



progressio

Publication of the World Christian Life Community



Progressio is the official publication of the Christian Life Community (CLC). It seeks to build community, supplement formation, and promote apostolic works. By publishing stories, reflections, events and opinions, it endeavors to reinforce, challenge and deepen the community's understanding and living of the CLC Charism, Ignatian Spirituality and the gospel values

ABOUT OUR LOGO

We did not go too far to find inspiration for the logo of the Christian Life Community (CLC). Countless books have been written about the Salvation history of CLC and its beginning in year 1563. From that came the Marian Congregations and its symbol (shown on the top right), having the "P" over the "X" (for the Greek Christus) and the inserted "M" illustrates that the Congregations were put under the patronage of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The blue curved line illustrates a movement forward to **one World Community in 1967**; hence the globe. From this new beginning came a new name: Communauté de Vie Chrétienne (CVX) in French; Comunidad de Vida Cristiana (CVX) in Spanish; Christian Life Community (CLC) in English.

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1. Asian Youth Day
2. CLC World Day 2017 Colombia
3. CLC World Day 2017 Kenya
4. CLC World Day 2017 Lebanon
5. CLC World Day 2017 Cebu, Philippines
6. CLC World Day 2017 Luxembourg

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Alwin Macalalad

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How to Read Progressio



Alwin Macalalad

First, find a comfortable place, just as you would for a special encounter. Settle yourself, maybe catch your breath.

Second, remember that you will be meeting a real world community. We will be zooming into a few parts of the world, and many of it might seem familiar. You will find the unceasing interaction between our Ignatian spirituality, our communal fellowship, and our apostolic life. You will find tools, and formation programs. You may be holding this as a magazine, or browsing it as a page online, but CLC members will be speaking to you, about their their passion, strife, and freedom. Listen, because they are with you now, in a community circle:

Clare Chinyama and Bénédicte Bosmans share their experiences regarding the process of communal discernment in the ESDAC formation in Rome. Heejong Nam recounts the amazing growth and blossoming of service into fellowship and abundance! Alexandre Tenorio describes Brazil's formation program for youth, Amar y Servir.

We bear witness to how our mission can change along with the rapidly-changing reality. Heran Choi shares about CLC Korea's shift from running a Center of Migrants to operating HOPE School, along with the multi-year process that it entailed. We also see how another apostolic institution from another part of the globe, the IREME Center in Rwanda, is changing the reality around it, by accompanying persons affected by HIV.

Third, finding yourself in this space, inching beyond the familiar, reflect on a piece of the eternal. Fr. Herminio

Rico SJ, our Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant, identifies our General Principles as CLC's Principle and Foundation. It is the living anchor of our way of life, a 50-year fruit and continuation of more than 450 years of tradition, borne of the Spirit. And spend a moment of gratitude.

Fourth, allow yourself into a mystical place. A place where, if grace allows, you might hear the murmur of all the saints that hold this communion-community together, like a string vibrating with your heart, with your prayer. This is us, and all who have gone before us, and all who will come after. Veronica Jodlbauer, Magdalena Palencia and Veronica Villegas give us some doorways into the life of Hildegard Ehrtmann, a woman who walked hand in hand with the newly renewed CLC, living it until the end. She easters on.

Lastly, if you find it in your heart, leave with joy and gratitude. I hope you find some life in what you have read, what you have witnessed, and in all of the moments you have spent in praying, in striving with, in fighting for, in cherishing past and present. And while finding meaning in a history that is as alive as you are now, know that your life in CLC is a story as well. And that we are all together in this one community, in this one way of life. Thanks be to God.





Reflections on ESDAC Formation in Italy

Clare Chinyama Chimuka



Clare Chinyama is a CLC member from Zambia. She attended the ESDAC Formation in Rome in April 2017

ESDAC means Exercises for Spiritual Discernment on Apostolate in Common. It consists of facilitators who use the discernment process inspired by St Ignatius of Loyola to reach different groups of people. The exercises are for everyone: Those from various social backgrounds including youth, couples, and communities who seek to deepen the communion that exists between them. ESDAC can be tailored to suit a given group's needs as they discern the call of the Lord and the need to respond to it favourably.

