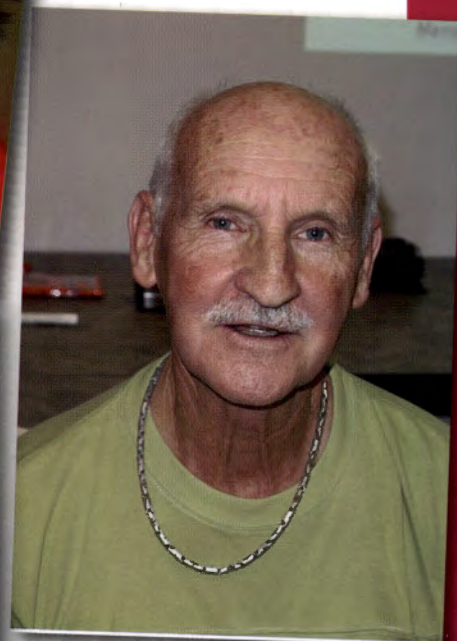




progressio

Publication of the World Christian Life Community



PHOTOS FRONT COVER
From up-left to right:

- Viviane Tchuenté (CLC Cameroon - CLC Canada Fr)
- Chris Gardner (CLC Australia)
- Ann Marie Brennan, Joan Woods, Marie Schimelfening and Lois Campbell (CLC USA)
- Members CLC Croatia
- Angelo Ponniah SJ (EA CLC Sri Lanka)
- Members of CLC Madagascar

PHOTOS BACK COVER
From up-left to right:

- Members of CLC Lebanon
- Members CLC Rome
- Wilfried, Etienne, Gilbert and Edel in the Pan-African Congress for Catholic Laity
- Monica Francomb (CLC England and Wales)
- Members of CLC Tenerife and Las Palmas with Mauricio Lopez
- Members CLC El Salvador
- New Exco of CLC France with Daniela Frank

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progressio

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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

In each issue of *Progressio*, the life of the world community is portrayed and this copy is not an exception. Now that the national communities are starting to prepare for the next World Assembly, stories and reports are being found in *Progressio* that illustrate the meaning of Lay Apostolic Body, the manner in which our world community is currently defined.

We thus begin then with the structure (skeleton) that makes it possible for dreams and great ideals to become a reality; an example of this is narrated in "A Sacrament for the World Community". When we assume ourselves as a body, it also implies to assume our history, and at times, I believe that we have not given just recognition to the laypersons that have promoted CLC. Therefore, it is very significant that the apartment acquired by the World CLC bears the name of a great Ignatian woman (CLC'er) called Josée Gsell. If this name does not sound familiar to you, please read the article of the section entitled "tribute".

The body, as world community, is comprised of people, members of the communities, who to the extent in which they are better organised, trained and committed are able to contribute more vitality and drive to all the others. Along these lines, for us, the execution of the temporary commitments in CLC Malta, for the first time, is cause for great joy. To the 19 "pioneers", thank you for multiplying our faith and hope in the CLC way of life. We are likewise pleased to see the progress of the CLC Lithuania in its process of incorporation into the World Community.

This body, as a community, has become sensitive to the signs of the times and feels the need to work for justice. Due to the aforesaid, our presence and participation in the March of Hope in DR Congo is understandable, as well as

in the Pan-African Lay Congress or in Rio+20 (testimonies given in this issue). We feel the call to move forward for the cause of Jesus.

As laity, this body finds the peculiarity of its mission in ordinary life, finding and serving

God in the day-to-day activities such as work, family, studies, etc. To give us an idea of this, there is the life testimony of Gertrude Diarra (CLC Burkina Faso) and, in a very special way, what is shared by Angelique Ruhi-Lopez and Carmen Santamaría (CLC Miami), with regard to the book they have written on infertility, the silent suffering faced by 1 out of every 6 couples nowadays, based on a catholic perspective; they share how the tools of Ignatian spirituality have guided their decisions during the difficult time of bearing this invisible cross.



This issue would not be complete without referring to the Year of Faith that our Church invites us to live out, given that, to be an Lay Apostolic Body, is to feel the calling to proclaim the Good News of Jesus. The Apostolic condition makes us a living testimony of the faith that encourages us, and above all, for us the laity, to be a symbol of God's love in the simple daily things of life.

Finally, we invite you to join us in prayer for the World Assembly Lebanon 2013. It will be the first time that we hold such an important event for the World CLC in the Middle East. It is an opportunity to grow in solidarity with our brothers and sisters of this region and especially, due to the instability of this area, an ideal occasion to put our trust in God.

Sofia Montanez
Editor

The voice of the readers



Dear Sofia,

A big thank you for all the work done around this review. It is vital for the dimension "one" and "world" in CLC.

As part of the reflection on the integrity of creation, can you study the feasibility of a magazine with recycled paper, not glossy and less thick cover?

In friendship in Christ

Anne and Jean (CLC France)

Thank you for your comments. For quite some time now we have been thinking about more environmentally friendly alternatives for the presentation of Progressio, therefore we are pleased to announce that, from 2014 on, changes will be introduced along these lines. By 2014 the magazine will be available online and hard copies will be issued on low density paper, produced by environmentally responsible sources.

Sofia Montanez (Editor)



Dear Madam,

The first issue of your journal for 2012 reminds us of the Jubilee in 2013 to mark the 450th anniversary of the foundation of the Marian Congregations by Father Jean Leunis sj. Our Centre is appropriately named after that renowned

*Jesuit; you can understand that we are deeply affected by this anniversary and we wholeheartedly rejoice in it. Indeed, the Centre was set up by Father Ludger Brien sj, who, over many years, devoted himself to the promotion of Marian Congregations. In 1951, he founded the Leunis Society (now the Society of Christ the Lord) with the aim of encouraging the promotion and development of the CCMM, in the spirit of the Apostolic Constitution *Bis saeculari*, given us by Pope Pius XII. After many years of membership and service in the CCMM, and later on in CLC, Father was drawn to found his own work: the Fraternities of Faith and Life, which continued to work in the spirit of their origins. As for the Society of Christ the Lord, its specific purpose was to build communities for evangelisation solidly rooted in the Church, with the help of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius and papal teachings. The Fraternities of Faith and Life and the Society of Christ the Lord both retain friendly links with the CLC of French-speaking Canada.*

*So it is with all our hearts we join in your thanksgiving and wish long life to World Christian Life Community. May it shine in the whole world and bring forth much apostolic fruit, *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam!**

*Suzanne Lapierre
Leunis Centre
Montréal, Canada.*

A Sacrament for the World Community

How do dreams come true? This is the story of a collective dream that has come true. It is the story of a house in Rome for CLC. The dream was to own it! Well, the dream was not exactly the house itself, more the house as a symbol of many things. Christians usually call symbols sacraments. Sacraments make the invisible visible. They connect us to something beyond themselves. Sacraments represent, symbolize, recall, communicate and make all grace a reality in the world. This house is like a sacrament, it symbolizes that we are becoming an adult community in this re-founded phase of CLC (since 1967), one that has its roots as far back as almost 450 years¹.

We have bought an apartment in Rome for those who come to work at the World Executive Secretariat. Sometimes those serving in this office have been single, sometimes married, even with children. The Secretariat is the institutional side of the world community. It organizes (communications, finance, web, publications, etc.) and represents the Community with the Vatican, (the Jesuits, the UN, etc.). For nearly 40 years CLC has rented housing for those who came to work in the Secretariat (or paid them enough to be able to do so for themselves). In 2011 we spent nearly €18,000 for rent. Our mission is not to be property owners. Our mission is to promote the Kingdom of God on earth in the Ignatian way. And to fulfil this mission we need "means": the organization and structure of CLC are only that, just means. The world community finances have consistently been the subject of

deficits. In this context spending €18,000 per year renting an apartment seemed a waste too. Therefore, the current Executive Council (ExCo) took the decision that it would be better to buy our own home.

From a financial and organizational point of view the aim of this project was to reduce our annual expenditure and have a reserve - an asset - to contribute towards our long-term sustainability. From the point of view of the community, it was a good opportunity to work together, for our members to experience the global dimension, and review how we had grown in co-responsibility. From the point of view of the mission, following the recommendations of Fatima 2008, it would release more funds to support apostolic projects that benefit the poor. Do you now understand better why I call this house a sacrament? It shows that CLC is valuable even financially. It symbolizes the collective effort of the members. It will show future generations of CLC that we thought of them today. We remembered how generous God

A home in Rome...

our home... your home...



¹ From the 25th March 2013 to 25th March 2014 we will celebrate the 450 year of foundation of the *Prima primiera* – that was the origin of the Marian Congregations - by Jean Leunis sj in Rome in 1563. For more information see *Projects 152*.

had been with us. With this and with God's help, we will move forward in the mission to a world with so many injustices that cry out for availability and service.

The ExCo and the finance team began to examine this project in 2010. At first we thought it would be best to get a mortgage, because pretty much what we spent on rent equated to the repayment on a mortgage. But the interest rates were high and we had no initial capital for a deposit: on the contrary, we had an accumulated deficit. Anyway, if we had to find money for the deposit, why not try to collect enough for a cash purchase? Of course it was an ambitious financial plan. Never in the history of CLC had something like this been attempted². We launched an initial consultation with some individuals and communities: What did they think? Would they be willing to donate for this purpose? The positive responses encouraged us to pursue the project.

There were some questions about the aim and context of the decision that needed to be addressed. First, "Having poor communities

answered 'yes', we still did not solve the real problem: we're spending €18,000 each year. In forty years, the cost exceeds €700,000. In front of poor communities and the world needs, is it right to maintain that expense? "No". Continuing to rent does not help the poor. We must stop this 'waste' of money, and then we will have more resources to dedicate to noble causes and solidarity. Then, the global economic conditions were hostile: the global financial crisis. "Would it not be better to wait until the crisis is over?" Maybe! But we did not know when the crisis would end and what we know is that every year we wait it costs us another €18,000. Even before the crisis, the World Community funds had accumulated a deficit: probably the crisis makes us even more vulnerable economically. Finally, if the crisis is longer or worse than expected, the conditions may turn what is difficult into an impossibility.

