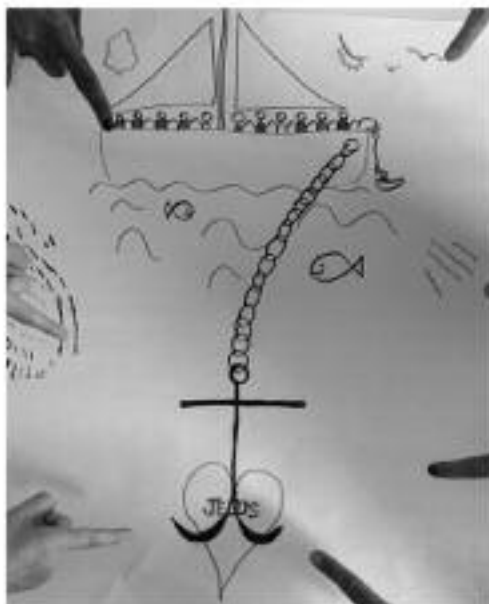
The following drawings were a creative response from small groups to the question **"Where is Hope Anchored in Your CLC Community?"** The instructions were:

1. Have a Spiritual Conversation (three rounds)
2. Draw together a symbolic image (no words!) to express what came out from the spiritual conversation. What if CLC was an animal, flower, tree, face, landscape etc.









Drawings from Estela Cemeirão of CVX in Portugal. Estela was a delegate whose drawings show the Assembly journey.





Estela's drawings accompanied the closing homily of Fr José de Pablo SJ:





Drawings from Bernard, a cartoonist from CVX in France who also made the Assembly logo. Bernard shared his creations with us over a few days of the Assembly, trying to capture what the Spirit was doing among us.



Assembly Decisions

New National Communities

As it said in the Final Document, “We welcomed new communities into the World Community: Slovakia, New Zealand, Sweden, and Ethiopia. These communities were introduced by their godparent communities: Malta, Australia, Germany, Kenya.”

Here we share the presentation text read by the communities that have accompanied the journey of the four communities that have joined the world community, and their presentation to the General Assembly

Presentation of CLC in Ethiopia by CLC in Kenya

This report presents our journey with CLC in Ethiopia as Godparents, in support of their full incorporation into the World CLC.

CLC in Ethiopia started with a small group of five lay people who sought to grow spiritually by studying *The Pilgrim*. They met in Addis Ababa over a period of about 2-3 years with the aim of adapting the Ignatian mind. The spiritual guide then, Fr. Groum Tesfaye, visited CLC in Kenya when we became aware of their existence. Fr. Groum started taking back information about CLC to the group which was used to guide their meetings resulting in pre-CLC group. This began the journey to understand and seek to be CLC.

Several of our members (CLC in Kenya) have had the privilege of participating in a variety of meetings hosted by Ethiopia CLC. In our interaction, we aim to convey the message of the simplicity we are called to in living our vocation as members of CLC.



In addition to sharing our (CLC in Kenya) formation materials (some of which the Ethiopian community has translated to Amharic for wider reach), we have also invited CLC in Ethiopia to two of our National Assemblies, the most recent being in 2019. The meetings have been enriching for both communities as we have shared our challenges and achievements in varying circumstances.

CLC members in Ethiopia feel called to serve the Catholic Church and society through the existing structures of the Catholic Church, entrusted with spiritual growth of others worshipping with them. They aim for organic growth, which happens when others they nurture see the authenticity of their service. Ultimately the community aspires for self-reliance and enough material resources and otherwise to impact others within and outside CLC.

This is a journey that begun with the sponsorship of CLC in Kenya and culminated with the application in 2016 to be included in the CLC World community. The community attended the 17th World CLC Assembly in Buenos Aires as an observer. With groups in Central, North and Southern Ethiopia and over 15 years of learning and living the CLC way of life, the group has fulfilled the conditions and requirements needed to be in the family of World CLC. We urge you to support us and welcome them to our community as full members.

