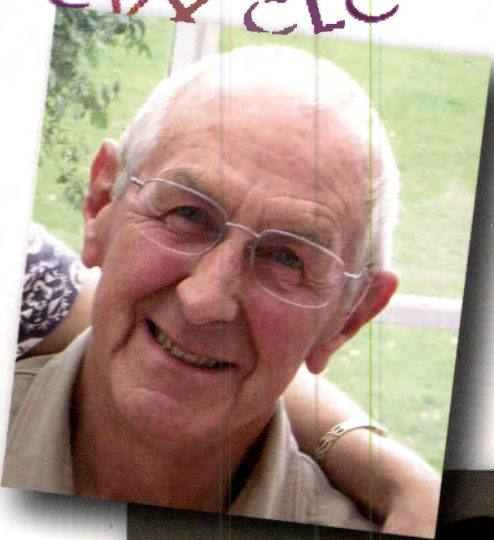




progressio

Publication of the World Christian Life Community



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- Erika Zárate and Danilo Barragan (CLC Ecuador)
- Irene Maina, Geoffrey Kipchumba and Floradinnah Nziva
- Brian Austin (CLC England and Wales)
- Telma and Amleto Junio
- Jeraldine (CLC Philippines), Agnes (CLC Korea), Luke SJ (India, Vice EA WCLC), Jessica (CLC Hong Kong) and Cosmos (CLC Taiwan)

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- Jimmy Chicaiza with his family
- Angela Widdison, Clive Hamlin, Angela Finnigan and Barbara Zarounas
- Norbert Tembo (CLC Zambia)
- Young from CLC Germany
- CLC Ayacucho, Peru
- Tiziana Casti, Elena Patrignani and Paola Cabras
- Manolo Enciso with his family
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ABOUT OUR LOGO

We did not go too far to find inspiration for the logo of the Christian Life Community (CLC). Countless books have been written about the Salvation history of CLC and its beginning in year 1563. From that came the Marian Congregations and its symbol (shown on the top right), having the “P” over the “X” (for the Greek Christos) and the inserted “M” illustrates that the Congregations were put under the patronage of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The blue curved line illustrates a movement forward to **one World Community in 1967**; hence the globe. From this new beginning came a new name: Communauté de Vie Chrétienne (CVX) in French; Comunidad de Vida Cristiana (CVX) in Spanish; Christian Life Community (CLC) in English.

Editorial

1

It is a constant challenge for us, in Progressio, to find the answer to the question: How can we communicate the spirit that joins us as CLC? We hope you can find this magazine useful as a means of strengthen the sense of body and the huge diversity in the World Community.

The General Principles were approved twenty years ago and we have just found a brief thought by P.Robin Koning, sj about the GP1 as a motivation to go back and see again and study the basis that inspire our community.

You will also find an interview to some of the ex-World Executive Secretaries who share their personal experiences while serving WCLC. May be this is the opportunity for acknowledge and thank them for the time and care they spent in building the World Community.

As you may know, we have created different sections in the magazine so that you can more easily find the contents of every article.

In the Family Section, "Maitu" community from Ecuador, tells us about the experience as a Family CLC, with the challenges of a community that involves parents and little children.

In the Apostolate Section, Rajan presents the work they are doing in Sri Lanka as a clear testimony of the Preferential Option for the Poor. We hope this experience may encourage more CLCers on this way of evangelical coherence.

Related to innovative actions in Co responsibility section, Guy Schuller presents the strategies developed by CLC Luxembourg, collecting money to support the CLC Solidarity Fund, which was created to help national communities that have economical difficulties to send their representatives to the World Assembly.

Another new community affiliated in Fatima, is CLC Hungary. That is why in the New Communities Section, they give us their History of Grace. We encourage them to continue supporting their community process. As well as from Togo, they share the beginning of CLC in that country. We hope they get our welcome and accompaniment in these first steps on their way.

Edel Churu, member of the World Exco, tells us about her experiences in CLC Kenya. It is an opportunity to know the testimony of the lay vocation of one of the women who are serving the World Community since the last Fatima Assembly 2008.

We close this issue with a little report from CLC Chile. Country that suffered a terrible earthquake in February 2010. We keep our solidarity with our Chilean brothers. In the same way we recall the memory of Mons. Romero from El Salvador, who was murdered 30 years ago, with a piece of one of his homilies. We confirm that his words and his testimony are still relevant.

We announce that there will be changes in the yearly subscription rate to Progressio from 2011 onwards. Please, check up the information on the announcements, last part of this issue.

Finally, we invite you to share your doubts, comments and inquiries about our articles at progressio@cvx-clc.net. With your help we hope to begin a new section "*The Readers Voice*". We count on your contribution. Thanks for reading us.

Do not forget to share with your community the articles that have called your attention!



Sofía Montañez

PRAYING THE PRINCIPLES



P. Robin Koning SJ

The Three Divine Persons, contemplating the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions, decide to give themselves completely to all men and women and liberate them from all their chains. Out of love, the Word was incarnated and born from Mary, the poor Virgin of Nazareth.

Inserted among the poor and sharing with them their condition, Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity within our human family. This gift of God to us, and our response, continues to this day through the influence of the Holy Spirit in all our particular circumstances.

Therefore we, members of the Christian Life Community, have composed these General Principles to aid us in making our own the options of Jesus Christ and taking part through Him, with Him and in Him in this loving initiative which expresses God's promise of faithfulness forever.

CLC General Principle 1

The CLC General Principles begin, fittingly, with God. Not a God in splendid isolation, but God as "Three Divine Persons", the Blessed Trinity. These three persons are contemplating the world. They see "the whole of humanity" – not just one part, not one culture, not just one class, not just one race, but the whole sweep of humanity. They see a humanity tangled up and trapped in all sorts of "chains" and at odds "in so many sinful divisions". It is a vision which St Ignatius gives us to contemplate at the start of the Second Week of the Exercises, in the Contemplation on the Incarnation (Exx. 101-109).

Having contemplated the world and its need, the Trinity make a decision flowing from their contemplation – "to give themselves completely to all men and women". The aim of this self-giving of God to humankind is "to liberate them from all their chains" – picking up Jesus' inaugural address at Capernaum, that he was sent "to bring liberty to captives" (Luke 4:18). This self-giving of God is to be embodied when the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son, the Word, becomes human. In accord with this decision and contemplation, God acts - the angel Gabriel is sent to Mary (Exx. 102). "Out of love, the Word was incarnated and born from Mary, the poor

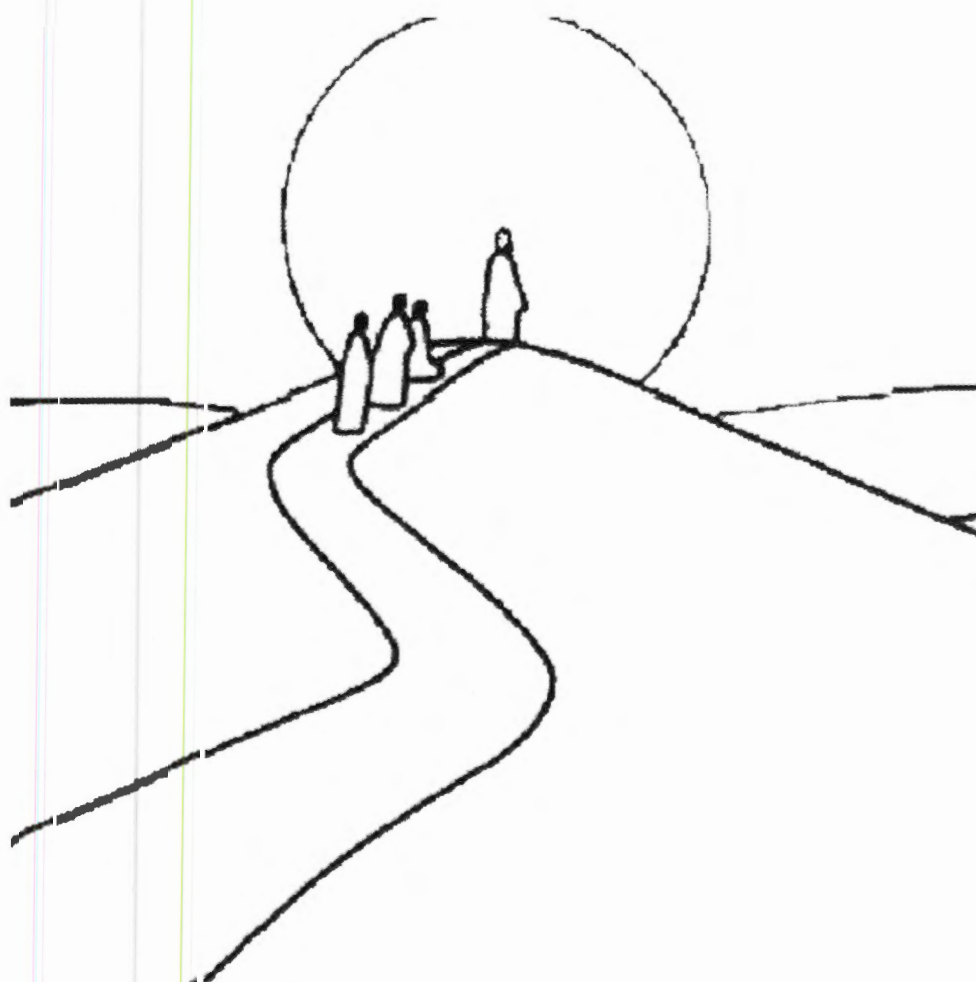
Virgin of Nazareth." As John puts it, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16).