Most of the responses were very positive. Some national communities were sorry not to be able to support us financially, but still said that they approved of our project and offered us many prayers. All that helps. Dreams

require much prayer. In some communities there was a collection among members, in others special fund raising events (e.g. garage/boot sales, raffles, or auctions) were organised. Some national communities still to be incorporated as full members of the world community volunteered to support us. Moreover, various ecclesiastical Jesuit assistants did their part to promote the project in their national communities: economic

co-responsibility is also a key area of the Jesuit-lay collaboration. The campaign was at



ExCo in front of the apartment

and so many needs in the world would it not be better to invest that money in them?" If we

² It seems that even during the time of the World Federation of Marian Congregations there was not any such financial project at world level

its peak from June 2011 to August 2012. At various times, it felt like a telethon: not knowing until the last minute whether we will manage to collect the money needed.

To be honest, we admit we had our moments of desolation. Some of the desolation was due to our own uncertainty and lack of faith. Would we meet our goal? And if not what's next? On the other hand, some of the desolation was because of disagreement. In a community not everyone can agree on everything. That's not a problem, but a constant challenge of discernment. However, the problem or impasse was because we received some, but strong, disagreement and criticism. Furthermore, - humbly and personally - we must recognize that the disagreements and criticisms hurt us because it felt as if we were disapproving ourselves. Anyway to be honest the disagreements were few and small. Seeing that most of the community was in favour was a sign that we should go forward.

Many said they did not have the means but helped by encouraging their communities or other donors. We also received some individual sizeable donations. We owe a great gratitude to these donors. We have also received many small donations but of great symbolic value: people with few resources and poor communities have contributed "the widow's mite" (Lk. 21:1-4). There, is the greatest consolation! How can we not be moved by the generosity of those who have little and give a lot? This dream was possible because many people believed in it and dedicated their energies and resources to making it happen.

We were looking for a name for the house, how to enhance our identity and recover our history. Who have been the key people in the history of CLC and its secretariat? Before answering we need to provide some historical context. The Jesuit Secretariat for the Marian Congregations began in Rome in 1924 and the first secretary was Adalbertus Bangha sj (Hungary). There was time when we had five

Jesuits working in this office. Then at the time of transition from the Marian Congregations to the CLC (1960's) there was discussions on who should take over the Secretariat. We must remember that it was the time of Vatican II with strong winds blowing toward greater lay autonomy. It was agreed that it was logical that the secretaries should be lay rather than Jesuits and that CLC should



Celebrating Mass in the apartment

gradually assume the costs of the office. Thus, the Jesuit Secretariat for the Marian Congregations became the CLC Secretariat; headed by a lay person who is now called the executive secretary. Within this history of nearly a century of the Secretariat, we were looking for a name for our house. Several suggestions emerged, but the strongest were two: Louis Paulussen sj (Netherlands) and Josée Gsell (France). They helped a lot in the setting up of the CLC Secretariat at the time of transition and re-foundation. Being a lay community, we favoured Josée Gsell. We consulted with members of the past ExCos or World Councils - some ExCo members were from the 1960's and 70's. They, who were there during the renewal of CLC, held Josée in much esteem.

Housing is a long-term undertaking. So a key issue was to discern if we the Secretariat

would remain in Rome for a long time. I described the house as a sacrament for the world community and thus having a special value. Hopefully the new generations will see it like this! Our Ignatian spirit encourages us towards a permanent openness and availability. In the current context of the Community, the Church and the Society of Jesus, it seems that it is best to stay in Rome. But we do not know what will happen in the future. Perhaps new generations of CLC Secretariat will move to another place in order to express greater solidarity with the

poor or for economic reasons. Perhaps at some point we would need to mortgage or sell the house to fulfil the demands of our mission. A property should not decide the direction of the mission: on the contrary! We hope that the communities of the future will be faithful to the spirit behind this project. In this they will act out of freedom. The important thing is to get where the firsts arrived and even farther into the Lord's Love.

*Franklin Ibáñez
World Executive Secretary
Original in Spanish*



The apartment is located on the ground floor of this building

³ More information about Josée Gsell, see the articles of Brigitte Minier and Cora Sim in this magazine or in Progressio Supplement 52-53

Josée Gsell House

What a great idea it is to give the name, Josée Gsell, to the Executive Secretary's residence in Rome. Why? First of all, because Josée gave 16 years of her life and spent them as the Executive Secretary in Rome from 1970 to 1986. Succeeding Edythe Westenhaver (1965-1970), Josée virtually created the worldwide Secretariat as we know it now... although since then computers have replaced typewriters!

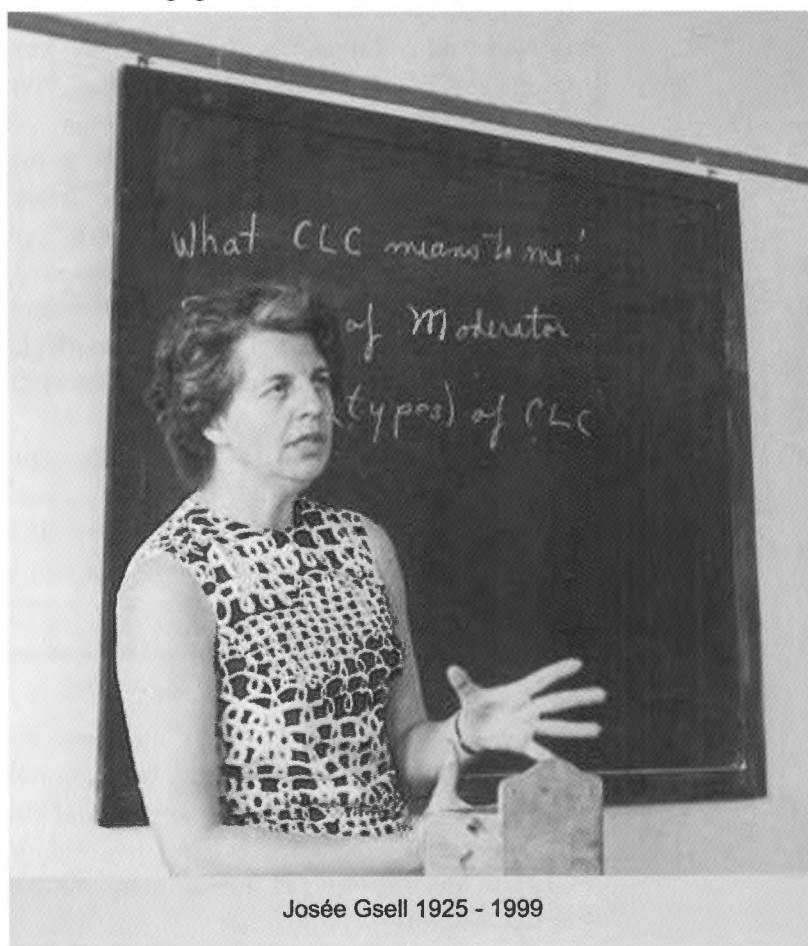
Rereading the *Progressio* Supplement No. 52/53 (December 1999) dedicated to her: "Josée Gsell: An Ignatian Woman", we see all the talents that she had used in the service of the community. Throughout the pages, each of the authors attempts to put into words all the facets of this rich personality!

I will gladly keep this expression of Father José Antonio Esquivel, sj, about Josée: "effectively tender and tenderly effective". He adds: "God willing, one day there will be a Supplement of *Progressio* about the influence women had on the life experience and charism of CLC, a publication that would illustrate the decisive and important role women have played for the last 25 years (more than 35 now!) in the life and the way of CLC. They are so numerous that it would be unfair to name a few. I must say, however, that Josée Gsell is the one that would be at the head of the "women of Israel" of CLC.

Many of those who have seen her were pleased by her exceptional spiritual and intellectual qualities. A woman of prayer and faith, she personified "discerning love in action". Everything she said arose from her own prayerful relationship with Jesus, God's wisdom. Positively imperturbable, balanced, centered, peaceful, she carried in her heart the joys and pain of the world, just as the Trinity's heart feels the joys and sorrows of creation pondering a response (Sp.Ex. 102). And often, I think, in private she wept with Jesus over Jerusalem. But she was also overflowing with

joy, with a contagious sense of humor. "She skillfully told stories which she enjoyed more than those who were conversing with her", said John P. Milan (Canada). He adds: "She took pleasure, however, in an extraordinary sense of how the Holy Spirit works in the world, both in the large community activities as well as in the small events of everyday life."

In rereading the history of CLC in the footsteps of Fred Leone, all through the changes in CLC from the Federation of Marian Congregations, to the World Federation of Christian Life Communities, to the World Christian Life Communities and finally to the world Christian Life Community, Josée was a "linchpin" quite central and vital. She was a simple yet profound, a quiet spiritual woman and yet firm; all engaged in her call. She had to



Josée Gsell 1925 - 1999

integrate all the results, in the midst of confusion and translate them into positive actions. It was similar for the General



World Executive Secretary 1971-1986

Principles, the importance of the Spiritual Exercises, the SURVEY, PROGRESSIO, the many travels on all continents, the meetings of the EXCO, the training courses, the world assemblies, etc. "Josée was a missionary in the true sense of the word. She was indefatigable, tenacious, constant, persistent and dedicated to God", adds Father Esquivel. Ingeborg Von Grabštejn sums up the role of Josée: "We could say that virtually nothing of what has been achieved during these years came without a substantial contribution of Josée. However, everything she undertook was not by her own initiative, but it was designed, identified, and accomplished with other companions". Is this not why we are invited to live as Ignatian companions following Christ?