From CLC in Ethiopia - Presentation to World CLC

CLC in Ethiopia, has adopted and adapted from the Ethiopian Liturgy the prayer of St. Basil. We slowly recite at every gathering, or a leader recites it guiding our meditation as we would follow with closed eyes. The prayer is:

O' Lord, Creator and Almighty God, the Father of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, we thank You on every occasion, in every condition, and for all things. For You have created us, delivered us, protected us, assisted us, preserved us, accepted us, spared us, supported us, you have drawn us to yourself and brought us till this very moment/hour.

Presentation of CLC in New Zealand by CLC in Australia

On behalf of CLC in Australia we are very happy to introduce CLC in New Zealand to the World Community of CLC.

CLC began in New Zealand in 1997 from the initiative of Patricia Kane, a strong and passionate promoter of the CLC charism until her death in 2020.

In November 2015, we, CLC in Australia, accepted a God parenting request from CLC in New Zealand. Since that time, we have accompanied CLC in

New Zealand on their journey of coming to understand the CLC Charism and vocation and their growth according to the General Principles, the General Norms, and the Formation guidelines of the World CLC. CLC in Australia has supported CLC in New Zealand in a variety of ways and now wishes to wholeheartedly endorse their application for full membership. At the World Assembly in Buenos Aires in 2018, CLC in New Zealand was present as an observer. At this General Assembly, we wish to introduce and celebrate their acceptance into full membership to the World Community.

Following this Assembly, we, CLC in Australia, look forward to continuing to share their CLC journey and support them in whatever ways that we can, developing our growing sense of responsibility for one another in the wider community of CLC. On behalf of CLC in Australia and with great joy, we present to this assembly, CLC in New Zealand, represented by Sarah Dench and Maureen McKillop. We wish you every blessing today and, on the journey, ahead.

Lord, help us to go forth; show us the way.

From CLC in New Zealand - Presentation to World CLC

‘Jesus said, “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”’ Matthew 19:14

In this gathering, as in the scripture from Matthew quoted, we of CLC in New Zealand feel as children, surrounded by loving adults who are guiding us to fully participate in the Ignatian charism and stand with CLC in the World. CLC in Australia has God-parented us wisely and well, supporting us in our formation, in developing our national and regional structures, and sharing knowledge, time and resources with us. We have received gentle and generous support from so many in CLC in Australia. From visits to and from CLC in Australia members, we received formation in the essential elements of our CLC charism, discerning as a community on our mission, receiving from the Australian community the gift of being able to offer annual Ignatian retreats, and learning how to travel as a community with other CLC communities in Australia and throughout Asia Pacific.

Today we honour all those who are part of our graced history, especially our Promoter, Patricia Kane who had her life changed with the experience of CLC in England, France and in the CLC office in Rome. She brought the CLC charism with her to New Zealand in 1997, and we pray that her soul is with her beloved Jesus and Ignatius in heaven.

Lord, we in CLC in New Zealand offer gratitude for our graced history;
We ask your blessing on all those who have walked this journey with us and
will continue at our side;
Be with us as we discern our path forward;
And may you bless all those here and throughout the world who are united in
service to you through this charism.
Dearest Jesus, help us to find God in all things:
To be at home in God's world without attachments that keep us from serving
You in others, to discern the paths that best lead to our growth in the Spirit and
to God's greater glory. Amen.

Presentation of CLC in Slovakia by CLC in Malta

It is with great joy that we, the Christian Life Community in Malta, recommend the Slovakia national community for incorporation as a full member of the CLC world community.

The Slovak Republic is situated in the heart of Europe, bordering the Czech Republic and Austria to the west, Hungary to the south, Poland to the north, and Ukraine to the East.

CLC in Slovakia had its beginnings in the late 90's as an offshoot to a voluntary project of Jesuits volunteers (JEV), growing from the same Ignatian roots.