But Jesus' mission is not something he accomplishes independent of human involvement. Already Mary has been mentioned, she to whose 'Yes' all our responses to God are united. This Principle goes on to speak of Jesus' invitation to all of us to be involved in his mission. The mission is described in terms of two inter-related aspects: "to give ourselves continuously to God" (love of God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength) and "to bring about unity within our human family" (love of neighbour). All of this is to be carried out in imitation of Christ, who is "inserted among the poor" and shares "with them their condition". In all this, we hear echoes of the Kingdom Meditation (Exx. 91-98), in which the eternal King invites us to join him in his mission, and to do so by fully identifying with him in his poverty. This call of God to the human race, which is God's gift to us, together with our human response, continue "to this day through the influence of the Holy Spirit in all our particular circumstances". It is the Spirit who unites us today with the living Christ.

From this general picture of God's mission to the whole of humanity, and God's invitation to all Christians to be involved in this mission, Principle 1 turns to the particular mission of CLC. The Principles have been composed precisely to aid us in taking our part, as CLC, in God's vision for the world. The transition begins with the word 'therefore'. Because of God's contemplation of humanity and its need, God's action to liberate humanity in Christ, and Christ's desire for humans to be intimately involved in his mission, CLC seeks to make its own *"the options of Jesus Christ"*. This is the imitation of Christ – not living every detail of his life when we are in a very different world, but taking on his options, his

attitudes, his desires, his values, his vision for humanity. By doing so, we take part *"in this loving initiative which expresses God's promise of faithfulness forever"*. We do not do so as though Christ has done his part and now we do our part, independent of Christ. Rather, we do so as part of his living Body, his ongoing presence in the world. We do so, as the Principle states, drawing on a prayer from every Mass we celebrate, *"through Him, with Him and in Him"*.

P. Robin Koning SJ
 Edited in "Annotations",
 CLC Australia bulletin, July 2010
 Original in English



MAITU: “wrapped” in the Love of God

“Chaimanta uyaichik, shuk, kunanlla wacharishka wawakutami uksha jawapi maitushka sirikukta tarinkichik, kaimi kankunapak unanchik kanka” (Lc 2,12)

“See how you recognize him: find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger”



It has been a year since *Maitu* was formally presented to the CLC as a community. Much has happened: our kids continue to grow as do our dreams and our desire to follow this adventure to accompany each other as individuals and as families in search of building this feeling of Christian families with a lifestyle based on Ignatian spirituality.

We are 11 active adults members (five couples), with eight children (1-6 years). We had belonged to different groups, where we went through the early formation in the CLC way of life. We were younger then, single and

without children and our journeys were enriched and supported as we settled on our lifestyle and lay vocation. We felt that we had mastered the group dynamic, the themes, the method of sharing, and the way to run the meetings. Moreover, having lived the very personal experience within the Latin American program of CLC formation in Ignatian Leadership, *Magis*, or having been part of the National or Regional Councils, gave us the certainty that the CLC was the answer and the complications of having to make arrangements to leave our children in the care of someone in order to be able to attend meetings, or having to find a thousand ways to entertain them “not to disturb” the same meetings or not to make a noise in the moments of our deep reflection, could not possibly be an obstacle in the way of life we had chosen. However, that was the trigger.

Then we begin to share the same feeling, those needs, the fact of wanting to continue the process of formation, growth, ministry and community but in a way that we could integrate our children in the process of searching to know and love Christ. However, based on the fact that we lived as a couple and we had children under six, we had to consider and change many things in the way small groups were run.

As a start we decided to hold the meetings in our homes, for the facilities, the toys and the space, but especially because it was more homely and we could share the “table”, the food, like a big family. That was something more intimate, ordinary and familiar to the children.

Then the issue of methodology had to be in tune with the ages and new, above all experiential, situation.



We were able to address various issues but at two levels, one for adults and another for children. The plan was to create educational, recreational, participative, short activities, in line with their developmental stage, their interests, making the link with topics to set them on the way towards a relationship with God: the EGO (sense of identity and self-esteem), GOD (to recognize and to be thankful for life and creation, to sense a loving and joyful God the Father etc..) and US (sense of community, society and caring for others, solidarity, beginning with parents, siblings, friends, planting the first seeds of ministry). At the beginning it was not easy, meetings were chaotic and poorly planned but on the way we have been able to work on these problems and when we already have a work plan with specific themes and activities for children that help us to not lose on the way and also keep us motivated.

But these issues helped us adults to go back to the beginning (principle and foundation) and we saw that we did not only have to focus our meetings on activities that enable children learn, share and discuss among themselves and with us, but we as adults also needed a space to share our own journey in relation to our relationship with God individually, as couples and as a family (and community members who do not yet have children). It enabled us to discern, to share our experience, to help us on our path of being spouses, parents, professionals and Christians in the world. So we made time in each meeting to pray (not always in silence) and to share. We have also begun work on specific texts which in sharing offer much more scope for deeper understanding.

Another aspect was the need for spaces of silence and formation to deepen our growth in our mission and our specific situation. As we considered the possibility that once a month we have meetings without children to have a longer prayer and to address more weighty issues. This remains a priority but by our lives and the difficulty of coordinating all our time and activities we have not succeeded fully.

So we plan to hold two meetings per month

with the kids, one without children and organize a walk or different activity each month in order to help along our integration process a while sharing in different spaces. As we said the difficulties of coordinating the times and activities within one family are not easy, let alone to coordinate six families. But even with this difficulty the organisation and meeting space have happened and have contributed a lot, even on social learning, it is amazing how the little ones support each other. They are becoming closer making a group of friends how surprised they are when they are not.

It is very encouraging to see the joy of the kids when we tell them we have a meeting, to see them participate, interact, seeing how happy they are with the activities, the play and the sharing. And for us it is very good to feel that we give mutual support in our way of being parents and family. This we would say is the best fruit we've had this year, our little ones feel good friends and they look forward to the

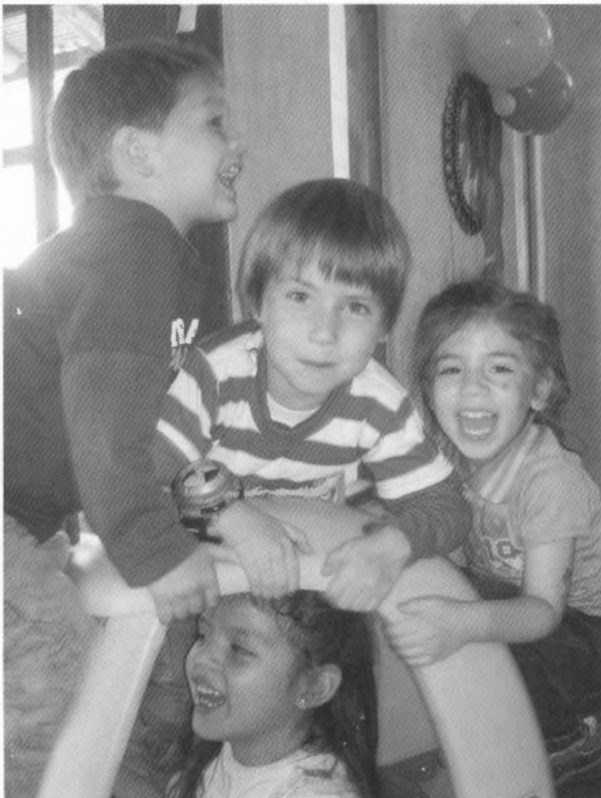


community meeting as something desirable and not an obligation. By asking some of the older ones what the CLC meeting meant to them, they told us it is *talking to others, seeing friends, eating, playing, and the*



word *boredom* did not come to their mind, nor to our minds the stress caused by our difficulty to bring them with us or find someone who look after them. Now they come and enjoy and be themselves.

We have set ourselves a challenge which we have not been able to achieve. It is to take charge of the mass from time to time, but under a new proposal in which parallel activities take place during the most solemn moments of the Mass, which at the same time, and at their level helps them to live the Gospel text of that Sunday. To do this we just



need a bit of openness and support from other members of the national community. We continue to believe that would be something rewarding for all and also the novelty is always attractive.

Finally we know the importance of a guide but we are also aware that not every guide can feel comfortable with this new dynamic and rhythm of our community, and nor will we as individuals, couples and families feel understood by a guide. We are still looking. Some have accompanied us and others have asked to come and visit us, which suggests we are on the right road.