For my part, I had the joy of meeting Josée on her return to France. She hosted many regional meetings where her experience and her spiritual depth were awe-inspiring. She came

to visit my region and her presence gave everyone the sense of growing up in the knowledge of Christ and CLC. I had the immense privilege of participating with her in the animation of a training session for group guides. I was still young and fairly inexperienced but I never had the feeling of my 'smallness'! She was a woman of great merit! This meeting was an immense grace for me. She kept a compassionate eye on everyone and knew how to guide without being authoritarian. She listened to all and constantly sought to intervene positively allowing the other to profit from what was taking place. She was gentle yet firm, exacting but flexible, rigorous and conscious of the reality.

But perhaps what touches me most, in the dedication of the house in Rome to Josée, was that I had the immense privilege to be welcomed in her small home in Colmar in 1995. I was struck by her sense of hospitality. Her apartment was simple but charming, decorated with taste but without ostentation. It was both functional and comfortable. And above all, Josée was an outstanding homemaker! She could prepare a great meal in a few minutes, and what a meal! The Alsatian gastronomy held no secrets for her! Available and attentive, to spend a few hours in her company was a grace for which I am extremely grateful.

For all these reasons, it seems to me particularly welcome, fair and sensible to dedicate the Roman 'home' of the World CLC Executive Secretary to Josée who, I am sure, next to the Father, continues to watch over CLC with tenderness.

*Brigitte Minier
ExCo member from 1998 to 2003
Original in French*

Josée would certainly have approved the CLC house project in Rome, but I am not so sure she would feel the same way about the house being named after her. Now it is for CLC to decide how to honour her and the legacy she left.

I lived for some time with Josée, and worked with her for nine years at the CLC World Secretariat from 1977 to 1986. She was one of the members of the Executive Council who decided that the World Secretariat should be a reflection of the "world" and so

I was offered a position in Rome after the World Assembly in Manila '76, because I was Asian. Up to the present, this "world" dimension continues to be reflected in the Secretariat.

I mentioned at the beginning that she will be happy at the realization of this house project. She understood the struggle and difficulties of one coming from outside Italy, and outside Europe for that matter, to the extent that she gladly offered the comfort of her apartment when I found myself unable to rent one at the beginning of my stay. I had to move six times before finally finding a place in the suburbs.

It is a privilege to have had these nine years with Josée, to have been able to share a little bit in her own joy and suffering as well. Among our simple "joys" were the times she returned from trips to Colmar, bringing "goodies" ("foie gras" among other delicious food) from "charcuteries" and "boulangeries" back home! How much we enjoyed them.

Her dedication to CLC was 24/7, in the language of today's world. It meant receiving a phone call in the early hours of the morning, informing her that there was a fire at the Secretariat and having to go to the office at once.

She had to carry the weight of incomprehension from a member of the Secretariat itself and the repercussions this had on the whole CLC for quite a long time. I could sense the pain she was going through and imagine she must have been bringing all this to Our Lady where she would be on Sundays when she was in Rome, attending Mass at the Gesù and spending hours at the

chapel of Madonna della Strada.

My relationship with Josée was not limited to work alone. In January 1984, when I was left alone in the office - Josée was in Latin America at the time - I had to attend to a Filipina migrant worker who was very seriously ill in hospital. When Josée returned I informed her I was not able to do any work at the Secretariat because I was helping the Filipina woman during these weeks. There was never a reproach. She understood the situation I was in.

I remember her concerns too, in 1986, during the period of the peaceful revolution in the Philippines which led to the ouster of Ferdinand Marcos, then the dictator president. As internet, skype, twitter, facebook were not commodities easily available more than 20 years ago, my ears were glued to the radio, listening to developments. Josée would come to check every so often to know what was going on... until I said "he (Marcos) has left!" "What

are you doing here, go and celebrate with your friends!" she told me.

In about a year's time I will be retiring and will return to the Philippines, after more than 30 years in Rome. I will have a home to go back to, a flat I own, thanks to Josée.

This was one of the most significant pieces of advice she gave: no matter what happens, make sure to save up and invest in a house, no matter how small.

This is the importance Josée gave to a home, and it is right that the CLC house in Rome should be named in her honour.

I will have a home to go back to, a flat I own, thanks to Josée. This was one of the most significant pieces of advice she gave: no matter what happens, make sure to save up and invest in a house, no matter how small

The Church goes into action in R.D. Congo

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the 1st August is a paid public holiday for everyone. The people of the Congo pay homage to the dead in the morning, and the afternoon is dedicated to a festival for parents. This year the day was very special. The Catholic Church, through the National Bishops' Conference of the Congo (CENCO) organised a march of Hope. This continued the series of activities that the CENCO, during its last plenary Assembly, had decided to take to show its disapproval of the balkanisation of the country, with regard to the politico-military situation that currently exists in the Congo. In the communiqué published at the end of their last plenary Assembly, the Bishops stated that the Catholic Church of the Congo intended to undertake a series of actions in order to express to public opinion, both national and international, its disapproval of the balkanisation manifestly at work under the impetus of international economic powers making use of corruption within as well as outside our national borders. This march organised in the 47 dioceses of the country is one of these actions which will thus be

followed by others.

There are several points to note. In Kinshasa, the capital, because of the extent of the town, the march left from different parishes (there are 135 of them) towards the 14 deaneries in the Archdiocese, flanked efficiently by the security forces. Reports from the provinces informed us that the demonstration went off peacefully. Goma was different, because the Christians decided on

three days of prayer instead. The Vicar General of this diocese considered that the decision not to march was the right one, in order to avoid possible sabotage by ill-intentioned individuals.



Jean-Paul BIRURU

In Lubumbashi, the 1st August was preceded by three days of prayer in the parishes. Christians, men, women and children, from every parish, assembled at the entrance to Kitumaini College. Led by the Vicar General, Monsignor Moto, and assisted by a group of priests, the crowd of the faithful, joined readily by adherents of other denominations and people of goodwill, set out towards the Cathedral of Sts Peter and Paul, accompanied by traffic police. The huge association of Catholic Mothers, charismatic groups and other movements stood out. Members of CLC-Lubumbashi joined the groups from their respective parishes. As elsewhere, banners were used, on which could be read "No to the balkanisation of the RDC", "No to the looting of our resources", "The Democratic Republic of the Congo is one and indivisible", "Love, Fraternity, Patriotism, Unity". Along the main roads of the town hymns and the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary were chanted. At the square in front of the Cathedral, the statement from the Bishops was read in French, then in Swahili by the Vicar General, giving the reasons for this demonstration. Chief among these was the recalling of over 6 million deaths since 1997, without the international community being moved to anger. Before that, there was a special prayer of collective repentance to acknowledge our own weaknesses concerning the evils afflicting the

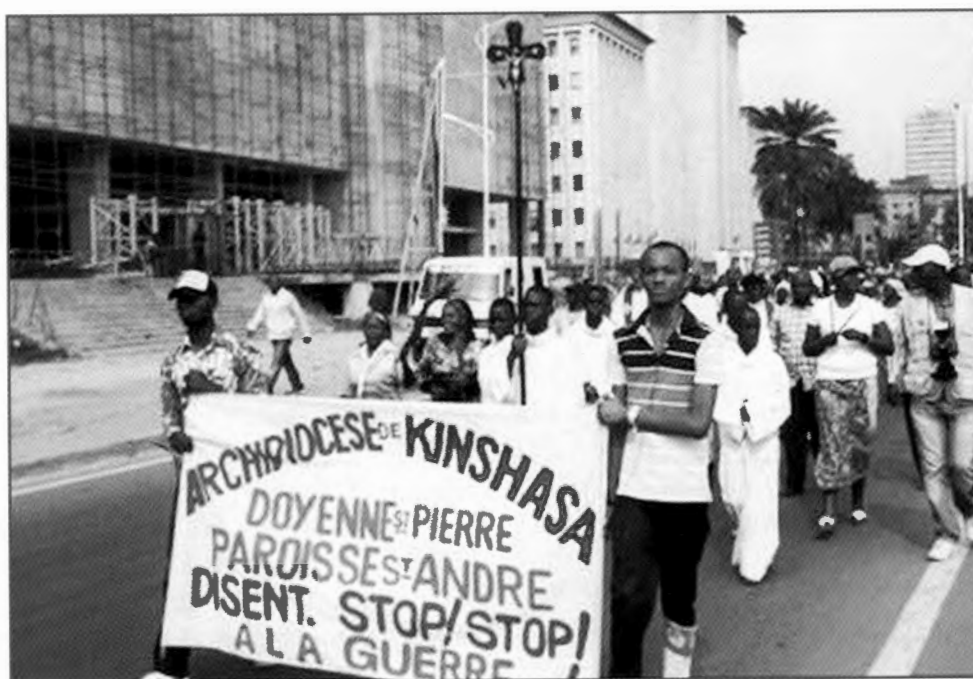
the National Bishops' Conference of the Congo, during its last plenary Assembly, had decided to take to show its disapproval of the balkanisation of the country, with regard to the politico-military situation that currently exists in the Congo

country. At the end, not without emotion, the Archbishop gave the blessing, thanking all the participants with particular emphasis on those of other denominations and civil authorities, including the mayor of the town.

After this gathering, the CLC members spontaneously came together for a rapid evaluation of the event and their own participation. It was an opportunity for us to recall the years of the 'liberation' marked by innumerable atrocities – we were far from forgetting the burial alive of a large group of women at Kasika, South-Kivu – which the CLC, together with other groups and movements, denounced through press releases. We discovered that the act of collective repentance that we had just experienced in front of the cathedral had a special meaning for us, because we had given up this means of awareness, of consciousness-

raising and of denunciation which we had embarked on and followed for three years. The number of dead mentioned by the bishops, the uninterrupted pursuit of atrocities in the east of the country, the criminal exploitation of resources by the great powers – Rwanda profiting hugely – which they make great use of, not the local populations – the threat of balkanisation, this picture brought us back powerfully to these words "What have you done for Christ? What are you doing for Christ? What will you do for Christ?" The initiative of our pastors in these difficult times has brought back vividly to mind the appeal by our World Ecclesiastical Assistant, Father Nicolas, at Fatima, for us to take on the prophetic call from the Lord as part of our identity in becoming a community on mission, an apostolic community.