When I got the invitation for the ESDAC formation, the Zambia National Executive Committee decided that since I was already a member of the local formation team, it would be good that I attend the formation course. I too felt the need and inspiration to be part of the formation programme.

Inspiring moments from the formation

Prayer and the Eucharist

The ESDAC group celebrating the Eucharist at the Rooms of St. Ignatius. Collegio del Gesù, Roma



During the formation period, I came to value most the attention allocated to prayer in the programme. Personal prayer time was allocated to allow for introspection and reflection. The personal and open sharing in smaller groups were very touching. I think it was important that we had time to meet in smaller groups before the plenary sessions.

I found it striking that as participants we were encouraged to use our imagination to enter into every situation of our lives and to have conversations with God the Father or the Son. The Holy Eucharist was the centre and heart of our exercises, celebrations and formation!

Speaking, Listening, Learning

I thought the use of an Eagle's feather during our sharings was a great technique. The method is derived from a tradition of Native Americans: The one with the feather in their hand is the one who speaks.

They will not be interrupted and are allowed speak as long as they keep the feather in their hand. Even when one goes silent for a moment, the group will continue to be quiet for as long as the feather has not been placed down. In the case of a heated debate, the feather can be very useful. The bottom line is respect for the person speaking or making their sharing. In other words, everyone's point of view is important and valuable.

Our group sharings were done in a spirit of contemplative listening. First, we would share the fruit of our prayer time as well as reflection. Then in the second turn, the group had the opportunity to ask questions or react

to one's sharing. I found the hands-on approach to the formation interesting and educative. It was learning by doing. Most of the formation was practical and thus relevant as what has been learned can almost immediately be applied.

The gems of the communal discernment process

For me, what is important is that communal discernment has to be done as an act of faith. Each member recognises and respects that the Holy Spirit is in everyone. The communal discernment takes into consideration the fact that, in the end, the Holy Spirit will show us the way that we need to follow. It follows then that if we are to be led by the Holy Spirit, we must be conscious of the different choices available, and we must be free from all that inhibits these options.

Another gem was that the members of the community who are doing the discernment process have to pray for light and the purification of their intentions throughout the process, i.e. before, during and after.

The discerning group needs adequate information on the subject matter be-

For me, what is important is that communal discernment has to be done as an act of faith. Each member recognises and respects that the Holy Spirit is in everyone

fore embarking on the discernment. This entails some prior research of the necessary information. All the pros and cons of each possible decision to be made will be weighed.

I also learnt that being a leader in my family and commu-

nity means that I have to discern the will of God in my life continually. I need to constantly reflect on where the Lord is leading me/ us as a family or as a group.

Graces from the learning experience

One of the blessings I received is the realisation that the Lord is moved with whatever is going on in my life or our lives no matter how trivial. Jesus is always there with me and feels the pain whenever I am troubled (John 11:34-35).

I was also inspired about the importance of openness to the Lord to be grateful for His everlasting love and mercy. His love for me, propels him to search for me and welcome me back when I lose my way in life. (Luke 15)

With time, it became apparent that our group had bonded well. We shared at a deep level, had so much joy and



fun together. For a team coming from 19 different countries, such bonding, joy and fun could only have been a gift of God's grace to us during the formation.

Another moment of grace for me was the visits to various Ignatian Churches and holy sites of Rome. I cannot explain the joy I experienced when we went to the "Chiesa del Gesu" which I believe is the mother church of the Society of Jesus; "La Storta" the little chapel of St. Ignatius which recalls the vision of Christ with the cross; the Basilicas of St Peter and St Paul. Praying at the tombs and feet of holy men and women such as the Apostle Paul, Saint Pope John Paul II, St Ignatius, Fr. Arrupe and many others were very satisfying moments that I will carry in my heart for a long time.

What CLC might learn from my experience

It is necessary for the CLC leadership always to realise that the power to make decisions lies with the group. The group can use different leadership models, but they must never forget that the group should always be engaged in the discernment process.