We know the needs of our group are shared by others in other national communities. In Fatima the theme of the family was highlighted, in particular how to enhance the experience of having groups of families? We feel it is a very new way, we are learning to walk; it may require some guidelines but also needs a lot of openness, flexibility and trial and error, to see what is working with each as a person, with the children, with the feeling of being CLC and a possible guide.

We are very open and willing to share similar experiences in order to create ways or guidelines that could be used for future community members who approach the blessing of becoming parents. We are eager to get in touch with communities that are travelling on the same road, or have travelled, with those who are looking for help with ideas, texts, lectures, retreats or spiritual exercises experiences and masses for young children or who can provide resources and activities for use with pre school children and their parents; all this to continue building a creative community within this slightly traditional church.

A hug to everyone, and we feel embraced, "wrapped" by the love of God as individuals, as families and as community involved in that we have called the Quechua *Maitu*.

CLC Maitu - Ecuador
Original in Spanish

The Growth of CLC in Togo

Togo, a West African country, rectangular in shape, is sandwiched between Burkina-Faso, Ghana, Benin and the Atlantic Ocean. Almost ten years ago this small country welcomed the community of Jesuits to the northern suburbs of the capital, Lomé.

The life and work of this community showed a new ideal of the way to worship and serve God. Opportunities (conferences, documents, film shows...) are still being offered to the faithful and the wider public to reflect St Ignatius' vision. In this regard, young people as well as adults, both men and women, won over by the life of the Jesuits, are pondering the possibility of joining the Society of Jesus, or of working with it.

Some of the faithful had already had wind of the existence of CLC and were only waiting for the opportunity to experience the method of praying in the Ignatian way. This opportunity was offered to them by Father Désiré Rigobert AYINA, a Cameroon Jesuit on formation in Lomé, who was given permission by his superior, Reverend Father Galli AGIDE, to set up a first CLC group. Motivated by the faithful's thirst for prayer, as many lay people as religious, Father Désiré decided to start with young couples and individuals who had some experience of Christian life.

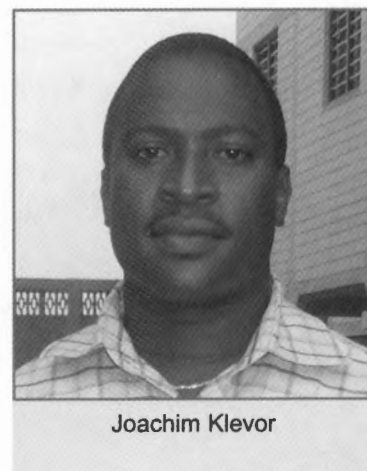
So, on the 1st March, 2009, under the guidance of Father Désiré AYINA, the first CLC of Lomé, made up of twelve members, saw the light of day. Over the months the history and main guidelines of a Christian life community were closely examined. Themes such as [the sacraments of] reconciliation and Eucharist, happiness, fear and love were all considered by our life

community, meeting in turn in each of the families.

However as our community was on the road to maturity, Father Désiré AYINA, our ecclesial assistant, was called to a new mission in Bangui, in the Central African Republic. So from November 2009, without a captain, our ship began to pitch; for three months our reunions became irregular or non-existent.

Providentially, on the 7th March 2010, the superior of the Jesuits in Togo, Father Galli, brought us together again to relaunch the group. On this occasion, Father Avellino CHICO, an Angolan Jesuit on formation, became our new ecclesial assistant.

Despite these being his first steps in CLC, Father Avellino knew how to give new enthusiasm to our community which was already suffering from absenteeism. With this perspective we made resolutions with the intention of reenergising the members of our community and to help us make



Joachim Klevor



Avellino Chico SJ with Father General

our first commitments on 31 July, 2010. These resolutions include:

- Making an Ignatian retreat and a day of recollection each quarter;
- Making three-monthly visits to those living with HIV in Lomé prison;
- Undertaking formation for leading recollection days and preparing couples for marriage;

- Setting up, as far as possible, another community during 2011.

Indeed, the harvest is rich but the labourers are few. It is our deep desire to collaborate in restoring, even a little, the Lord's work, disfigured by men and women. This is why, through the sharing of our life, we hope to deepen our faith so as to be more available and dynamic in the service we render to those men and women whom we meet in our daily life.

*Joachim KLEVOR
CLC Togo
Original in French*



Members of CLC Togo

At the service of CLC

Interview

20 years ago we approved the new GP of CLC. We have interviewed three ex-Executive Secretaries who told us their personal experiences while there were in Rome at the service of World CLC, through their answers we also can identify the Spirit that encourage our community.



Gilles Michaud from Canada
25 years in CLC
Executive Secretary from
1993 to 2003



Roswitha Cooper from Germany
In CLC since 1967
Executive Secretary from
1992 to 1998



José Reyes from Chile
In CLC since teenager,
about 38 years.
Executive Secretary from
1986 to 1992

How were you elected to this position?

José: Is one of the mysteries of my faith. Josée Gsell and Patrick O'Sullivan came to Chile in January 1992 to give a Latin American course for guides and assistants. At the same time and in the same place, a number of young CLCers were following the "minimanila" formation program, including 8 days of Spiritual Exercises and 8 days of studying the process and its implications for social and church concern. Together with Cecilia my wife we were participants of this minirnanila course. At the time we had only our first child Nicolás. I think that this was the setting in which they thought of me for the first time. In December 1984 I was invited by the World ExCo to guide an international formation encounter of young CLCers in Rome, and at the end of that encounter I was formally invited to think about the possibility of moving to Rome. At the time we had two children. We took our time during the first months of 1985 to discern about this call, and finally we decided to accept. Some days later we learnt that we were expecting our third child. Ignatius was born late in November 85 and we moved to Rome late in March 86. In Rome our 4th child Gabriel was born in 1988.

Roswitha: The World ExCo was urgently looking for someone who could replace Jose Reyes who with his family needed to return to Chile. When I was asked by the German CLC, I understood that there was not a great choice of candidates for this important service to the World CLC. In my prayers I asked the Lord for a word to help me in my decision, and when I opened

the Bible it was at Luke 9:61- 62: *"I will follow you , but first let me go and say good-bye to my people at home. Jesus said to him: ' once the hand is laid on the plough, no one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'* "With this answer what else could I do than say yes? The ExCo decision came on Palm Sunday of 1991. I had half a year to sell my company in Munich and rent my house before moving to Rome in November 1991. This was not a big sacrifice for me since I had felt for some time that a change in my life as business woman was due.

Gilles: When the World CLC ExCo began its search for an Executive Secretary CLC Canada ExCo asked me to consider serving in this capacity. When I accepted to be a candidate for this position, my name was sent to the World ExCo. What followed was a request by the CLC World President, Jose Maria Riera, to come to Rome to experience working at the World CLC Secretariat. After a month of walking in these new shoes I felt that this was do-able and accepted to be the Executive Secretary.

Included in my acceptance and after an agreement with Jose Maria I had indicated that my preference would be to share the responsibilities of Executive Secretary with my wife, Leah. It was understood that my name was to be shown as the juridical person of the CLC World Secretariat. A few months later, when we gathered at the General Assembly (1998) held in Itaici, Leah and I were appointed by the delegates at the Assembly to be part of the World ExCo as Co-Executive Secretaries.

What were the main challenges in your time as CLC Executive Secretary?

José: I took over from Josée Gsell, she was really an extraordinary woman, very gifted and excellent in all areas: spirituality, managing, theology, languages, CLC process, relationships with the Church and the Society of Jesus, ecc. She had been in office for about 17 years and was completely devoted to the task. She had visited more than 60 countries and had a personal relationship with the CLC leaders all throughout the world. Patrick, the Vice Assistant, was also leaving the office and the same was happening with Cora Sim who managed PROGRESSIO in a very good form and with Luciana, our Italian Secretary. So the first challenge was to take over from Josée and develop a completely renewed secretariat, counting on my profile which was

very poor in comparison with Josée's. A number of legal issues were troubling the printing and mailing of PROGRESSIO in Italy, so we moved to Spain and this was also a big challenge, Hiring new personnel was also difficult, but we managed.

Other challenges had to do with the formation of guides, the promotion of the SP. Ex. and the vision of CLC as a way of life rooted in them. Also to develop the vision of CLC as a World Community according to the discernment of Providence 82 confirmed in Loyola 86. A big challenge was also to express all this in a new wording of our General Principles. The main challenge was indeed to do all this with respect to the variety of people and



José Reyes and his wife Cecilia

experiences of CLC around the world and with the support of the hierarchical Church and of the Society of Jesus.

Roswitha: None of our three official languages was my mother tongue, World CLC actually had not enough money for the running of the secretariat, and I had to serve a world community I did not know, since I had never been to a World Assembly or any international CLC meeting. How was I to help national communities to become aware and understand that we are ONE world community? At that time regular communication was mainly limited to letters and some telephone contacts.