*Jean-Paul Biruru
CLC-Lubumbashi/RD Congo
World ExCo Member
Original in French*



IS ANOTHER WORLD POSSIBLE?

Rio+20 The future we want

“Rio+20” is the short name for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012 – twenty years after the landmark 1992 Earth Summit in Rio.

The CLC coordinator of Apostolic Activities and International Advocacy was present on behalf of World CLC. He shares with us his thoughts on what he saw there.

The Center-Periphery perspective

June 21, 2012

Quite a number of big words and concepts, such as DIGNITY, RESLIENCE, EQUITY, and so on, have been heard in the RIO+20 Summit. All of them clearly represent a reasonable standpoint, and we find them important and interesting. In the Summit, we have even heard those words and concepts in the context of the slogan “ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE.”

The main problem we see, which turns into an unethical social-structural model of our world

system today, is that there are interests with incomparable dimensions, and which represent the highest scale of the most important corporate groups, ones that have no nationality. They don't need such identity due to the fact they're immersed in a global scheme that is created and reproduced along the paths they themselves have set.

These corporate groups and their interests have such power that we can smell their positions all around this Summit through some NGO discourses and member States, but mostly through the CENTER-PERIPHERY logic which structures the world today, and that has a

strong influence on the dialogues among Nations and organizations in this very Summit.

Here at the Rio+20 Summit, we can sense and confirm the CENTER-PERIPHERY perspective at a conceptual level, where the intensive promotion of the GREEN ECONOMY category is setting the rhythm of discussions. GE is establishing the market mechanisms and rationale as the organizing axis of society. The GE concept, as perceived by some experts that spoke at this Summit, reaffirms the central position of agro-businesses and big corporations as the foundation to overcome poverty, and relies on itself to solve everything else as a consequence of its correct implementation.

But there are always doubts and questions around these issues related to the CENTER-PERIPHERY approach. The main problem in this context is that most major decisions were already made by the representatives of the CENTER position. This presence gains force in those statements that affirm there's no need for a structural change in our societies at a world level. They trust that it will be sufficient to green up the already existing development model which has led our way for the past decades, and so we should focus mostly on mitigating the impacts which some wrongfully present as “externalities.” This category is wrong because these so-called “externalities” are not random or external and calling them that way takes away every responsibility for the consequences of decisions made out of a market and consumption-centered standpoint, intending to make the highest profit possible regardless of the impact on communities and societies.



We find those voices all around this Rio+20 Summit trying to convince us that we are all being heard, and that we assist in a deeply democratic event. But while we participate here, we can see how decisions and discussions took place months ago, and that the idea that economic growth, dressed in green, is the only way out of this global crisis.

Experiencing the CENTER-PERIPHERY reality in this Summit is truly worrying, but it's even more alarming to imagine and confirm how most of the grassroots social movements, organizations, and minority groups who are taking part in the CÚPULA DE LOS PUEBLOS (civil society's alternative event) don't seem to have any possible way, formal or informal, to connect their demands and objectives into this "democratic" event of the globalized world.

The germinal is in the marginal: Another world is possible

June 25, 2012

The philosopher Martin Buber wrote in his essay *"I and Thou"* that humanity is going through an extremely stressing moment, where it's very difficult to find alternatives. According to Buber, despite these times or perhaps because of them, humankind will find hope. If Buber is right, then another world is actually possible.

In the context of Rio+20, we experienced once again the unilateral leading voices that set the path. Nevertheless, Rio+20 is a call to be more attentive to other perspectives, precisely to those coming from the margins. We're able to find in those margins the most hopeful and germinal proposals of the Summit.

Today we wish to pay more attention to these perspectives coming from the margins, local experiences full of hope:

1. The official document of this Summit was unanimously rejected by NGOs due to the poor achievements. This shows that the

last word was not said on this matter. It looks like civil society is leaving behind a naive position and expresses its maturity when opposing the superficiality of the final agreement.

2. From one meeting room to another at the NGOs' pavilion, prophetic voices were



heard – full of hope and proposing that only a change of paradigm is the way out of this crisis. Only marginalized groups of peasants and minorities, those who in fact keep more harmonic relations with the environment and follow communal practices, are the ones truly resilient. As Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator stated, the oppressed will liberate the oppressors, and along with them, the entire unjust structures of society. This was witnessed at the People's Summit, and while obviously limited, this participative experience showed that much more democratic mechanisms are necessary to fulfill the global context.

3. Bio systems are beyond national borders and they function as living entities that can't be fragmented.

Understanding this will help societies to see beyond particular interests, and to learn how to move forward from our dying paradigms.

The main problem in this context is that most major decisions were already made by the representatives of the CENTER position

4. Some specific governments are leaving behind the traditional poverty measurement indices. They are using new indices that try to measure the sense of happiness, good living, meaningful



RIO+20 **el futuro** **que queremos** →

existence, or other more subjective and significant perspectives. It would be interesting to combine these with the more conventional indices.

5. Small countries presented the most crucial issues and challenging solutions. They may be seen as almost irrelevant for those defining the agendas. The notion of small and marginal as truly germinal was a determinant for Rio+20's outcome and horizons. Small is beautiful, as the British economist EF Schumacher stated many decades ago.
5. In responding to the apparent failure of Rio+20, what is emerging is that new

perspectives and solutions will have to come from collective agendas, or these will never be implemented. National groups previously viewed as marginal in the UN, such as the G-77 and China bloc, are becoming more visible and influential, especially at a time when the current global crisis is affecting more those nations that are self-assumed as their unquestionable elites.

Undoubtedly we still have a long way to go until these emerging perspectives become solid and generate peaceful transitions. However, speaking about ecology implies the challenge to understand the relationships and rhythms in living systems. Let us keep our hopes up, especially the young people around the world who are discovering their critical role in changing the status quo. Their demands, and many more, should eventually lead us in developing the diversity of responses needed, some of which are presently coming from the margins

Mauricio López Oropeza
World ExCo Member
Original in Spanish

For Reflection...

- What are our first reactions and perceptions about the issue of ecology? How much do we understand and how do we feel about the issue?
- As Christian members of the Ignatian family what do need before we can take this issue on as a priority essential to our identity and what do we need to do to integrate it seriously into our work?
- As Ignatian communities and individuals what invitations have we received from the God of life with regard to the environment? What can we do about this?

Pan-African Congress of Catholic Laity

Yaounde, Cameroon 4-9 september 2012

*The Lay Faithful: Protagonists of the New Evangelization in Africa.
Salt of the Earth... Light of the World.*

The congress was an incredible gathering of laity from 35 countries of Africa South of the Sahara. Many came through their Episcopal conferences, while even more were from the Lay Ecclesial movements, of which there were 40. It was a particularly great consolation to meet so many committed laity who have found in New Ecclesial movements the way to live their Christian vocation more deeply.

The formal Congress itself was a full and fast-moving schedule with various speeches and plenary question sessions. Most of the speeches were given by members or associates of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, and centered on the Pontifical Documents especially *Christifidelis Laici* 1988, *Ecclesia in Africa* 1995, and *Africae Munus* 2011. All these were set in the context of the realities on the ground in Africa, where the emphasis was placed on the socio-economic challenges, security threats and cultural imperialism of which the continent does not seem to have either control or mechanisms to apprehend. Perhaps more emphasis might also have been placed on the richness of the continent of Africa in its diverse cultural heritage, which is a huge resource for the deepening of the evangelizing mission of the Church.

The presence of CLC in Africa was visible in the Congress. Not only were Etienne Kimessoukie from Cameroun and Edel Churu from Kenya directly representing CLC, but in addition and to our great joy, Thomas Théophile Nug and Wilfried Ntolo of Cameroun and Gilbert Morba from Chad were also in attendance, delegates for their dioceses and in the case of Wilfried Ntolo for the youth of Cameroun. It was a witness of our leadership and active participation in our local Churches, a beautiful and visible sign of maturity in CLC. On one evening, the CLC participants held a meeting during which we exchanged on our experience of the Congress

and also on developments in CLC in our countries. This was very enriching, supportive and challenging. This brief report is mainly a summary of that conversation with regard to the Congress.

Besides the formal program, much energy and enthusiasm was generated around the topics of the education of the laity into full participation in the life of the Church and of the world – the vocation that is proper to them. The congress might have taken greater advantage of the fact that many of the laity present would have been able to lead discussions into the pontifical documents with due alacrity and competence. Many of the participants were keenly conscious that the Congress might have been an occasion for deeper discussion of some of the issues, had there been provision for workshops, for example. Nevertheless, this lack was made up for in the informal sessions wherein tremendously rich exchanges were taking place. It was truly a revelation of the action of God's grace in the various communities.

This congress was also an opportunity for many countries and sub regions to realize the potential of the African laity to contribute to the New Evangelization. Several meetings between national and /or sub-regional delegates were organized impromptu by the delegates to galvanize the creation or revitalisation of national and sub-regional Councils of Laity. We hope that CLC will be active in enabling those structures to grow and bear fruit, contributing our particular gifts and expertise, especially in the formation programs for youth and laity.

Edel Churu (World Exco Consultor) y Etienne Kimessoukie (CLC Africa Regional Coordinator)



Ignatius and infertility:

What the pilgrim saint has taught us about this journey

*Adapted and expanded from an article originally published in Harvest,
the publication of CLC-USA*



Angelique Ruhi-López and Carmen Santamaría

Fifteen years ago, we sat on a bus and chatted nonstop during a four-hour ride home in the middle of the night after our high school's senior class trip. Little did we know that this conversation—in which with youthful idealism we talked about our families, our plans for the future, and our common Catholic faith—would change us from acquaintances to lifelong friends.

Though we were companions on a different kind of journey at the time, God cemented our friendship as he knew we would share in many other journeys together: graduations and celebrations, first jobs and first dates, breakups and breakdowns, weddings and funerals, and vacations and vocations.

Of all of our shared life experiences, it is perhaps infertility that has been the most complex and formative for us, not only as friends, but also as Catholics. We are eternally grateful to God for giving us the gift of each other as spiritual companions on this life-altering journey of infertility."