Contact with international CLC started early on, and Gilles Michaud, the CLC's executive secretary from Rome, visited Slovakia in 2003. The first groups of which some members persist up to now started in 2005.

Before the World Assembly of 2013 the Slovakia community approached the World ExCo to invite CLC in Malta to become their Godparent community. At the World Assembly in Beirut, CLC in Malta became a Godparenting community in the process of Slovakia's incorporation to the CLC world community.

Since then, several meetings were held between CLC in Malta and the Slovakia community, in both countries.

Our journey together continued, with a bit of a lull during the COVID pandemic. In 2020, the new Maltese ExCo revisited and evaluated the process so far and desired to assist to bring the process to a decision point. Reports

were drawn up and sent, and communications in this regard were entered into with the World ExCo.

Finally, in February 2023, an online meeting was organized between the leadership communities of Slovakia and CLC in Malta to discuss the application to join World CLC as full members. Witnessing their preparedness but also hesitation, we advised them to carry out a discernment process, supported in prayer while doing so by their national community and by the Malta ExCo. As a result of this process, the decision was taken to apply for full affiliation within the World CLC. James from the Malta ExCo, and his family, visited Slovakia one more time to participate in their national assembly this year. Final reports and documents were submitted and soon we received the wonderful news that Slovakia would be proposed during this Assembly for full incorporation.

At present, there are about 150 members in CVX in Slovakia who meet on regular basis in their groups in 16 small groups based in 3 local regions.

The Slovak community is very alive, vibrant, and enthusiastic to always grow more and deepen their CLC identity. It possesses deep roots in Ignatian spirituality. New communities are forming, and they have moved on to significant independence from their original Jesuit-dependent beginnings, with a strong sense of self-leadership. Spiritual growth is given much importance and courses of spiritual exercises and of spiritual guidance are well attended.

The main aspect of our God-parenting journey was sharing, observing, and helping out with what was needed as a community, discussing ways of proceeding and overcoming setbacks. It was a journey of shared experiences.

Today, CLC in Slovakia is going from strength to strength, with a leadership community that takes care of the national community, visiting some communities in different parts of the country, starting new communities, sending members for courses on spiritual guidance, organizing a Family Day and their national encounter, and working at building good relations with the Society of Jesus.

The Slovakia community has inspired us with the seriousness with which they have undertaken their growth towards becoming full members of World CLC, and with their honest evaluation of who they are, with all their strengths and

weaknesses. We are confident that they are ready to be full members of CLC and will continue their journey and growth with enthusiasm.

May their desire to join the world CLC be fruitful and result in always more depth in their relationship with God and in always more generous service for His kingdom.

From CLC in Slovakia - Presentation to World CLC

The Incorporation into The World CLC is the continuation of a 10-year journey of growing up and maturing into a beautiful Community that is accompanied by the Breath of God. We are grateful for each member who has helped us pave the way on our journey to the warm-hearted worldwide family.

Our Lord calls each of us by name and we answer His voice in a unique way accompanied by our Mother Mary. We desire to be a part of one apostolic body with many areas of its apostolic service. We are in awe, feeling united in calling to live our Ignatian charism.

We are happy to belong to the universal Church, to be on the way towards one mission to follow Christ and to co-create His Kingdom together, we are humble and joyful disciples and companions. We have chosen to respond to God's mercy and to spread the good news to the world.

Let the Spirit connect us so that we passionately and truly live our common vocation.

With gratitude, we keep our godparent community in our further prayers. Your guidance, friendship, word and presence with us were a cherished gift on our journey. We would like to bless you all!



Dear world community, we appreciate this blessed discernment. God, as loving communion, opens new doors for exciting relationships with other communities. With hope and courage, we go forth united by Trinity Love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Let us fully sink into God's Will.