The biggest challenge, however, was that I had to insist again and again on the central importance of the Spiritual Exercises in our way of life; to emphasize that our mission grows out of the dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises, that apostolic activities, of course, were important and necessary but were not automatically MISSION. Some of our members in several countries did not even have the chance to make the Spiritual Exercises, some were afraid of them, others considered them reserved for an elite as a sort of conclusion on the end of the way.

Gilles: One of our biggest challenges was to overcome the unexpected and sudden death of our eldest daughter, Diane, during that first year of our tenure at the Secretariat. In the days following our daughter's funeral, Leah and I felt that we had to be more available to our grandsons; Diane's two young boys, Parker and Evan. Because of this incident in our family, we felt that our initial commitment had to be reconsidered. It was with much prayers and assurance of support from our CLC group in PEI¹ that we could leave for Rome once again, to take on the responsibilities of the Executive Secretary.

Another challenge was the learning of a new language, Italian. In addition to that was the adapting to a Mediterranean way of doing a number of things that would impact on our daily work at the Secretariat. As for learning Italian, Leah became much more fluent than I because of her Italian roots. I always have considered this to be an asset because whenever there was a need for serious conversation in Italian I had to rely heavily on her fluency in that language and, on other occasions, my fluency in French was beneficial. But, I must say, that I never had any trouble expressing myself in Italian when ordering my favorite dishes and wine.

It quickly became apparent to me that the Roman way of doing business was quite different than what I had been accustomed to in Canada. There was an accepted attitude that things can be done but the time of delivery was not a consideration. Although frustrating but, as time went on, I simply had to become more patient and accept the obvious that... in Rome learn to do as the Romans.

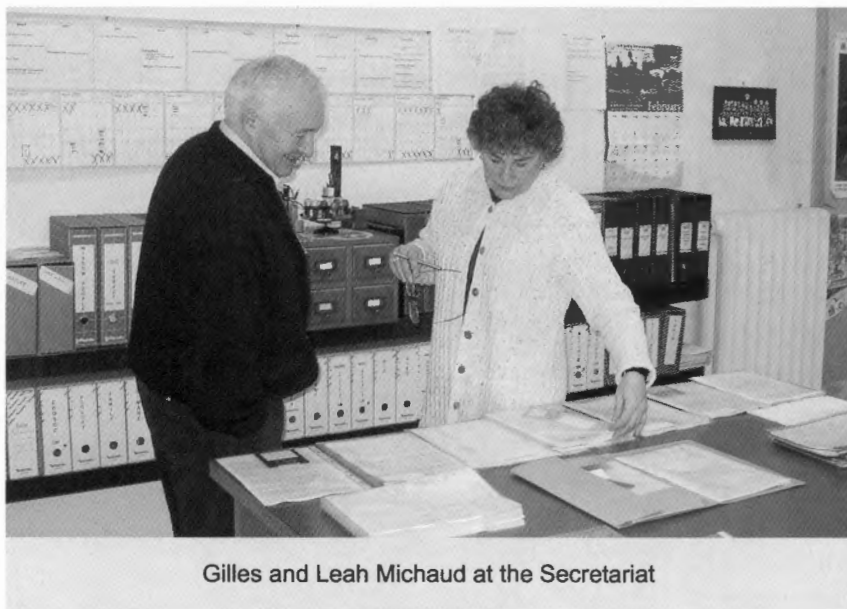
Another critical issue at the Secretariat was the many changes that had to be made regarding our method of communication. The I.T.² revolution had not been fully initiated into our daily work



¹ Prince Edward Island, the place where Gilles and Leah live

² Information Technologies

environment when we had arrived in 1998. The habitual method of communicating continued to be by telephone and facsimile. It was obvious that this problem had to be addressed so that we could become more efficient in communicating between members of the ExCo and the National CLCs. The high cost of financing such a project was a major problem. To overcome this drain on our budget, we attempted to recycle old computers. As time went on, we found this to be not acceptable because much time was lost at repairing the old computers. This became problematic, especially when it came time for Leah and Van to prepare and publish the publication *Progressio*. Eventually, I had to purchase workable computers for all of us.



Gilles and Leah Michaud at the Secretariat

Another challenge that I was faced with was that the internal phone lines had to be upgraded to accommodate internet communication. The Italian telephone system was inefficient and unreliable consequently the task of renovating the office telephone system became painfully slow. Over time and with great determination, although demanding more patience than I ever thought possible, the transition into the 20th century was accomplished. With this new innovation, the CLC World Web site could now be established. The majority of the work in creating the CLC Web Site was accomplished through the generosity of

Goran Kuhner, a CLC member from Croatia who had been studying in Rome.

Do you have some memory or anecdote about your time in Rome?

Roswitha: Even the communication with the ExCo members was not easy. Once I was waiting for an answer to a letter I had written to the ExCo members. After three weeks I received a call from the Vatican post office who told me that they had letters to be sent, but the postage - which was actually calculated by them - was not enough. I totally lost my calmness until the moment when Fr Julian Elizalde, SJ, our Eccl. Vice assistant at the time, said to me: "I don't understand your anger; don't you know that the 2nd letter of Paul to the Romans has not been delivered yet". Humour has such a healing effect!

Gilles: I have come to believe that being in Rome for five years was a great privilege for us. As often as we could, especially on long week-ends, we would visit the many historical sites that we had only read about while in Canada. Our many travel experiences also brought us to several other famous cities rich with history and its unique culture. We also visited other regions in Italy along with the occasional visit to other parts of Europe during our five year stay.

But, I must say that what will always remain carved in my memory are the persons that we came to know and those who have become very good friends. There was Van, not only an exceptional and knowledgeable secretary at the Secretariat but also a very caring and generous person who would often invite us to share special events with her family at her home in Morlupo. There was Roswitha, who had been Executive Secretary before us and knew full well the pressures of working at the Secretariat. She had remained in Rome after completing seven years of serving

at the Secretariat. Her presence was certainly a valuable gift for us because of her availability. Roswitha always found the time to help and support us whenever we felt overwhelmed with the work at the Secretariat. Her remedy was to find the best restaurant in Rome to wine and dine us with the best of Italian foods.

José: After a week in Rome Josée Gsell asked me to translate into Spanish the talk that Fr. Kolvenbach would deliver at the forthcoming Loyola Assembly. It was written in French with PHK's³ small and beautiful calligraphy. It was obvious that I knew French, but I didn't. I had to refresh my knowledge of French and trust in the Holy Spirit and the gift of languages. I could manage but until today I think it was an abuse... don't you think so? With Josée we had agreed to speak in Italian because I was following an Italian course and needed to practice. But when Patrick joined us in our meetings we preferred to move into English for security reasons (Patrick's Italian would not help me to speak Italian). When Josée was about to leave the office she decided that it was the right time to pass on to me the accounts... and she did so in French because the books were in French. So I learnt accounting in French and, again, I managed with the help of the Holy Spirit. Later at Loyola, an Indian treasurer was elected (Tony Martyris) and I had to report to him in English... I had to learn again. When I came back to Chile and had to manage a Foundation I realized that I knew the English, Italian and French technical expressions... but not the Spanish ones.



Gilles, Roswitha, Fernando Salas SJ and Leah

What do you consider was your main contribution as Executive Secretary to WCLC?

Gilles: I think the main contribution that Leah and I may have made was that a husband and wife team can more easily take on the rigorous challenges and demanding responsibilities of working at the World CLC Secretariat.

José: I think it was the coordination of the process towards the approval of the General Principles. I wrote of this in a former issue of *Progressio*.

Roswitha: Isn't that a sort of unfair questions? Well, I tried to do my best but you should have asked me for my



Roswitha, Leah and Gilles

³ Peter Hans Kolvenbach SJ

shortcomings; I could easier talk about them. One contribution perhaps was that the World ExCo realised that one person should not be left alone for this work in the secretariat. I am happy that after me there were couples following to share the work and burden of the task.

How has your vision changed after your experience as CLC Executive Secretary? (briefly explain)

José: 18 years have passed since I left the office, and 4 General Assemblies. The world has changed as well as the Church. The vision of a World Community has been confirmed, but it is more difficult to get people committed in the long term. People today tend more to collect different experiences rather than to go deeper in one way of life. Sometimes I think that the Spiritual Exercises have become a sort of product to be sold and purchased. At times I am not able to understand what is going on, but I remain faithful and grateful to CLC as my vocation in the Church.

Roswitha: I received the grace of recognizing and accepting my own shortcomings and also those of others. It made me more tolerant and patient and deepened my love and trust in the Holy Spirit. I can accept now that growth takes time. By witnessing the growth of individuals and of the community as such, and by experiencing how the Spirit is guiding us, I began to better understand what S. Ignatius meant by saying: *A few people realize what God could make out of their life if they would leave the guidance of their life entirely to God.*

Gilles: To answer this question adequately, I must go back to the time when I was a CLC Canada delegate at the General Assembly in 1990 in Guadalajara, Mexico. During our days of deliberation on the revision of General Principles, I found that this moment had become, for me, a touchstone. The vision that was being articulated in the General Principles represented an affirmation of my "*lay Vocation*". In addition, it was a confirmation that it was not only a vocation being lived out by myself but also by so many other persons in a very unique and distinguishing CLC way. It was especially the words found in GP No.4 that struck me as a personal invitation to follow Christ and to work for peace and justice and most importantly within the context of a discerning community.