Thus begins the book that we co-authored entitled, *"The Infertility Companion for Catholics: Spiritual and Practical Support for*

Couples," which was recently published in the United States by Ave Maria Press and is the first book of its kind to offer medical, emotional and spiritual support from a Catholic perspective to help couples bear the cross of infertility.

Though we have each had different experiences on our infertility journeys, we have both grown in faith and trust in God and have learned how to employ the tools of Ignatian spirituality to guide our decisions during this challenging time. We share some of our experiences and perspectives in the hopes that they may help both those bearing this cross as well help anyone who may know someone experiencing infertility empathize with these challenges.

Carmen's perspective

Infertility is a silent suffering that approximately one in six couples faces today. As Catholic Christians, it can be especially difficult to bear the cross of infertility. Christians can find in God's word passages such as, "You will be blessed above all peoples; no man or woman among you shall be childless nor shall your livestock be barren." (Deut 7:14) This is called a blessing of obedience. For me, as someone who has tried to remain faithful to God and "obedient," to not receive this blessing is a heavy cross indeed. Wanting a child is a natural and beautiful desire so to have this desire remain unfulfilled is heartbreaking.

In the book of Exodus 23:26, it also states that the reward of fidelity is that "no woman in your land will be barren or miscarry; and I will give you a full span of life." Infertility can lead to jealousy, bitterness and hardness of heart. We can easily lose sight of the desired child as a gift and begin to view the child as a right.

My husband Alejandro and I have experienced over four years of infertility following the birth

of our second child and we continue to walk this path. Secondary infertility, which is infertility after having had a biological child, presents many of the same challenges as primary infertility as well as some unique trials. The Catholic Church's position is that the dignity of all people is always to be respected. This is the reason why the Church has stood firmly against so many so-called fertility "treatments." As Ignatian discernment teaches us, we can only decide between two goods yet many of the so-called solutions the world offers us to infertility are considered to be intrinsically evil by our Catholic faith.

Infertility presents many crossroads, and the opportunity to remain faithful to God has been an opportunity for growth, including in our understanding of Ignatian discernment. The rules of discernment offer advice that we can apply throughout the journey of infertility.

Throughout the process, it is important to remain in prayer. A Jesuit once told me the practice of the daily examen would allow me to see the lights onto the path I should follow. Though not always with the greatest fidelity, my husband and I have used the prayer throughout our marriage, including our infertile years. Ignatian spirituality helped us have the tools to see the path when all seemed dark. This doesn't mean the path was easy or inviting at times.

There were points we wished we could turn around, but we knew we had to choose for the greater glory of God, not for our own glory. With the years of infertility came years of retreats as well. I can see myself praying through the Spiritual Exercises as I walk this road, uniting my life to Christ as I have learned about him in silence. I remember being on a retreat when we were discerning adoption and on another retreat after receiving a potential placement for adoption. There are moments that stand out as more difficult and others where the hand of God is clearly visible.

Angelique's perspective

Experiencing infertility while trying to conceive our first child came as a big surprise to my husband and me. We just took for

granted that we would be able to conceive when we decided we were ready, particularly since we practice Natural Family Planning (NFP), the Catholic Church's accepted way to track a woman's fertility signs. Nothing in our NFP charts indicated we would have any trouble conceiving and yet months would pass with no positive pregnancy test.

The heartbreak and loneliness of infertility can be among the most challenging times in a couple's marriage and in their faith life. It can cause us to feel resentment, anger and hopelessness in what can seem like a never-ending desert. But it can also be an opportunity to grow closer – both to one another and to God

The heartbreak and loneliness of infertility can be among the most challenging times in a couple's marriage and in their faith life. It can cause us to feel resentment, anger and hopelessness in what can seem like a never-ending desert. But it can also be an opportunity to grow closer – both to one another and to God – as we trust in His plans.

When we proclaim our Catholic wedding vows of pledging to honor one another in sickness and health, we likely aren't thinking infertility. Similarly, Ignatius's Principle and Foundation says we should not "prefer health to sickness"—or, in this case, fertility to infertility. As difficult as it is, we should pray for God to grant us the grace of indifference so that we may be open to the outcome toward which God is guiding us.

For me and my husband, our particular charisms of Ignatian spirituality helped us along the road and presented us with concrete ways to help re-shift our focus on God instead of merely constantly on our desired child. When we felt God was calling us to decide between adoption and licit Catholic treatment

options (called NaProTechnology – <http://www.fertilitycare.org/>), the best way we knew how to determine where God's promptings were leading us was through Ignatian discernment. Infertility can make us feel so lost and confused; Ignatian discernment helps to provide a bit more clarity as we listen for God's voice and choose with Him how to proceed.

Ignatius and infertility

Another companion we have both had on the journey of infertility and in writing this book is St. Ignatius of Loyola, who we both encountered through our involvement in CLC and our participation in the Spiritual Exercises. Below are excerpts from *The Infertility Companion for Catholics* that demonstrate how St. Ignatius was instrumental in helping provide spiritual fruit for the journey of infertility:

The Principle and Foundation



St. Ignatius of Loyola begins his Spiritual Exercises with what he calls the Principle and Foundation. This is the starting point of the Exercises because, in order to make wise decisions and follow Christ, St. Ignatius felt we first needed to understand our purpose. Like Genesis, the Principle and Foundation points to being created in God's image.

The first sentence of the Principle and Foundation says: "Human beings are

created...." St. Ignatius wants to emphasize our creaturehood and, as such, remind us of the fact that we are not God, despite our desire to become like God (Gn 2:16–17). Because we are not God, we cannot create on our own accord. So when we conceive a child, we co-create with God and could not do so by any other means. "In [God's] hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind" (Jb 12:10). This foundation is critical to the infertility journey since being grounded in this reality of our creaturehood and purpose illuminates the decisions and challenges infertility brings.

Discernment

In the discernment process, we are drawn closer to God by choosing to do his will. We have learned from the time we were young that we should never knowingly choose wrong. So in the case of infertility, a proper discernment cannot be made, for example, between Catholic treatments, which are licit, and in vitro fertilization, which is illicit. The Christian may only choose between two (or more) good, moral options. We are called to the *magis*, a Latin term that St. Ignatius often used that loosely means "the greater good." In the end, discernment can be simplified by asking the question, "What is the more loving or life giving thing to do?" Having the tools of discernment was critical to our infertility journeys and allowed us to make prayerful decisions along the way.

Challenges to Discernment

A friend of mine used to always say that holiness lies outside of our comfort zones, and sometimes stepping out of what we know is what God asks of us. Sometimes when we are making decisions, we are afraid to invite God into the decision-making process because we fear him wanting something for us that we don't want for ourselves. God is such a loving Father, and we cannot even imagine the kind of joy that he wants for us. This can mean considering adoption as a way God may be calling us to parenthood or making lifestyle changes that are difficult in order to help treat an underlying med-

ical problem that can be affecting our infertility. Knowing that God guided our decisions and not our own will can be comforting especially when challenges arise.

And what if you and your spouse discern how to proceed along the infertility journey and you find you're not on the same page? What if one wants to continue to pursue treatments and the other doesn't? One cannot force another to do something against his or her will any more than God forces us to do his will. Everyone has free will, and just because one person is not ready to act or move does not mean they won't be ready later on. After all, it is God's time that is best. Or perhaps God is speaking through one spouse in trying to guide the other. Either way, frustration may result at not being on the same page, but very few decisions are final. There is always an opportunity to rediscern in the future.

St Ignatius and his ways have helped us to find peace and purpose in our infertility. The best way to sum up the lessons we have learned, as well as our desire for our book is the prayer

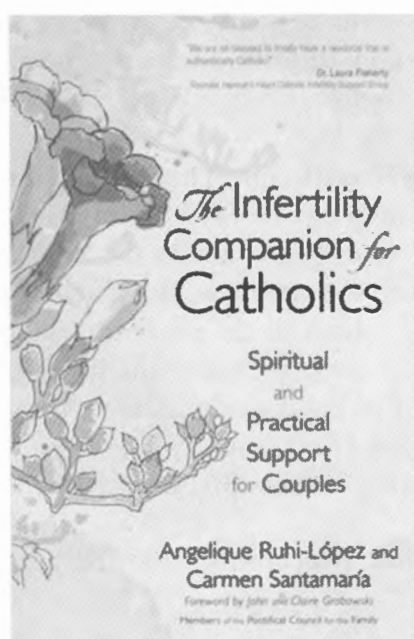
toward the end of the Spiritual Exercises (234), commonly referred to as the Suscipe:

*Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding,
and my entire will,
All I have and call my own.
You have given all to me.
To you, Lord, I return it.
Everything is yours;
do with it what you will.
Give me only your love and your grace,
that is enough for me.
Everything is yours, Lord.*

More than ever I find myself in the hands of God. This is what I have wanted all my life from my youth. But now there is a difference; the initiative is entirely with God. It is indeed a profound spiritual experience to know and feel myself so totally in God's hands.

Pedro Arrupe

Carmen Santamaria and
Angelique Ruhi-López



The book written by Angelique and Carmen which was recently published in the United States by Ave Maria Press and is the first book of its kind to offer medical, emotional and spiritual support from a Catholic perspective to help couples bear the cross of infertility.

Can be purchased on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

The Year of Faith

The Year of Faith began on 11 October 2012, the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, and it will end on the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Universal King, on 24 November 2013.