Our CLC groups could learn to take note and pay attention to the movements and stages of growth within the group. ESDAC encourages the idea that every person is a master of their experiences and CLC has to remain a discerning and apostolic body.

Challenges for communal discernment

There are many challenges to communal discernment. Among them is availability. Communal discernment cannot take place in a vacuum. It needs people to be available. It is very challenging if members do not listen to each other. CLC members have to learn to listen to each other regardless of who is talking. When a community has some preconceived opinions about people and situations, it becomes difficult to be open to the Holy Spirit who leads the process of discernment.

I am glad that I attended the ESDAC formation course. It was not just formation, but it was also a pilgrimage of sorts. Being on a pilgrimage with the Lord was good; reflecting on God's love and going back to the places where I felt touched by his hand, made me feel privileged and loved by the Lord.

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Visiting La Storta

Communal discernment: a way of life?



Bénédictte Bosmans

*I*t's more than a method, or a set of techniques. It is a way of life. It was these two sentences that made me subscribe to the ESDAC-course (Exercises for Spiritual Discernment on Apostolate in Common) in Rome. I am familiar with the Spiritual Exercises and with discernment. But communal discernment, what would that mean? And how could that become a way of life? How could I live this in my own life? It touched something in me, I needed to know.

That is how I, Bénédictte Bosmans, a 30 year old Belgian woman, got involved with ESDAC. I am currently working as a university chaplain (doing pastoral work with students) and have been for several years member of a CLC-group, both in Belgium and the UK.

Looking back at the whole experience, I don't think I could say that now I know. But I do feel it, I know it with my heart. Because that is the way an ESDAC-course works: learning by doing. We didn't simply receive the theoretical knowledge, but went through the process ourselves. As a group of 26 people, from 19 different countries, that mostly didn't know each other, this was very interesting. A variety of languages, cultures, ages, backgrounds, experiences and wisdom – there could not have been more differences between us. But after a few days I learnt how precisely that was our gift, as we could really experience that even within these differences so much was possible, and so much was happening. Within these differences the Spirit was, and is at work.

So let me try now, from my own experience, to formulate an answer to my initial question: how can communal discernment be a way of life? What tools or insights did ESDAC

provide me in this matter?

Openness to the Spirit

The crucial insight that I very happily received from ESDAC is the importance of being open to the Spirit. A process of communal discernment is only possible if at least one person in the group is open to receive what the Spirit wants to give, what the Spirit is doing. The Spirit is at work, He creates communion, constantly. And this is not only the case during an ESDAC-formation! So often in my own life I'm not aware of it, and even not open to see what He is doing – little signs of communion, signs of hope, signs of the Kingdom. So being open to the Spirit is not an insight, but an attitude that I want to cultivate. It is necessary for a process of communal discernment, and it is a gift in everyday life as well. It makes me look to the world with different eyes, starting from my heart, freeing myself from judgments and resistances.

During the ESDAC-formation this is put into practice by giving time for individual prayer before sharing about a topic. It is time to open yourself to what God tells you deeply, to how He moves or touches you.

The Spirit is at work in all of us

But there is more. The Spirit is not only at work in the whole world, but also in every one of us. I saw how starting from that conviction, having faith that this is really the case, changed the way we communicated and behaved towards each other. Instead of being so caught up in your own point of view, you listen carefully to what the other says, with an open heart.

The Spirit might have something to



Bénédictte Bosmans is a 30 year old woman from Belgium. As a married woman she is working as a student chaplain at the university in Leuven (Louvain).



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The group makes a review of all tools helping communal discernment.

say to you or to the group, through the other! Even through the other that you might at first not like, or feel you couldn't agree with. It is not a matter of agreeing or not agreeing anymore, but of listening to the Spirit, and therefore valuing the words and experiences of the other.

However, during the course, we questioned the power of this way of proceeding a lot. What to do with communities that are not familiar with the Spirit, or can't (yet?) trust Him in the work He does? Is communal discernment then not of use to them?

Reflection and discussion brought us to the conclusion that also in more secular environments (companies, groups, etc.) it can be very valuable, and there is a possibility of 'translating' the words used into a language that they will be able to identify with. To start the process you only need one member to trust in the power of the Spirit, the rest is up to Him...