Roswitha and José

In the five years while at the Secretariat, I became aware of how challenging this can be, to be called to be a "discerning World Community" in a culture that has become individualistic. It was becoming clear that we, as a world body grounded in the realities of the life of the Church and the World, were being asked to clarify this illusive discerning aspect of our charism. What did this really mean for us as individuals and as a world body? It would seem to me that when we accepted to become a "World Community" (1969) and in the following years, especially in our most recent General Assemblies, we were being led by the Spirit to move forward while very often encountering Jesus on the cross.

This is where Ignatius, in the Spiritual Exercises, poses three questions: What have I (we) done for Christ? What am I (we) doing for Christ? What must I (we) do for Christ?

It was during my time at the Secretariat and through the experiences of Itaici and Nairobi General Assemblies that I can say that the horizons of my vision had been expanded by having me/us focus on the third question (What must I (we) do for Christ?). I must also add that as I reflected on the recommendations from the latest Assembly in Fatima, we are being moved more deeply into the call of "Christ the King". The "Fatima call" is truly a significant one in that it is a call to be "PROPHETIC" at a time where, in the church and the world, we can sense and feel an urging by the Trinity to ponder on, in a discerning manner, those many signs that are challenging us to contemplate more deeply the



Franklin, Gilles and Roswitha

Incarnation and seek the grace of "an intimate knowledge of our Lord, who has become man for me (us), that I (we) may love Him more and follow Him more closely (SE 104).

Please send a message to CLC

José: Keep going. Today the Church is needing more than ever the contribution of well formed lay people, and these people need more than ever a shared identity within a World community of christian life. See the Spiritual Exercises as a way of life, and persevere in an ongoing process of growth. Work with others, for the Kingdom of God, reach beyond, reminding always that "our life is essentially apostolic".

Roswitha: Dear companions on the way don't let us allow that our spirituality is watered down! CLC way of life is a radical vocation; not the number of members counts so much but how seriously these members are rooted in our spirituality. Let's learn and practise communal discernment ; Let our presence on the five continents of this global village make a difference; above all let us radiate hope; the Kingdom of God is right here among us, and it becomes visible when we do what the Lord wants us to do.

Original in English

Experience of CLC Luxemburg regarding the World CLC Solidarity Funds



Guy Schuller

CLC in Luxembourg is a small community (60 members distributed in 10 groups), which, like all CLC communities in the world, is called to live concretely its membership and its close link with the world community. Financial solidarity, also forms part of community life on a world level, and our members respond generously to the call for participation and support addressed to them by our National Team (executive council) every year. But will this be

sufficient for the years in which a World Assembly will be held? To which *Magis* are we invited, when we are very conscious that our community is very small, but that it lives in a country where the standard of living is very high?

For a good decade, while the World Assemblies were being prepared, our successive responsible teams have taken at heart this interpellation, and the creative spirit has blown and has conducted them to risk opening their request beyond the national CLC. Thus, besides the call to solidarity addressed to our members, we elaborated a project comprising different stages to be better

able to support the World CLC solidarity funds on the occasion of the World Assemblies. Even though each member makes a gift of solidarity personally, we request his or her contribution to widen our network of contributors:

1. We send a letter to all CLC members, asking each one of them to kindly send us the names and contact details of ten people around them (family and friends) susceptible to being receptive to a call for donations. A good number of our members receive with benevolence this request and feel interiorly free to establish a personal list of potential donors. Others remain unresponsive.
2. The personal lists of potential donors are centralised, because in our country, many CLC members have circles of friend and establishments of social and ecclesiastical involvement that often largely connected; upon centralising the proposed names, we avoid having certain persons finding themselves solicited for a number of times for the same cause.

It must also be noted that we have also had access to the diocesan directory which gives us the contact details of all the priests, religious and lay people living and working in the Archdiocese of Luxembourg: one must know that in our country, the clergy and all the workers of the Catholic Church are remunerated by the State of Luxembourg.

3. Then we send a letter to all potential contributors with the aim of presenting them the project of solidarity.

In 2008, for example, we sent 314 calls for donations to people who are not members of CLC and 110 people replied favourably. The donations were of a very varied significance, but we could note that "many small drops of



water can join to form a river". We feel encouraged to continue in this route, because the sums paid by the external givers made it possible to triple the gift of solidarity of the National CLC.

4. Finally, we sent a 'Thank you' card to all contributors in the name of CLC Luxembourg and also in the name of CLC World.

The experience around the collection of funds is fruitful but it is also a sign: we receive the gestures of solidarity of our friends and acquaintances also as a sign of gratitude for the numerous beginnings of life that grow thanks to the CLC, as an encouragement for the CLC to continue its mission on the footsteps of Christ in our country and the world.

*Guy Schuller
CLC Luxemburg
Original in French*



Little tree has grown from a seed



Ercsey Zsófia

Hungary can be found in Central-East Europe, its territory is 93.030 km² and population is 10 million.

History of the Hungarian CLC – KÉK

The beginning of the history of the Hungarian CLC connected to the German CLC, but not to the Hungarian Jesuits. In 1987 a

Hungarian young girl, Judit Fábián participated at a “CLC Grundkurs” in Germany. At the end of the course she invited Sr. Irene Luster Haggeney, a German nun to come to Hungary to lead spiritual exercises. Irene accepted this invitation. In 1989 she come to Hungary and gave the first short spiritual exercises. It was followed by two spiritual exercises in 1990 leaded by P. Alois Berger SJ and Sr. Irene.

Since then every year they have spent several weeks in Hungary where they have given spiritual exercises, silence meditation course,

dance meditation and training for leading spiritual exercises. We are continually receiving the GCL literature, methodological documents which we apply in Hungary. In 1991 the first CLC group was created in Budapest and the second one in Miskolc (East-Hungary).

In 1992 and 1993 the German Jesuit and Sister held a training for leading spiritual exercises. Since then we have done and leaded spiritual exercises in daily life every Advent and Lent. As a fruit newer CLC groups have been created in Budapest.

At Christmas of 1994 we first released the CLC periodical “*Pilgrimage*”. Since then it has been published three times a year.

In 1996 a promotion team was set up for the formation of the members. In 1997 a leadership team started the conscious guidance of the community. Since 1996 the CLC members have gathered for common holy mass every month in Budapest.

The second root of the Hungarian CLC is

connected to the Hungarian Jesuits. In 2004 Szabolcs Sajgó SJ, the ecclesiastical assistant established a group from young people. Another new group has been created in another location of Jesuits, in Szeged (South-Hungary). Since then CLC members have taken the guidance of these groups. Nowadays there are 12 groups in Hungary with 117 CLC members (of which 2 new groups with 24 persons).



Characteristics of the community

Sources of our spirituality are the spiritual exercises. Learning and integration of different types of prayers was a call for us and required a process of several years from all of us. We have the same wish for common prayer and following Jesus. Common contemplations, silences and sharing of our lives formed our community.

We can symbolize the Hungarian community by the pilgrim rod what we presented in Fatima. Every group chooses a symbol and we put them on the pilgrim rod by colourful ribbons. These symbols are the following: a little apple tree, the Bible, Manreza, a circle of colours of rainbow, bird egg (quail egg). We all are pilgrims but we are going together on the way.

The spirituality is the source for us to live our family and professional life in Christian faith. Nevertheless many individual services originate from this spirituality. Many CLC members work at parishes, in Caritas, in religious instructions, in choirs. Others start Bible groups, lead liturgy (in absence of priest), company individually persons, edit Jesuit periodical "*Heart*", organize children champs, support big families, visit ill people, care homeless people etc. Some CLC members work as professionals in the field of social welfare e.g. family therapist, social worker, cure of souls, hospice, caring of ill and old people.

The Hungarian CLC has a common service: leading spiritual exercises (of 3 day, silence meditation, dance meditation) and giving spiritual exercises in daily life in several towns.

The CLC groups living in different towns have their own characteristics as follows.

Szeged (South-Hungary): CLC group connected to Jesuit parish organizes Saint Ignatius Day on the 31st of July every year. This is a colourful family day with elements of

Saint Ignatian exercises. In 2007 we celebrated 800 years' anniversary of Saint Elisabeth from Thuringia. The CLC group organized a competition for children in the diocese. Works (drawings, paintings) of 200 children were presented in several exhibitions.

Miskolc (East-Hungary): A fruitful co-operation has formed between Jesuit parish and CLC group. Jesuits organized a caritas service for poor. CLC members participated in this service in different ways e.g. prayer, financial support, personal contact to poor families, old and ill people; packing up and transport of food and clothes for poor.