**YEAR OF FAITH 2012
2013**

7. “*Caritas Christi urget nos*” (2 Cor 5:14): it is the love of Christ that fills our hearts and impels us to evangelize. Today as in the past, he sends us through the highways of the world to proclaim his Gospel to all the peoples of the earth (cf. Mt 28:19). Through his love, Jesus Christ attracts to himself the people of every generation: in every age he convokes the Church, entrusting her with the proclamation of the Gospel by a mandate that is ever new. Today too, there is a need for stronger ecclesial commitment to new evangelization in order to rediscover the joy of believing and the enthusiasm for communicating the faith. In rediscovering his love day by day, the missionary commitment of believers attains force and vigour that can never fade away. Faith grows when it is lived as an experience of love received and when it is communicated as an experience of grace and joy. It makes us fruitful, because it expands our hearts in hope and enables us to bear life-giving witness: indeed, it opens the hearts and minds of those who listen to respond to the Lord’s invitation to adhere

to his word and become his disciples. Believers, so Saint Augustine tells us, “strengthen themselves by believing”... Only through believing, then, does faith grow and become stronger; there is no other possibility for possessing certitude with regard to one’s life apart from self-abandonment, in a continuous crescendo, into the hands of a love that seems to grow constantly because it has its origin in God.

15. Having reached the end of his life, Saint Paul asks his disciple Timothy to “aim at faith” (2 Tim 2:22) with the same constancy as when he was a boy (cf. 2 Tim 3:15). We hear this invitation directed to each of us, that none of us grow lazy in the faith. It is the lifelong companion that makes it possible to perceive, ever anew, the marvels that God works for us. Intent on gathering the signs of the times in the present of history, faith commits every one of us to become a living sign of the presence of the Risen Lord in the world. What the world is in particular need of today is the credible witness of people enlightened in mind and heart by the word of the Lord, and capable of opening the hearts and minds of many to the desire for God and for true life, life without end.

Let us entrust this time of grace to the Mother of God, proclaimed “blessed because she believed” (Lk 1:45).

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI (Taken from the Apostolic Letter “**MOTU PROPRIO**” **PORTA FIDEI** For The indiction of the Year of Faith)

CLC's Path in Lithuania

Shortly about Lithuania and its history

The Republic of Lithuania is a country in Northern Europe situated along the south-eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. Lithuania has an estimated population of 3 million and occupies a total area of 65,300 km². Its capital is Vilnius. The Lithuanians are a Baltic people, and the official language, Lithuanian, is one of only two living languages (together with Latvian) in the Baltic branch of the Indo-European language family.

The Lithuanian history begins with the unification of the Lithuanian tribes by Mindaugas, in the middle of the XIIIth century. This period was also one of the Christianization of the population, which changes from paganism to Catholicism or to Orthodoxy by the conversion of its political elite. The current territory of Lithuania is then integrated into the Russian Empire, until its independence on 16 February 1918.

The new republic disappears again in 1940 by the occupation of the Soviet Union at the beginning of World War II and in accordance with Nazi-Soviet pact of August 1939. After the four-year German occupation (1941-1944), sufficient to destroy the Jewish presence in the country, one of the largest in Europe, Lithuania is again absorbed by the Soviet Union from 1945 to 1990. It has therefore regained its independence since the early 1990s.

Lithuania is a member of NATO, the Council of Europe and the European Union since 2004 and is part of the Schengen area since 2007.

History of CLC Lithuania

The first community, at the time Marial Congregation, in Lithuania and Vilnius was founded by father Stanislovas Varševickis sj in 1573. There are indications that the community existed during years of Lithuania's first independence (1918 - 1940). It was also known as the Marial Congregation. After the "Iron Curtain" collapsed and Lithuania regained its independence, the renewal of CLC began in 1998 - 2000: when in Kaunas were created two groups which were captured by the CLC way of life.

Two main impulses that led to the creation of new groups should be mentioned: the experience of Spiritual Exercises (SpEx) led by Jesuits and designation of Ecclesiastical Assistant (EA), father Stasys Kazėnas sj.

On February 2003 the first meeting of representatives of the six small local communities took place in Kaunas. During this meeting the first National Formation Group was established also as the future National Exco (or Service group) and the first President of the Community (Vilija Malinauskienė) was elected. It was also decided to appeal to the World CLC in order to appoint the godfathers for Lithuania CLC. French CLC became the godfathers of Lithuania CLC. In autumn of 2003 the talks, concerning creation of Statute for CLC Lithuania, appeared. In 2005 Aldona Mickevičienė was elected as the President of community. In 2006 the request for a worldwide community of CLC was typed. At the time there were already 13 local communities, linking more than 100 people, in Lithuania.



Kristina Rankelytė

Currently (in 2012) there are 206 members, representing 24 groups located in seven cities in Lithuania (Vilnius - 6 cluster, Kaunas - 5, Panevezys - 5, in Siauliai - 4, Anykščiai - 2, Alytus - 1, Rokiškis - 1). It consists of four regions.



LIETUVOS KRIKŠČIONIŠKOJO GYVENIMO BENDRUOMENĖ

The age range of community's people is from 30 to 70 years. The average age of members is about 50 years. The spiritual guides of local communities are fathers Jesuits, nuns and Community members (lay people) who completed the course for spiritual guidance.

CLC Lithuania was registered December 23, 2011. Since 2010 the Community's president is Kristina Rankelytė, Ecclesiastical Assistant – father Algimantas Gudaitis sj.

The Structure

The main governing body of the Community is the National Assembly which is convened each year. Every 4 years the National Assembly elects National Exco. The National Exco shall consist of five members of the Community and Ecclesiastical Assistant appointed by Provincial of the Society of Jesus.

The National Exco also calls some members of the Community to form the National Formation Group (NFG). This one consists of three members and is accompanied by the EA. Sometimes community member who is responsible for relations with nongovernmental organizations, member, carrying out the ministry of Eurolink, regional coordinators, and other community members take part in these meetings.

The increasingly important role in community life gets the activities in regions. In order to strengthen the regions, each region chose regional coordinator (term for two years) in the meeting of regional coordinators in autumn of 2010. Meetings of Regional Community members' are designed to experience the joy of friends in the Lord, became more aware of the community, to feel its body.



The National ExCo

Community Membership

Usually people come to the Community after the SpEx, in daily life or in a week of Ignatian retreat experience. Then the tour of "8 steps" follows which is to get acquainted, experience what is the Christian life Community and to determine for it. At the end of the tour the person says "yes" or "no" to the community.

Formation

In 2003 the CLC Lithuania were appointed godparents - CLC France. So far, we feel strong support and coaching from this community. Within 2003-2005 six members of CLC France shared their daily life and community development experience with CLC Lithuania during the summer camps. These meetings helped to emerge for trends for community education.

In 2007 together with three members of CLC there were held two weekends of education for community's responsible persons and those who are long time in the Community. In 2009 two members of CLC France held a weekend concerning Commitment to the Community. In 2011 this topic was repeated during one weekend which was held by EA of CLC France.

It is already more than once CLC Lithuania has been invited to participate in major events, educational seminars held by the CLC France

These contacts and experience helped us to develop our own training weekends, retreats and seminars for the newcomers members, for spiritual guides of the groups and those in charge, who spent a year as Community members. These weekends are held annually. Tradition is also an annual summer camp for community members, their families and friends. They provide an opportunity to develop, learn about community and to rest.

Links

CLC Lithuania members tries to build bridges between groups or regions, in order to feel better the body of Community, to grow a friendship within the Lord, and also

"discern, send, support, evaluate" (DSSE). Training for small groups or regional meetings, tours, pilgrimage are being held.

With the Society of Jesus

Many of the Jesuit fathers are the spiritual guides of the local communities or provides personal escort to Community members. Society of Jesus also helps supporting financially CLC Lithuania. The Jesuit fathers are involved in the CLC Lithuania events: congresses, trips, camps, weekends. On the other hand, CLC members cooperate with the father Jesuits while carrying out the ministry of spiritual guidance during the Spiritual Exercises, they lead Spiritual Exercises in everyday life.



In 2012 CLC Lithuania gathers 206 members, representing 24 groups located in 7 cities

In 2011 Vilnius hosted the meeting of the National EAs from the CLC Europe region, organized by the Euroteam and CLC Lithuania.

With the European Region

The community representatives regularly participate in Eurolink meetings. In 2008 two community members attended the meeting on migration issue held by Euroteam; in 2009 three members of the

community attended the European Assembly in Alicante. In 2007 the EA of CLC Lithuania and another Jesuit father, attended the European Regional Meeting of National EA in Ghent (Belgium).



Eurolink meeting 2010

In 2009 in National Assembly of CLC Lithuania participated the president of CLC France Dominique Leonard. In 2010 - President of Euroteam and World Vice-EA also were in our National Assembly. We constantly keep in touch and share news with the members of the Euroteam.



With World CLC

In July 2006 fr. Alberto Brito sj, at those days the World Vice-EA of CLC visited Lithuania. He met with members of the National Exco, with local communities in Vilnius and Kaunas. In August 2008 three delegates of CLC Lithuania participated as observers at the General Assembly in Fatima. In summer camp of 2009 we had a joy to meet the CLC World Executive Secretary. In spring and summer of 2010 the World Vice-EA of CLC fr. Luke Rodrigues sj: during the National Assembly and during the summer meeting he talked about the commitment.

Apostolic Initiative

At apostolic and missionary level it may be noted that the Community is on the way of listening. However the community has some of the emerging ministries. There is also a constantly updated CLC Lithuania website (www.kgbendruomene.lt). Two times community members held a retreat for young people "Magis". The community talk live Rosary for the Community. The first Friday of the month members of the community (each according their possibility), pray together in the Mass in the main church of their town or in Jesuit church.

Individual people in community take ministries in parishes as well they lead persons in the retreats of internal treatment, they work as volunteer in the social assistance centre "Samaritan", leads the program "Live water". Some of the members are involved in activities in Christian non-governmental organizations dealing with social issues

One of the largest missions in the Community areas currently

is building a Community itself. During summer camps the mission of help for non-community members to grow in faith, to become committed Christians has emerged.

Looking at the DSSE which were raised up during General Assembly in Nairobi and listening to the call of the Spirit, CLC Lithuania tries to identify their mission.

Many of CLC members, as we mentioned above, collaborate with the fathers Jesuits by conducting the Spiritual Exercises and performing a ministry of spiritual guidance. Since the summer of 2011 CLC members started to guide Spiritual Exercises for other members ("Community to community"): personal escort, if necessary, financial support for the participation in these retreats.