Presentation of CLC in Sweden by CLC in Germany

First contacts with CLC in Sweden emerged already from meeting one another during the European Assembly 2014 held in Germany. The objective was to get to know members of the existing groups and provide some further information about CLC. In meetings with the coordinating team (focusing on leadership in CLC and steps to be taken to establish a national community) and with the members of the CLC groups, we could lay the foundation of a fruitful exchange and mutual learning process up to date.

In March 2017, the World ExCo nominated Germany officially as Godparent community for CLC in Sweden.

Between March 2017 and summer 2019, several mutual visits could be realized

- getting more background on starting and accompanying groups in CLC,
- facilitating the preparations to establish the national community of Sweden including the preparation of adequate structures and the respective statutes,
- accompanying the development a kind of “mandate” for the future national leadership team, and the first elections,
- offering formation weekend on group guidance in CLC.

Both, the leadership team of Germany and Sweden were very much interested to widen the contacts between both communities beyond the leadership level.

During the Corona pandemic we continued in contact via e-mail or Zoom, including an online formation meeting for group guides as well as a meeting on membership and commitment.

Over the past few years, CLC in Sweden could develop the structures needed to provide solid formation for people interested in CLC, members who want to deepen its spirituality and for supporting the local groups towards becoming discerning communities where members can share their faith and daily lives.

Meanwhile, all groups have a guide and do a yearly evaluation.

As Godparents, we are impressed by the commitment of many members to deepen their CLC identity and develop both the local groups and the national community as discerning bodies at the service of others. Through our personal contacts, we could better understand the specific reality of Sweden as a highly secularized country, where many Christians (and especially Catholics) experience a “spiritual loneliness” among their family and friends. Therefore, communities like CLC offer an important forum to share experiences and deepen one’s personal faith. People experience Ignatian Spirituality as a helpful way to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. CLC has developed a great readiness to share Ignatian Spirituality and the CLC “tools” with others, both within the Catholic community and beyond, i.e. with members of the Lutheran Church.

There is a great interest in the wider – international – community. CLC in Sweden has been always present in meetings at European level and joined the last World Assembly as observer.

As CLC in Germany, we are deeply grateful for the process lived so far and are looking forward to continuing walking together as members in our one World Community.

From CLC in Sweden - Presentation to World CLC

We come from a country of extremism; we are extremists in being secular. So, for us it is really a victory to stand here and be able to be a part of this world community in Christ!

The three of us, Christina, Fr. Dominik, Henrik, come from Stockholm, one of the three places where CLC is now represented. The parish we come from, Saint Eugenia, is not only the oldest in the country, but also the largest. So even though we Catholics are few in this secular country, CLC is continuously growing slowly even though we do not market ourselves in any way and we are, of course, very happy about that!

We want to say; Many Thanks to Germany who have helped us along this path.

Early in our relationship when we visited our friends in Germany with the purpose of learning more about group-guides, we also came home with the realization of needing a formation-team. And when I now, for example, read the report from World ExCo, I realize even more how right the CLC in Germany

was. For those of you who have yet to form a formation-team, I can highly recommend this. Because having this resource in our community, has helped us get to where we are today.

Another important component on our way to where we are today is that many of our members were given the opportunity early on to go through the Spiritual Exercises.

So, a big thank you to the Jesuits in Sweden for the good and close cooperation.

Through these years we have been moved by our deep desire for community:

- community through our own Ignatian experience,
- community experienced in dialogue (not at least in the current Synodal process),
- community with other Christians – within Sweden and abroad,

leading us to the great community with all CLC all over the world, which means the full community with you in Christ.

For this we express our great thanks to all of you!



Amendment to the General Norm

The General Assembly approved the necessary revision of NG 21.a) as it had to be brought into line with the General Decree of the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life.

The current text of General Norm 21.a) is as follows:

The elected members of the Executive Council are: the president, the vice-president, and five consultors, all elected by the General Assembly for a period of five years. They may be elected only for three terms maximum and two terms maximum in one office, in strict accordance with the rules fixed by the ecclesiastical authority¹.