Budapest: Youth groups joined Jesuit programs of City mission in 2007 („Mission impossible”). • CLC members take meals every day to the young couples who have a newly born baby. • In the occasion of 100 years anniversary of the independent Hungarian Jesuit Province we had a Jubilee Week in Budapest in September 2009. CLC joined this celebration by special programs (presentation CLC meeting, "prayer school", individual conversations in the street). • In Lent 2010 a spiritual day was jointly organized by Jesuits and CLC in the House of Dialogue (Jesuit centre). We hope that this kind of common programs will continue in the future.

The CLC World Day 2010 started a new action in the CLC groups of Budapest. Adrienne is social worker in a "family assisting centre". During her work she meets poor people every day. We support them by our donations and prayer. Adrienne tells about her meeting with poor people. It is nice to experience that we can help poor people and we are praying for them during CLC holy mass.



Symbol of CLC Hungary in Fatima

Contact with worldCLC

In 1994 we participated at World Assembly in Hong Kong. Since then we have celebrated World CLC Day on the subject given by World ExCo. In 1997 Ms. Ilona Horváth, a founder of CLC translated the General Principles and Norms into Hungarian and the CLC groups started to know and contemplate them. We also have translated the final documents of assemblies in order to bring the orientations of the world community close to the Hungarian CLC members.

In 2007 we celebrated together with our godparents, CLC members the anniversary of 40 years of CLC in Dobogókő (Hungary). This common German-Hungarian summer holiday meant the first experience of what a feeling to belong to a world community. During the sharing it was nice to see other communities which live in the same spirituality in another country.



Delegates CLC Hungary in Fatima

As far as our contact to the world community is concerned the CLC World Assembly in Fatima was outstanding for us, because the Hungarian CLC was incorporated into the world community there in 2008. We do not forget the support of German CLC, the visits and assistance of Inge Hoepfl and Daniela Frank in the preparations. Géza Pakot SJ, our ecclesiastical assistant was making notes during the Assembly and he was sending them

in email every day to the Hungarian friends, so they were informed about events of Assembly and they could feel the atmosphere of the meeting. I also participated at the Assembly. When World Assembly voted about acceptance of CLC-Hungary it was a pleasure for me to see many green cards "YES". We were pleased to celebrate together with the representatives of the German CLC which was present at the stages of the birth and development of CLC-Hungary. When in Fatima the delegates of several national communities came to us and they gave us gift, we felt that we have been accepted into world community!

What happened after Fatima?

One month later, in September 2008 we translated the final document of World Assembly and the message of Adolfo Nicolás SJ. We invited all the group guides for a meeting and we talked about Fatima events, orientations and our joy and experiences. All CLC groups started to "process" these important documents.

In May 2009 we elected a new national ExCo in Hungary. Founders of the Hungarian CLC have surrendered the "governance" to the next generation, who tries to cope with this challenge. The new leadership team initiated the regular meeting of group guides for discussion and discernment of topics relating to the community. Although the number of members has not significantly increased for last years, but starting new group is difficult because of the lack of group guides. That is why we started in co-operation with Jesuits the preparation of materials for training of group guides. • The youth group has undertaken designing the website of CLC-Hungary. Four persons from CLC participate at the training of leaders ("*accompagnateurs*") of spiritual exercises in daily life (2 years long training). • Since we have been member of a world community we have to think the management of finances over.

At the end of my article I have to note that the grace history of the Hungarian CLC is not a straight and ascending way, but a way with stagnations and decays. But this is GOOD. If we are courageous to trust in God, He will form the history of our community!

root in earth of Hungary. Since then this seed has started to grow, became a little tree, which already has some fruits. We hope that this little tree is going to grow big tree, will bear many fruits, we can share with those who wish these gifts!

In 1987 a young Hungarian girl participated at a course in Germany and then the seed took

*Ercsey Zsófia
CLC Hungary
Original in English*



Accompaniment and companionship with Poor and marginalized



Rajan and his wife Nithiya

My CLC community life started in 1980 after I joined a CLC community with 12 members. I regularly attended monthly recollection. I had the opportunity to participate in a retreat cum formation program, organized by the national CLC. These formation and retreat experiences motivated and inspired me to make a commitment to live CLC way of life and my option for the poor and the marginalized. My call and Commitment was a process, which I realized thorough annual retreat, recollections and personal reflection. My humanitarian profession helped me to be in touch with the grassroots level with the poor people. The prolonged armed conflict intensified. Professionals and academics, community leaders and others left the country. This had an impact on CLC. The CLC became inactive and many communities were disrupted

In the east, where the armed conflict was very intensified, With the help of committed CLC Jesuits like Fr. Mayer, SJ and Fr. Paul, SJ, we were able to sustain the spirit if CLC way of life. Their animation was valuable for prayer life, making retreat, following discernment process, and living

in communities. This CLC spirit was an enforced for many young people from opposing formed recruitment. The Jesuits offered the Manresa retreat house and the Loyola candidates' house for our psycho spiritual programs. During the peak time of armed conflict, because of my commitment to CLC way of life, I was chosen to represent the CLC community in Hong Kong world assembly as an observer. The theme was community in mission. I was accompanied by Fr. Paul. This exposure to the world CLC reality changed my attitudes & perspectives and I made an offering saying *'Lord I am here to witness to love and mercy you have on human kind. This human kind is the poor and the marginalized'*. In the world assembly, I experienced many lay people imbibe by the spirit of the spiritual exercises, taking enlightened leadership in the church in varied spheres of life.

In my present experience, I am walking and talking with the poor and the marginalized. They are my daily bread and butter. In the north, the intensity of poverty experience is unbearable. The impact of this experience also is in the east where I lived.

I began this journey in 2002 when I was involved with the action research on community empowerment to fight with their economic and social poverty. During this period, I was preparing for MPhil¹ at the London Metropolitan University. Peace process in Sri Lanka was moving towards the end and each party involved were preparing for the fresh battle to launch after having sung peace lullaby for two years. Even though I had opportunities to work with conflict affected Communities in camps and with displaced families, yet I can say that I was not very close to the poor people and in empathy experience

¹ Master of Philosophy

their pain and suffering. Many used the war situation to enhance their own position. The voiceless and powerless, socially & economically marginalized people, were pushed to the bottom of the economic psycho spiritual ladder.

In my own personal research work in the north and the east, I had encountered with the poor and the marginalized. It was personal experiences. I wept with them and experienced their hunger & helplessness and lack of meaning to life. They lacked in basic needs of food, shelter and clothing. Many of them experienced multiple displacements like the people of the Old Testament; they were living in tents with the God they worshiped. Their food was what they could get from quick agricultures. This experience confused me and disturbed me. I wanted to respond to this situation in order to support the people. My research made me realized that war was the root causes of poverty, exclusion and marginalization.

The protracted armed conflict traumatized people at different levels. Many had post traumatic stress disorder. Domestic violence, child abuse, communal violence, violent social behaviors, high level of suicidal tendency, alcoholism, anti social behaviors among youth and live on with disputes and conflicts were numerous. Elders and children were not properly looked after. Begging destroyed the dignity of the human person. There were at the time, 31, 387 widows in the east alone (there are now, 49, 767 in the east) and were left with the responsibility of finding money for the family need and managing the family affair as head of the family. Most of them were young and having more than two children. There was another category of women (nearly 11,654 families) who were deserted by their husbands due to the reasons such as family disputes, inability to look after the family, elope with another woman, run away from family and the forcible recruitment of rebels. These women became the bread winners of the families. In the case of children, thousands of them became unaccompanied. They were either recruited by rebels or were sent as support labors to skilled

labors. Some children were lucky to have children welfare centres, run by religious institutions. The women who are the bread winners used the children to earn bread as a part time job after school. The legal and social systems are weak to protect children. Religious leaders and institutions are the defenders of the rights of children.



A poor and marginalized family

My analyses and reflection revealed out that the main root cause for the poverty is lack of compassion and genuine love among those who can bring changes in the life of poor and marginalized. We have many economic strategies with well developed approaches and methodologies to eradicate the poverty. What is lacking there is the love and compassion with our fellow sisters and brothers who are living in isolation, exclusion and marginalization as poor and sick. My discernment and reflection showed me a path to choose my profession and commitment. Nithiya, my wife who had been working for Registrar general department of the government came to UK to live with me. She joined with me in the discernment process in London where we had comfortable life and socio economic security. We finally decided to return back to my home town in the east on the 23rd of December 2004, leaving our comfortable life. God works in our life in different ways and calls us very gently and firmly. People have the freedom to discern and decide or ignore completely the god's call.

Ignatian way of discernment helped me to chose a particular way of life, which is challenging. I realized why I made this decrements and decision only when I experienced tsunami in 2004.

I became a humanitarian worker, working for the rehabilitation of refugees and internally displaced communities, affected by human made disaster, the armed conflict and the natural disaster, the tsunami, from 2005 in my own country. I did not limit myself with my work that was assigned to perform as humanitarian Aid worker. I wanted to support poor and marginalized through my personal commitment and engagement in the work that I was doing.