Since 2006 CLC Lithuania members provide financial support for two annual missions in Africa (Congo and Rwanda). Community members also support

individual people (not just the community members) who need help. This year the regions prepared the Christmas charity campaigns.

Perception

Looking at this way and reviewing personal stories of vocation to the CLC, we realize that God wanted it and it is His job. We also realize that we are limited, weak, but this community keeps on a solid foundation - the rock - that is Christ. Recognize the signs and recognize the way as our own way. We want to live in St. Ignatius legacy: to search for and find God everywhere, to love and serve in all, seek for *Magis, ad maiorem Dei gloriam*. We want to know and accept our mission in the Church and the world. Send and to be sent to support and be supported. We want to be a part of the great body of CLC World.

Kristina Rankelytė
President of CLC Lithuania



At the service of people with HIV/AIDS

Testimony of Gertrude Diarra



Gertrude Diarra

Launch of the Association.

Before the launch of the Life and Health Solidarity Association, I worked in the service of an association for widows, in the Paspango neighborhood, in the parish of Kolognaaba (Burkina Faso). We were doing traditional weaving of cotton, of bogolan dyed cloth, cooking... I had previously tried out as a postulant of the Little Sisters of Father de Foucauld; this did not come to anything. It was Bishop Thomas

Kaboré, the parish priest at the time, who steered me towards his sister-in-law. It is in this framework that I participated in a training session on HIV/AIDS: there was no reimbursement but I wanted to participate for my own formation. After this meeting, a new formation was proposed to participants, of 15 days in Bobo-Dioulasso. This training pleased me very much.

I discussed it with Sister Françoise Dager and with my spiritual guide, the Jesuit Father Jean-Luc Masson, guide of the CLC in Ouaga. That was in 2001. We then began to meet with young people with HIV. For greater efficiency, we decided to create an association and we received official acknowledgement in 2002.

In the beginning, it was difficult because we did not have headquarters or local premises. Our work was mainly home visits. Our meeting place was Sister Françoise's lodgings, at Mr. Seydou's, in the Dapoya neighborhood. She lived there for 7 years. At that time, the work was not easy: the patients hid away, they were kept out of the way by their family and other relatives, sometimes chased out by their family to die alone. Today, there is no more of this discrimination. But they were tormented in

other ways. So, I go to visit Maimouna. Her older brother calls her: "your nurse is here." Relatives told me to give her good advice; "it is a disease like any other..." However, in reality, when I'm not there, they tell her: "you know yourself you're going to die".

We saw a case of discrimination during the flood of September 1st: five women of our Association had seen their homes of banco [mudbrick] crumble in a few hours. With thousands of others, they went to a school where they were taken in. When the other occupants of the classroom where they were noticed that they were taking medicine at regular hours, they suspected that they were HIV positive: the class emptied quickly, and the women were left alone. An unbearable humiliation: they had to leave. Fortunately, other members of the Association were able to take them in at home, until the Association was able to help them find accommodation. However, it should be noted that in some families, they are well received.

My nursing training.

I now have my State nursing diploma after three years of hard work. The manner in which the Sisters treated the poor touched me deeply. But I realized that it was necessary to have a more extensive medical training. I studied for two years, at first for two continuous years, and then I stopped because of illness. French friends of the Burkina Solidarity Association contributed to the financing of my studies. I was able to resume last year, and passed with an average of 14,10/20, 7th in a class of 37. I do not wish to go further in my studies, to become a "health officer", because I want to stay in contact with every category of the sick.

My final training course at Po went well, I thank God. It was in a region unknown to me, Kasena country, and I didn't know the

language. With another trainee, we fell into a delicate situation: there was a conflict between the Major and his subordinates. I listened to them a lot at first; they vented their anger on the Major. I listened to twelve of the 14 on the staff. And then I talked to them, telling them that a leader must be supported. And finally, the atmosphere has changed, there has been reconciliation. The Major, who had stopped attending church, changed his attitude: he is now preparing for a Christian marriage. When I left, he thanked me profusely for helping them all get back to a good agreement. I know that it was not my doing; it is the Lord who had done the work. Everyone in the service found the desire to be more committed to their faith: Catholic, Protestant, Muslim: I didn't have any other apostolic desire than that.

The support of the sick by the Association

What patients need first of all, it is to be listened to. Close, immediate support "a ready answer". After emergency aid, what they need is to be listened to.

If someone comes to speak to me of a family problem, a father-son relationship, it is not money, or advice he needs, but to find out how to build a relationship. Or couples in difficulty, I say to them, citing our proverb: "the rain is beating you, and you go on beating yourselves" (to make them understand that there are enough external difficulties without adding to them). While giving care, I try to listen to the patients; I am very happy with this direct contact. We do not want to think for them, but to encourage them to take responsibility for themselves: so we encourage them to make bogolan dyed cloth.

Relationship with the association world.

It was often discouraging. Many people in this world are only looking for their personal advantage.

What CLC has given me?

In the beginning, I did not feel much at ease in the CLC, I found it very intellectual. I had 3rd level education among others more advanced. The CLC has helped me to express myself. I was very limited: in front of five people, I did not dare say a word. Then I felt the desire to communicate. I put myself forward in my parish as organizer of the Cœurs Vaillants/Ames Vaillants movement (Brave Hearts/ Brave Souls), for the formation of children. I also learned to pray in CLC. The CLC gave me an opening. It encouraged me to make a commitment to catechesis for two years now. From 7 to 8.30 am, every Sunday, I give this catechesis. This is a great opportunity for my own training. It gives me great joy. When I was ill, the children prayed for me. That gave me great joy. We are not in CLC for ourselves but for our brothers and sisters.

N.B. Less than a month after giving this testimony, Gertrude Diarra died suddenly of a heart attack on Sunday, November 6th, 2011 at 15:00. The faithful came in their numbers, and the priests of the parish have said how they have been affected by Gertrude's life, "a small effective ant", and her service to the children and for catechesis. I have lost "a curé ", said the parish priest.

Original in French



Gertrude and Fr. Jacques Fédry SJ

First Maltese undertake initial CLC commitment



The 19 CLC Malta members who undertook their Initial Commitment in March 2012

Nineteen members of CLC Malta undertook the Initial Commitment to God through the CLC way of life at a ceremony held on 25 March 2012, World CLC Day.

The 19 members are: Gabby Abela (from the community Dawn-Loyola), Marion Agius (Dawn-Loyola), Mary Anne Borg Cunen (RODS), Saviour Borg (RODS), Clare Camilleri (RODS), Genevieve Camilleri (Stepping Stones), Renato Camilleri (Stepping Stones), Fiona Fenech (Lyra), Chris Micallef (World CLC vice-president), Maria Micallef (Khaire), Sabrina Miggiani (Ignis), Joseanne Peregin (Exiles), Elisa Saliba (Ignis), Carmen Sammut (RODS), Cristina Spiteri (Stepping Stones), Lorna Sultana (Lyra), Edward Warrington (RODS), Elizabeth Jane Zammit (Lyra), and Lawrence Zerafa (RODS).

The process of inviting members of CLC Malta to consider undertaking the Initial Commitment started as a follow-up of the annual CLC Malta national assembly held in November 2011 on the theme 'Ready,

Steady...God, here I am'. During the national assembly, World CLC Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant Fr Luke Rodrigues explained in detail why World CLC gives importance to this formal act of commitment as part of the process of growth in CLC.

Immediately following the seminar the CLC Malta Leadership Community invited all members to reflect both individually and within their communities on Fr Luke's talks and the material distributed during the national assembly (view <http://seminar.clcmalta.org/resources.php>). At the same time, the Leadership Community, assisted by a team of members including Saviour Borg, Edward Warrington, Jenny Zammit, Issac Gatt, Carmen Sammut, and Chris Micallef, among others, formulated a document entitled '**An invitation to commitment in the Christian Life Community**', summarising why members were being invited to consider undertaking the commitment, some hints on how to go about taking the decision, the qualities expected of people opting for the commitment and some criteria to help them in their decision (The

document may be viewed at the end of this article).

A meeting for the national community was held to launch this document, to discuss it and clarify queries, and to invite members to consider formally submitting by early February a request to the CLC Malta President Joseanne Peregin to undertake the commitment. A total of 19 members submitted a request. Joseanne, together with Marion Agius and Carmen Sammut went through all the requests to see whether there were any queries thereon.

A preparatory meeting for all those requesting to undertake the commitment was held on March 10, facilitated by Jenny Zammit and Elisa Saliba. Among other things they also created the formula read out by the 19 members undertaking the Initial Commitment during the ceremony. This formula was also reproduced in a memento distributed at the end of the celebration. Apart from commemorating the Initial Commitment undertaken on the day it also features a work of art created by CLC Malta member Kenneth Zammit Endrich for the 2011 CLC Malta national assembly which conveys in a simple yet effective way the 'snakes and ladders' we all need to face in the CLC journey of growth and commitment to God.

Several months have passed since the Initial Commitment ceremony was held and three of the 19 members – Edward Warrington, Fiona Fenech and Gabby Abela – were asked to share their thoughts and feelings prior to and since undertaking the commitment. Here's what they had to say:

In what ways did you feel prepared to undertake the initial commitment within CLC and why did you feel it was important to undertake it?

Edward Warrington (EW): I undertook initial commitment because it seemed natural after the lapse of 35 years as a fully engaged member of CLC Malta. It was

something I had long wanted to do, especially after completing the Spiritual Exercises in daily life in 1993, but the opportunity did not present itself earlier.

Fiona Fenech (FF): The Spiritual Exercises and the CLC General Principles and Charisms were crucial for me to understand the CLC way of life and Ignatian spirituality. Undertaking the commitment was a response to dwell deeper on what I believe in: saying I accept the CLC way of life and I would like to grow as person with the help of my CLC community in my spiritual life based on Ignatian spirituality.