Approval of the proposal presented by the World Executive Council and CLC in Australia

This Assembly formally approved:

That the World Executive Council appoint an international commission to work with the World Community on a comprehensive revision of the General Principles and General Norms.

Connected to this, the Assembly approved the CLC in Australia proposal, *that integral ecology (according to Laudato Si')* be included in this revision process and for that purpose that the international working group on ecology be consulted.

¹ Currently General Decree 2021/466 of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. Article 2§3 of the Decree names the conditions in which a person may serve a third consecutive term.

World Executive Council Elections

On Saturday 12 August, the General Assembly in Amiens elected the new World Executive Council of the Christian Life Community for the period 2023-2028. The new World Executive Council (leadership community in discernment) is composed as follows:

President:	Chris Micallef (CLC in Malta)
Vice President:	Daphne Ho (CLC in Hong Kong)
Consultor:	Catherine Waiyaki (CLC in Kenya)
Consultor:	Franklin Ibañez (CLC in Peru)
Consultor:	Inji Fayeze (CLC in Egypt)
Consultor:	Catherine Kelly (CLC in Canada)
Consultor:	Cecilia Martínez Arellano (CLC in Spain)

The appointed members of the Executive Council are:

Ecclesiastical Assistant:	Arturo Sosa, S.J. (Venezuela)
Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant:	José de Pablo, S.J. (Spain)
Executive Secretary:	Manuel Martínez Arteaga (CLC in Uruguay)

It is with great joy and hope that we share that these are the people you have sent on mission to serve our community.



National Communities

Status and Presence in Amiens

A. Full Member National Communities

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Argentina | 23. Germany | 45. Nicaragua |
| 2. Australia | 24. Guatemala | 46. Nigeria (Absent) |
| 3. Austria | 25. Hong Kong | 47. Paraguay |
| 4. Belgium Flanders | 26. Hungary (Absent) | 48. Peru |
| 5. Belgium French | 27. India (Absent) | 49. Philippines |
| 6. Bolivia | 28. Indonesia (Absent) | 50. Poland |
| 7. Botswana | 29. Ireland | 51. Portugal |
| 8. Brazil | 30. Italy | 52. Puerto Rico |
| 9. Cameroon | 31. Ivory Coast | 53. Rwanda |
| 10. Canada English | 32. Japan | 54. Slovenia |
| 11. Canada French | 33. Kenya | 55. South Africa |
| 12. Chile | 34. Korea South | 56. Spain |
| 13. Colombia | 35. Latvia | 57. Sri Lanka |
| 14. Congo Dem.Rep. | 36. Lebanon | 58. Switzerland |
| 15. Croatia | 37. Lesotho (Absent) | 59. Syria |
| 16. Cuba | 38. Lithuania | 60. Taiwan |
| 17. Dominican Republic | 39. Luxembourg | 61. United States |
| 18. Ecuador | 40. Madagascar | 62. Uruguay |
| 19. Egypt | 41. Malta | 63. Venezuela |
| 20. El Salvador | 42. Mauritius | 64. Vietnam |
| 21. England and Wales | 43. Mexico | 65. Zambia |
| 22. France | 44. Netherlands | 66. Zimbabwe |

II. National Communities Incorporated in Amiens

- | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1. Ethiopia | 2. New Zealand | 3. Slovakia | 4. Sweden |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|

III. Observers National Communities

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. Benin | 5. Haiti | 9. South Sudan* |
| 2. Burkina Faso | 6. Macau | 10. Togo |
| 3. Central Africa Rep. | 7. Panama | 11. Tchad |
| 4. Congo Brazzaville* | 8. Singapore* | |

* Absent



18th World Assembly of the Christian Life Community

Discerning paths for hope

‘You will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth’ (Acts 1:8)