23 families involved with breaking stone business

I would like to share my experience with the life story of marginalized families who were struggling to live ethically. In 2009, I happened to meet a smaller community with 23 families in Sakayapuram in Muthur division, situated in the south east coast of Trincomalee district where there was a rocky mountain, which was their source of income. They were working for cheap labors in the stone quarry. The work was hard. The wage was low. Whole families were to manually break stones and get their wages for the amount of stones they broke. When I started my task on relationship building with them, I gradually found out that there is only one single old man who is the survivor in this community. Others were either killed or deserted. Women were the bread winners of

the families and were living in the small house built by a charitable organization. The rest of the community were ostracized because of prostitution and begging. The women were exploited by the power that are. The children were abused by the adults.

Due to this bad name, rest of the community is very resentful and hateful towards these 23 families. They did not offer any community support or allow them to take part in any religious or cultural activities in the village. They were isolated and pushed by the rest of the community members to live at the mountain side. My relationship with these 23 families was looked upon with disgusted by the

rest of the people. They warned me that these families are thieves and beggars. But, after many visits & meetings regardless of the warning, I had good understanding of their issues, problems and emotional feelings. They started to accept me and listen to me as they developed the feeling that they were being accepted and respected by me. This was not enough for me. I wanted to be more supportive in their life. I continuously prayed to the Lord to show me a path to be more productive companion to these families.

During one of my visits to this village in December 2009, I noticed that four youth from the same village who are involved with breaking stone business approached me and wanted to talk to me about these families. They complained of their social behaviors and suggested that if they are chased away to another village, they would find different life. There was no concern and interest to support them. I developed long conversation and finally invited them to join with me to the families to see how they are suffering through the harsh treatment of this society. I challenged them further that they are also partly responsible for such state of these 23 families. I asked them whether they are willing to buy the crushed stones from these families if they are supported to break at their backyard and sell to them. They were not very much interested at the beginning.

But, they took up my challenge and visited these families 1st time in their life to listen to

their stories. I made some of the family members to share their burden and suffering, they under go in the hands of the owners of stone quarry. One of the solutions, proposed was during the meeting that these families should be 1st liberated from the owners from slavery. They needed to be supported for their own income generation. I discerned and decided that I should seriously look for some money to support them or link up these families with generous people who can at least show a way for their new life.

Time went on and more than 6 meetings were conducted between these youth and the families. Meanwhile, I was searching for some fund to assist these families to start their own income generation by their own. I found a small faith community and their informal charity foundation in Colombo, the capital, and organized some money to support these families. Three members of the faith community visited on the 23rd of March 2010 and organized the materials, tools and some capital to start their own stone breaking in order to liberate them from local slavery. Youth supported the families to bargain and purchase load of big stones for each family from rock breakers in the mountainside and buy the essential tools for each family. The total cost was USD 2480. 23 families found a new way generating income at their backyard. They are no more slaves to the quarry owners. Youth in the village protect them being attacked by the angry quarry owners. The youth did not stop supporting these families. They have now identified 5 young people from these families and trained them on making concrete post for fence. I am now encouraging these youth to guide these families to send their children to nearby school.

It was strange to see how resentful youth became the supporters of fellow community members and how the money was organized for them to start their own income generation at their back yard and how organization is challenged by younger generation through sympathy and empathy. I realize this is the way God works with us and through us. 'Lord

makes me your instrument to accompany the poor and marginalized people who are living with us'.

I continue my journey as accompanier and a companion. Now, I have chosen two families where there are three disabled member. They lost their limp to the artillery shelling.



CLC PLUS in Sri Lanka

My CLC unit is the support for my journey as an accompanier and a companion to do my personal apostolic mission. There are nine life members in our CLC. Three of us were earlier, members of Leunis CLC. In 1990, we had more than 12 members in Leunis unit. Therefore we formed another CLC community with members from the same age group and social background. We invited the members who had already been identified and discerned to form the new CLC unit. We call ourselves 'PLUS CLC'. PLUS is anachronism for **Prayer, Life** (CLC way of life) **Unity** (union with Christ & the Church) and **Service** (apostolic mission). We meet weekly at our homes. We have our own apostolic mission of supporting widows' families through self employment apostolic activities.

*Arulappu Iruthayanathan (Rajan)
CLC PLUS - Sri Lanka
Original in English*

My journey in CLC



Edel Beatrice Churu
CLC-Kenya

CLC World Exco Consulter, elected in
the 2008 World Assembly in Fatima

I 'stumbled' onto CLC in 1989 when I was a student in the university. I hadn't been searching for anything special in my life at the time. Four years earlier, I had entered the novitiate of the Loreto sisters and I was now a young sister, pursuing a degree in Education. I had been a Loreto student for six years, at the end of which I was convinced that the sisters had something that enabled them to educate youth into freedom. This was my greatest aspiration. I wanted to work for youth and was convinced that the greatest gift that one could give them is the inner freedom to which I had become heir by virtue of a Loreto education. Indeed this aspiration had been rooted in my family background. Both my parents were teachers in newly independent Kenya, and were great champions of promoting young people through education. I had grown up in a rural village on the Nyandarua mountain ranges, close to the forest, working the earth for most of our food, and with education ever before me as the greatest obligation. This was all enshrined in the context of a constant, and certainly not excessive, Catholic faith practice, safeguarded in the family under the express leadership of my mother. My entry into the Loreto community was, in my view, in continuity with this family faith; my parents did not see it that way and we differed much about my religious vocation.

Memorable experiences for me in the novitiate were especially the 30-day Ignatian retreat and the encounter with Mary Ward, that incomparable 16th Century English foundress, who crossed Europe on her feet several times, convinced of a call to apostolic religious life for herself and her companions, of the absolute importance of the education of girls, and of the potential of women "do great things" for God. Mary Ward, by any measure

a women ahead of her time, made and still makes a strong impression on me, about the vital importance of following the inner call. As a passionate young religious then, I found in her way what I was searching for: courage to follow my dream – to do my best to prepare myself to lead young people to that greater freedom to follow their own 'deepest longings'. It was in this light that I understood a career in education in general and teaching in particular.

While I was in the university, an Australian Loreto sister, Therese Daly, IBVM, (author of *Deepest Longings*, Mary Ward's Ignatian Way, 1990) visited Kenya and conducted a number of workshops for university students, introducing them to the Ignatian Way of spiritual life as championed by Mary Ward, a truly Ignatian woman. My fellow university students thrived in these workshops, their eyes glittering with joy and hope. These programs represented what I wished to be able to do with youth and young adults. When Fr. Tim Quinlan, SJ, assistant World EA for CLC, later came and spoke about CLC, the ground was already well prepared, not least by the workshops of Sr. Daly. The idea immediately caught fire, and I was brought along by my Catholic student friends in the university. These – Levi Matseshe, Athanas Itebete, among others - were the founders of CLC in Kenya.

The members of the first CLC communities in Kenya were university graduates. They were greatly assisted by the commitment of Gerry Whelan, S.J. then a Jesuit scholastic in Hekima College. Gerry was present with the young communities, and invited other Jesuits and Loreto Sisters to walk with the young CLC communities. Fr. Terry Charlton, S. J. was appointed as the First EA and enthusiastically supported the spread and growth of CLC in Kenya. The young new members were available to introduce CLC in new places. With hindsight, it is clear to me that this involvement of the CLC members in

the propagation of CLC is one of those ingredients that made the early members solid in the ownership of and belonging to CLC. Perhaps people who joined later felt they should leave it to the older members to speak for CLC; for those first groups, there were no older members. They had to move and speak and share their experience of CLC with other Christians. Their witness often offered hope to other searching and hungering spirits. Thus spread CLC in the early days in Kenya. At the Johannesburg All Africa CLC-CVX Encounter 2005, other communities in Africa corroborated our experience that the efforts of propagation strengthen the identity of the members.

Within two or three years of introduction of CLC in Kenya, a substantial number of the members had made the Spiritual Exercises. Prospects of CLC getting rooted in Kenya were looking up and as a guide to one group, and also member of the first National Exco, I was greatly enthusiastic for the future of CLC in Kenya. Together, we set out to deepen our understanding of the Spiritual Exercises with a view to making the Ignatian way more deeply rooted among the laity. This exercise of study of the Spiritual Exercises, which took place over a period of two or three years, became the foundation of the CLC National formation team which has been a major pillar for the development of CLC and its leadership in Kenya.

My own story took different paths in the mid 1990s. In response to a request of Roswitha Cooper, the CLC World Executive Secretary at the time, I was released by the provincial of the Loreto sisters at the time to do CLC formation work in Southern Africa during 1996. I was deeply touched by the faith put in me by both Roswitha and my provincial. Together with Victor Kiachaka from Zambia, who had been an active member of CLC Kenya in his student days in Nairobi, I visited and worked with communities in Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Lesotho. CLC and the Jesuit community in Johannesburg were our base and source of stability as we traveled around these countries. Fr. Tom Valiquette S.J., was particularly helpful and supportive.