The power is in the group: a power to choose life

"The power is in the group" is one of the guiding principles of communal discernment. 'Power' is understood here in a very positive way, as the abi-

lity to react, evaluate, make recommendations and take decisions. The group has, by means of all individuals, the power to continuously grow in authenticity and love for each other and the world.

Every individual is important; his or her contribution is valuable. And every person is the expert in his/her own experience. At first I was somewhat surprised to hear this principle, as it sounded a bit strange. But reflecting on it I realized that actually that was exactly what I felt myself in the group, what was happening. As one of the only few lay people present, being 'only' 30 years old, it could have been a real challenge. But to my surprise I found that this all didn't matter. I felt valued, in the same way as a sister from Nigeria or a somewhat older and wiser Jesuit from Malta.

But if the power is in the group, every individual is also responsible for his or her contribution. It demands a commitment to do it seriously, to make the most of your personal prayer time, and involve your whole self in the process. It means individually becoming aware of, and choosing the path of love and not the path of the bad spirit. That is where I learnt that a process of communal discernment does involve a process of discernment on the individual level as well. I was surprised, but I have to admit that in a way the formation course became also an individual retreat. The individual prayer times, the sharing in small groups, the process within the bigger group: it touched me on a deeper level and confronted me several times with things I had to work on or wanted to deepen more. So the day of reconciliation was to me very strongly also a point of personal reconciliation – personal reconciliation that made me more open to receive the communion that the Spirit was creating between us.

So strangely enough this power, when used rightly according to its purpose, is a power that makes free. It is incredible how listening to the sharing of

others, hearing the Spirit talking to you through them, makes you free from all secondary thoughts and feelings. It directs you to the core of your heart, to what you are called to as individuals and as a group.

A community is formed to make communion

So to conclude: is this a way of life? Yes, to me it can be. In an ever changing world it is an indispensable way of looking at each other and at the world, to be able to respond in a proper way. We are social creatures; we are involved in communities all the time. So inevitably discernment has to take place at the level of the community, not only at the level of the individual. What are we as a community called to be, to do? And are we really doing that? It is a way of life I can apply at work, with my group of friends, in my CLC-community. But during the formation course I realized that even in my marriage, my husband and I, we form a community. A community that

can grow towards communion, if we are open to the Spirit and have faith that the Spirit is also at work through the other (even when he says something that I don't want to hear).

In concrete terms this would mean taking time for personal prayer, but also time to share with each other, to have spiritual conversations, more than just to talk about our daily concerns. It is being mindful to create a space for the Spirit to communicate with us, through us, and in this process also opening ourselves to the rest of the world. It is constantly, in every group we are involved with, asking ourselves the following question: What will give us more life and joy, here and now, for you and me and for the whole world?

Thank you ESDAC for this wise life lessons. I pray that more and more communities might have the chance to discover communal discernment, and discover how the Spirit is at work among them.



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The diverse group of participants including several CLC-members from different countries

The Process of Communal Discernment on CLC HOPE School Yongin

Heran Choi



Heran is a permanently committed member who is an ExCo member in charge of social apostolate in CLC Korea. She is now the headmistress of the CLC HOPE school in Yongin.

1. Background

◆ Opening the CLC Center for Migrants in Yongin (2002)

- In 1998, many Asian countries experienced economic difficulties due to global financial crisis and many workers came to Korea from Asian countries. As most of them were undocumented, they couldn't get legal protection. In many cases they suffered from discrimination at work and failed to receive their already low wages. There were only few organizations and groups to support them. They paid a lot of money to brokers but some even died while attempting to enter Korea.

Moved by empathy toward those migrant workers in dire situations, CLC Korea discerned to open a center for migrants in 2002 in order to help those migrant workers experiencing discrimination. The goal was to restore their human dignity through diverse activities such as protecting their human rights, changing policies and systems, and enhancing the awareness of Korean people of this issue.

❖ Activities : labor counseling, legal support, Korean classes, dialogues among people from different cultural backgrounds, vocational skills training, etc.