Gabby Abela (GA): Looking at my background of many years in CLC I see myself as already trying to be faithful to God's call and CLC way of life; also I have contributed a lot of my time, energy and reflection to the growth of the national community.

What difference do you feel having undertaken the initial commitment has made to you, your community and the national community? Has undertaking the commitment changed anything vis-a-vis your relationship with God, your involvement in CLC and the way you are living your vocation/mission in the world?

EW: Outwardly, nothing changes as a result of undertaking commitment; inwardly, it is a daily reminder of the way of life I have committed to, an invitation to be faithful to my promise, and a central reference point in discernment, especially in response to invitations to serve the national or the world community. With 19 people having taken initial commitment, CLC Malta appears to be maturing in this way of life. The promise itself draws divine grace onto our community.



Joseph Grech

Outwardly, nothing changes; inwardly, it is a daily reminder of the way of life I have committed to

Commitment is important for any community to be able to reach out to others

FF: By undertaking a commitment I feel responsible to be a good example to other CLCers who still are thinking about taking this step. I feel I need to commit myself to daily prayer to back up all my daily activities. My faith needs to be the source of everything I do. Commitment is important for any community to be able to reach out to others.

GA: As the public expression of my fidelity to God and contribution to CLC, the step of undertaking the commitment gave this more meaning and authenticity. Through the preparation to take the step, I was able to reflect on how I have been shaped by my encounters with God and people through my participation in CLC over the years. This resulted in the greater conviction that God accompanies me in my life. The humble ceremony itself was a beautiful moment of oneness with the national community and also the world community – the deep support of my own community strengthened my decision.

In what ways would you like to follow-up this initial commitment?

EW: I would like to follow up this commitment by setting my sights on permanent or definitive commitment, and doing so by praying about the option and seeking the assistance of my own community and the national community in prayer, discernment and community formation.

FF: I feel the need to be of service to other youths who are starting their CLC way of life/journey. Studies are taking up much of my time for the coming year. My wish is, always God willing, to be a guide within CLC and share with other youths what I received and am still receiving. The post-commitment meetings being organised by Jenny Zammit are a very good means of spiritual formation within CLC and a reminder of the CLC commitment taken,

namely that this commitment has to be reconfirmed and renewed each day in our lives.

GA: I feel a sense of greater accountability to God in my daily life; also to the national community – I have been on several teams and worked with many communities over the years, but when the Leadership Community this summer asked me to form part of the team to prepare for the forthcoming national assembly in November 2012, I knew with certainty that I had to accept, almost unquestioning – not out of obligation or duty, but with love. I feel an inner peace that comes from the desire to integrate more fully the areas of my life.

Joseph Grech
Executive Secretary
CLC Malta

* * *

(The following document was formulated by CLC Malta to invite members to submit a request to undertake Initial Commitment to CLC)

An invitation to commitment in the Christian Life Community

Commitment in the Christian Life Community is to be understood as a loving response to God who loves us, and was committed to us from the beginning. Therefore, the commitment is primarily to God, to a life of faith, based on the values of the Gospel, through the CLC Way of Life embodied in the General Principles.

Why a formal commitment?

- Because we are human, we need tangible signs to sustain us in our important choices. Expressing my commitment before the whole community strengthens my resolve and helps me to remain faithful to my choice in difficult times.

- When I commit myself I strengthen the community which I love and where I have grown. The community knows that I can be depended upon, as far as my circumstances allow, to give of my time and resources that it may grow as an Apostolic Community. At the same time, when I commit myself publicly, the members of the community are witnesses and take on the responsibility of supporting me in my commitment.

Some hints about deciding on commitment:

- This is a personal choice, and should not depend on the decision taken by others in your community.
- Take this step only if it makes sense to you, and if it is something you desire and feel will help you grow in love.
- Take this step after having shared your inclinations with your community, or with the guide, and listened to their feedback. Ask the community to pray for you and with you as you make the choice: this will also help the other members to take on the responsibility of supporting you in your commitment.
- Making this commitment obviously requires that I understand the CLC way of Life, not simply with my mind, but especially through having lived it over a period of time, even if in a limited manner.

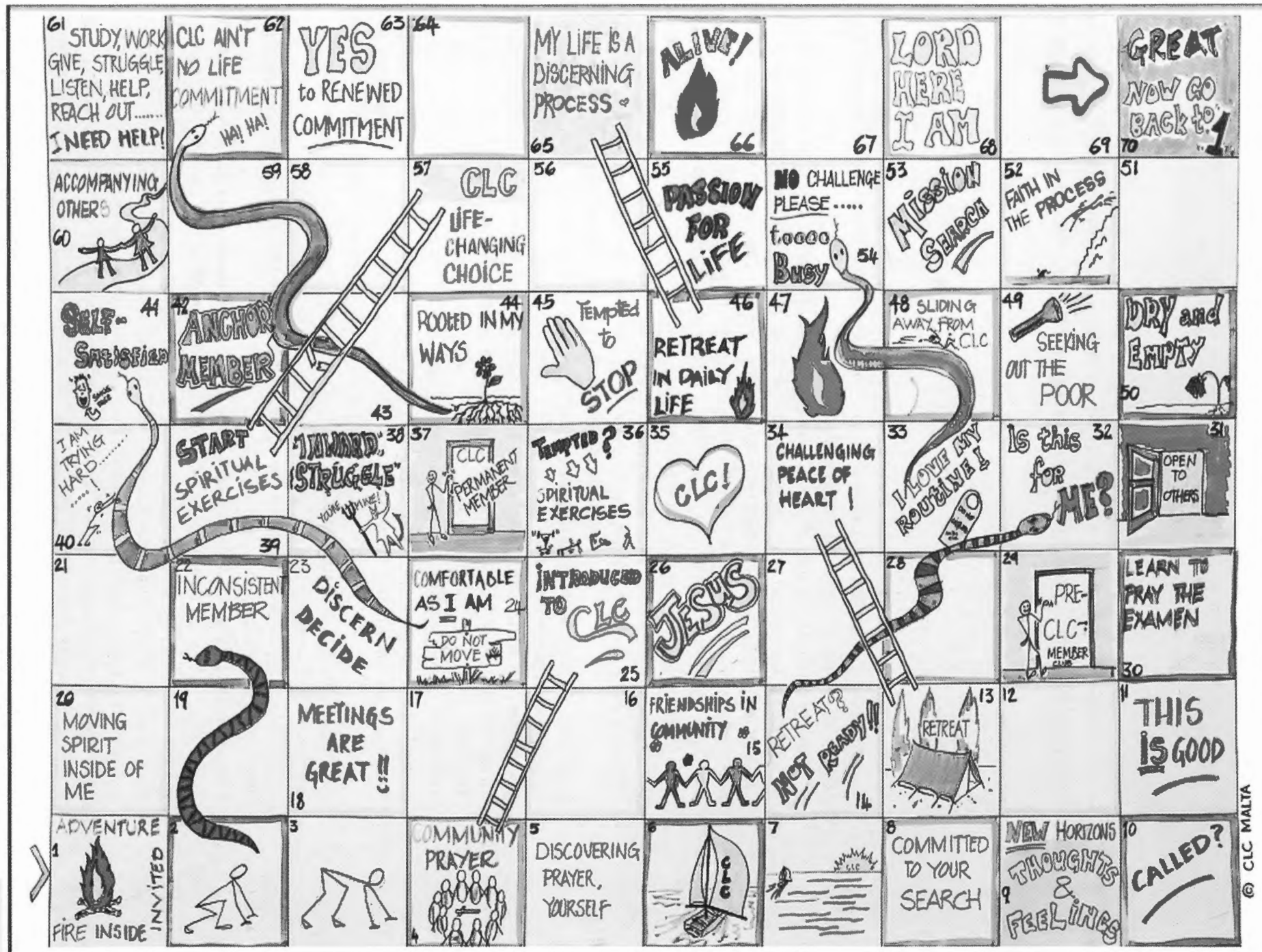
What qualities would one expect in someone who makes an initial commitment in CLC?

Below is a set of criteria which can help you in your decision:

- A living relationship with God which expresses itself concretely in daily prayer, an appreciation of, and regular participation in the sacraments, and regular practice of the Examen which sheds light on how God is working in my life.
- An initial experience of Spiritual Exercises in the form of silent retreats. (Those who have not made the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in full should have a sincere desire and a commitment to do so within the next three years.)
- Sensitivity to situations of injustice, poverty and all forms of social marginalization, together with a sincere search for concrete ways of showing solidarity with their victims. This sensitivity expresses itself also in my choices of lifestyle, use of free time, and in how I relate to others in my family, at work and other social activities.
- An active participation in the life of the community, at local, national and international levels. This expresses itself concretely by sharing, in some way, the responsibility for the community, dedicating time and/or resources so that it continues to grow and achieves its aims. This includes an active participation in any apostolic projects undertaken by the community, either through direct participation or through other means (e.g. financial support of the project).

CLC Malta

Go to page 32 to see the ‘snakes and ladders’ we all need to face in the CLC journey of growth and commitment to God.



Prayer for our Lebanon Assembly

Heavenly Father, you offer us Jesus, your Beloved Son, and ask us to listen to Him. In response to this gift, we the members of the Christian Life Community commit ourselves to following Jesus more closely and working with Him to build your Kingdom.

O Lord, our World Assembly at Lebanon is part of a long and rich history which you have bequeathed to us. Today, your Spirit invites us to be present at the ever changing frontiers of faith and justice. Relying on the intercession of the Virgin Mary Our Lady of Lebanon and St. Ignatius, we seek to deepen our identity and act effectively as a Lay Apostolic Body in the Church. May your love and grace empower us along this journey.

O God of Love, we ask your Blessings of Peace upon the whole world and especially upon the region of the Middle East. Illuminate the hearts of your children; free us from all bitterness and strife; guide our steps along the paths of Peace.

Almighty God, we entrust our CLC World Assembly to your loving providence. Eternal Father, confirm us. Eternal Son, confirm us, Eternal Spirit, confirm us. Most Holy Trinity, confirm us.
Amen.

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