He, Pat Hanvey and Veronica Miller accompanied us and worked with us on a memorable retreat and formation experience in Lesotho, where for the first time I experienced snow falling in Africa. I got to work with Veronica Miller in giving Open Door Retreats in Kimberly, and meeting CLC communities in the Western Cape. During all these visits, travel across large distances such as Livingstone to Lusaka to Mongo in Zambia by bus, we enjoyed the variety and beauty of the Southern African region. I was surprised how homely every CLC community was for me. Each time we arrived in a new region and met the community, it was like coming home.



CLC Kenya

The challenges for formation were enormous. Countries like Botswana and Lesotho struggled then even more than they do now, to get support for formation from persons knowledgeable of Ignatian spirituality and the CLC way of life. Because of this, some of the materials we had prepared for our work proved to be too difficult, and needed to be broken down to simpler presentations. Victor was very gifted in simplification of some of the Ignatian disciplines for members who had not had the chance to experience the Spiritual Exercises. In addition we enjoyed more than a little his gift of music, which, together with local songs and dances, came to embody the typical character of our evenings. It was a lesson for me in the variety that builds up community. We engaged the formation

programs with much seriousness, and the music brought a necessary spark of fun and lightness that worked 'magic' with the communities.

When in 1997 I left religious life, it was my local CLC community that was one of my strongest links with what was deep and dear to me as I made the transition from Ignatian Religious Life to a Lay Ignatian way of living my Christian life. As I had hoped, religious life in Loreto had enabled me to drink deeply from the source that made the sisters thus able to lead youth to claim their freedom as children of God. Key for me was the relationship with Christ and the Ignatian tools for living the Christian life especially the daily *examen* and the constant response of the invitation of the *magis*. These I cherished deeply. I was glad to be in a community that enabled me to share this way of life as Friends in the Lord. By then, there were members in my local community who were quite deeply into the Ignatian way, and so, though I had been the guide of the group since 1995 when

it had started, it was possible to obtain much support and challenge from these members for my own discernment. I increasingly discovered that there is something unique about the Lay Ignatian vocation and the Lay Ignatian community. I am enjoying the challenge of the on-going search which is one of the most characteristic ways I might describe the work of the CLC World exco.

Between 2000 and 2002 I lived in Cameroun. I experienced a strong cultural shock, characterized especially by language barrier since I was living in the French-speaking part of the country, without much knowledge of the language. My great consolation was when I was able to make link with the *Groupe Ignatienne* in Yaoundé. Here a number of CLC members together with some sisters studied the Ignatian Spirituality, under the guidance of Fr. Dorino, S. J. and Sr. Louise of the *Souers de la Retraite*. I found myself completely at home in this group, even though the discourses were carried on in French. I had the benefit of a number of English-speaking friends, not the least among whom was Sr. Louise herself and some members of her community. Through this *groupe ignatienne*, I was introduced to some CLC members in Yaoundé, and was able to attend one CLC Cameroun National Assembly. I was just getting excited about the possibility of now joining a community when my stay in the country was cut short.

I returned to Kenya in March 2003, in time to leisurely enjoy the Kenya national community preparing competently to host the World Assembly which was to take place in August of the same year. It was a truly momentous experience for CLC Kenya. We experienced that we had "come of age" and the World Community could rely on us to make our contribution. As a newly returned member, and without the burden of leadership responsibilities, I enjoyed this year in CLC Kenya thoroughly, experiencing it as a celebration of the fruits of our work in the previous decade. Even when in 2004 I was elected CLC-Kenya President, I enjoyed working with a very effective Executive Council which was well able to conduct most of the affairs of CLC Kenya with discernment.



Edel at the World ExCo Meeting 2010

Family support especially that of my husband Sam, and the children - Shuru, Spe and Chichi - for my CLC commitment, has been a rock I could not have been able to stand without. I am truly grateful for this unwavering and sometimes costly support. I hope very much that my children will find in CLC a home and community of faith that makes sense for them. While they are young, I have tried to involve them in some CLC activities, but I regret that logistical realities have not usually been able to bear this possibility. The idea of Family CLC that I cherished learning so much about in Fatima has yet to grow find real pathways for me and for many young CLC couples in Kenya.

My 'checkered' life in CLC, in the sense that many of my years in CLC had been as a religious, brought me to a situation where I had been almost 20 years in CLC before I made permanent commitment. When the occasion came, I had the joy of at least 15 other CLC members in Kenya who have made permanent commitment ahead of me, and who live the CLC way of life in distinctive commitment to the community, and the mission. The occasion of making permanent commitment, was a celebration of the Lord's faithfulness to me, that throughout my adult life so far, he had given me that thirst for him and his mission as well as provided the well from which to satisfy the thirst, through my Ignatian pilgrimage so far.

The discernment of CLC Kenya in about 1995 to focus on youth as the preferred area of mission and the courage to take on St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School for AIDS orphans has provided a recurrent field for challenge and rallying the energy and identity of the community. This particular mission field is, by any measure, difficult. In working on this project as a member of the School board, it has been most inspiring to experience the sense of both our gifts and our limits as a national community, and alongside, the action of God in making great things happen in the young people's lives, as we contribute our small steps and actions in the mission field. It is truly God, "whose words are works" as Mary Ward puts it, who accomplishes this great work in and through us. It is powerful for CLC Kenya to experience, especially through St. Aloysius School, the support of the world community and indeed of the larger Ignatian family, around the world.

As I tell my story of my life in CLC I am aware that in some measure, it is the story of the community. How much I have been carried! I am grateful and truly blessed to be part of the CLC family.

Thank you.

*Edel Beatrice Churu
Original in English*



Edel with members of CLC Africa

And the sea was not so quiet...

The night of February 27 was a fateful night in the south of Chile. A night where our emergency systems, our ability to react to adversity, our courage, our solidarity and our hope: were tested. A massive magnitude earthquake changed the



geography of entire villages, causing a tsunami that devastated beautiful coastal towns. How much destruction! How much desolation! Our Community stood up immediately to assist in the emergency. In few hours, many CLC youth members

collected help and arrived to one of the most affected places where there is also a Jesuit Community: Tirúa.

More burdensome needs appeared soon: it was necessary to provide emergency housing to more than 50,000 families, homes that eventually will require improvements to enable them to cope with winter weather. CLCers from different regions supported country level programs that were quickly launched.

We wondered: How can we continue to help more effectively and for a long-term? Our community in Concepcion, after leaving its own disasters, stood up by initiating an exploration of where the greatest need was, the least attended and where help could be more effective. Our attention was turned to fishermen coves where the sea had destroyed not only houses, but had also destroyed their jobs. They had lost everything. This is where we are focusing our limited resources and emphasis on our apostolic work.



'Caleta Tumbes' is a small town that houses about 40 fishermen families: our brothers who need that we bring them a message of hope, our prayer and our company; but we also want to help them physically so they can get up and go back into the sea to seek their livelihood. It is necessary that these families can recover their boats, nets, engines and fishing equipment to return to their jobs with dignity and hope, that life can be resumed after such a terrible experience and that they feel they are not alone; that the Good News is a reality, and that we will achieve together that hope reborn again in their lives.

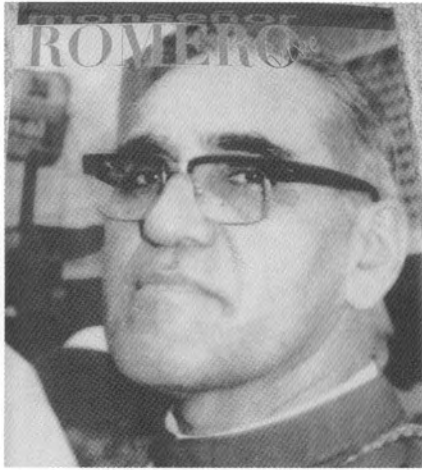
To support this we have asked for help, but it is never enough. We have received millions of prayers and support of Latin American and World CLC. We have heartily felt that we truly are a Worl

Community. Our dream is to effectively support as many families as possible.



*Miguel Collado
President CLC Chile
Original in Spanish*





If you live a good Christian life,
but do not respond to our times,
do not denounce the injustices,
do not proclaim
the kingdom of God with boldness,
do not reject the sin of men,
accept, to be friends with certain classes,
the sins of those classes;
you are not fulfilling your duty,
you are sinning,
you are betraying your mission.

The Church is there to convert men and women,
not to say that everything they do is right,
and so, naturally, upsets.

Anyone who corrects us upsets us.
I know that I upset a lot of people,
but I know that I upset all those who sincerely seek
the conversion of the Church

(Homily August 21, 1977)

Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated 30 years ago (03/24/1980) while celebrating the Eucharist. He made himself the voice of the voiceless in El Salvador. He pledged to give his life for the cause of the poor, persecuted, threatened, disappeared or been murdered in his country.

We invite our readers to know more about his witness of the Church and Gospel-coherence .

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