◆ Changes in Korean Society Regarding Migrants (2004– 2011)

▪ As the number of migrant workers grew and as support organizations like CLC Korea worked together to demand the government to improve its policies regarding migrant workers, the Korean government started to change its

programs and policies. It enforced the Employment Permit System in 2004 and abolished the Industrial Training System in 2007. It legalized undocumented migrant workers with less than four year stay in Korea, helping 184,199 migrants. It also made social insurance mandatory and enacted a law to support multi-ethnic families and revised the immigration control law. In 2011, it adopted a policy to allow loyal migrant workers to re-enter. (When they pass a special Korean test, they can re-enter within six months and get employed.)

▪ Simultaneously, from the mid-1990s, many foreign women started to come to Korea for international marriage. (As part of the improvement program of rural living conditions starting in 1999, there began an international marriage business through which many women entered Korea from China, Southeast Asia, Uzbekistan etc. to get married to Korean men living in rural areas) In the 2000s, the government began to provide legal support to them, establishing multi- ethnic family support centers and schools. With this, social as well as national concerns grew with regard to these migrant women who married Korean men and raised children.

◆ Request from the Executive Council of CLC Korea (2012)

Against this backdrop, the Exco asked the CLC Center for Migrants to form a team to answer the questions: Are migrants the people who are in the most desperate situations economically and socially in our society? As an apostolic center of CLC Korea, does the CLC Center for Mi-

grants always try to meet the demands of the times that are changing?

◆ Research Team, Its Purpose, Activities and Results

- Research Team 1: October 2012 - January 2013.

- ❖ Purpose: Evaluation and reflection on the 10 year activities of the center.

- Research Team 2: June 2012 - December 2012

- ❖ Purpose: Carrying out a research on the current situations of migrant workers and foreign migrant women by marriage in order to respond better to the medium and long term calls of the times

- ❖ Result: The situations of migrant workers and migrant wives had greatly improved. There still remained some undocumented migrant workers but government agencies and civic organizations continued supporting them. The government provided a lot of services to migrant wives, so their situations were expected to get better, while most of them appealed their difficulties and anxieties in raising and educating their children. Although the government as well as civic organizations supported their infants and school-age children, it was not clear whether the supports were proper and sufficient. Considering

the fact that the number of the multi-ethnic family is growing rapidly (It is estimated that one-fifth of children will be multi-ethnic in 2030), it may become a serious social issue.

◆ Request of the CLC Korea ExCo (2013)

Based on the researches, CLC Korea decided to close the CLC Center for Migrants and change it into an apostolic center to support the multi-ethnic families by educating their children. The Exco requested the Department of Social Apostolate to organize a task force team to plan a new apostolic center.

2. The Task Force Team to Plan a New Apostolic Center

- ❖ Goal: To draw up a concrete vision to support multi-ethnic children.

- ❖ Formation: Seven CLC members

- ❖ Period: May 2013 - December 2013

◆ Data analysis (May - June, 2013)

- All kinds of accessible statistics, dissertations and various papers from the Education Office, Yongin Municipal Office, and the research centers on multi ethnic children were collected.

- In our weekly meetings on Saturday mornings, we shared and discussed all the available materials



we have read on the subject. These materials became the basis for the first discernment.

❖ **Result** : When we started the research, we assumed that multi ethnic children would have difficulties with language development, social and family relations, hyperactivity disorder, and depression. They did show some problems when they were under around nine, but as they grew older, no significant differences were noted between the multi-ethnic and the Korean children. The longer the migrant mothers stayed in Korea, the better the economic situations of the families became. The older multi-ethnic children also improved in their development and showed less and less differences from Korean children. Thus, we learned that poverty is the basic problem for the multi-ethnic families and their children.

We also found out that a lot of support has been provided to multi ethnic babies and elementary school students. In this regard, it seemed better to carry out activities for young people (middle school and high school students). It seemed especially important as the number of young juveniles grew who came to Korea as their mothers got married to Korean men. They suffered from a lot of difficulties due to the different language, different culture, and poor financial situation. However, there were few organizations that could help them to settle in Korea and study in alternative schools for multi ethnic children. It seemed likely that this situation, if not handled properly, could lead to serious social problems like crimes.

◆ Carrying out Research on Yongin Region and Visiting Centers (July – October, 2013)

▪ To verify the result of the data analysis, it was required to carry out a field study. We also needed to determine whether it was proper to establish our apostolic center in Yongin where the CLC center for Migrants had operated. If so, for which age group should the center operate and exactly where should it be established? We needed to have a concrete ground to discern.

● *Visits of Related Institutions*

✓ About ten local community centers in the region which ranked high in the list of the number of multi-ethnic children. (Singal-dong, Jukjeon 1-dong, Pogok-eup, Jungang-dong, Yurim-dong)

✓ Yongin Municipal Office : Children care, welfare policy and Dream Start Center, Cheoin-gu Distric Office : welfare department and other government offices

✓ Schools : Yongin elementary school (Specialized elementary school for multi ethnic children), Pogok middle school, which ranked 2nd in terms of the ratio of poor multi ethnic students.

✓ About twenty of local children's centers (Social welfare facilities) in the region.

● *Results and the first discernment.*

In the case of elementary school students, multi ethnic students didn't manifest serious differences from Korean ones. Most of them didn't experience retardation in language development or get bullied by peers. Multi ethnicity itself didn't cause pro-



blems. Rather, it was the poor economic conditions of the family that increased the cases of learning retardation, emotional instability, and problems with peers, which concurred with the results of the previous data analysis.

Workers and teachers of the visited institutions said that in the case of multi ethnic children born in Korea, many difficulties were resolved when they entered elementary school. When they reached their third grade, they didn't show many differences from others. On the other hand, those who entered Korea in their youth had difficulties as there were no formal language courses for them (few, if any, only in Seoul).

We consequentially reached the conclusion that our new apostolic center should be not only for poor multi ethnic youth but also for all poor youth in general. The place should be one of the two, Singal and Pogok which has the 1st and 2nd highest ratio of poor young students in Yongin respectively. We discerned to open the center by February 2014, before the new semester started.

● *Last On-the-spot Visit to Discern the Place of the Center*

In order to finalize our discernment, we reviewed the data and statistics again and visited Singal Pureun school (a local children center for the youth) and Pogok middle school. We found out that Singal is near big cities like Suwon and Bundang, so residential areas were shrinking while commercial areas were expanding. This caused the number of young students to decrease. We also found out that

there were already more than 10 children's centers so they had enough support. On the other hand, a quarter of Pogok middle school students were from poor families who received the government support and there was no children's center in the region. The region was in a remote rural area and public transportation was inconvenient so it was not easy for volunteers to reach. There is a big amusement park (Everland Yongin). So many poor people came to look for daily job, some of whom used to use the CLC Center for Migrants.

3. Final Discernment

We discerned to open an apostolic center to support the education of young people from poor families including multi ethnic young children (including migrant multi ethnic children). As they are in the period of preparation for their future, we needed to establish the center's identity as an educational institute, whose focus was to be more than just providing protection. We needed to establish an after-school institute which provides education necessary for them to break the vicious cycle of poverty. We discerned to open the center by February 2014 so we formed a working group which carried out practical work like renting a house, interior decorating, hiring, furnishing as well as recruiting students.

For about two months, the working group visited most of the CLC members from seven regions, sharing the whole process and their experience of God's presence with them as well as their gratitude and joy. They also sha-





red the required cost and asked members to participate as volunteers and to recruit financial contributors.

4. Things learned from the communal discernment process

1. At that time, the CLC center for migrants had worked quite well and was recognized as a reliable center in the region. However the national ExCo realized that Korea has been changing a lot with regard to migration issues. Thus, it raised the questions as to whether we needed to stick to it even in this changed situation and whether they still belonged to the neediest (desperate) people. CLC always responds to the call of the people in more desperate need here and now. In that regard, our discernment is not a one-time decision but a continuing process and we need to be alert, open and flexible.

2. Accepting the call from the ExCo, the CLC members around the CLC Migrant Center went through a two-year long discernment process. Several working teams were formed during that period, carrying out research using various data and on-the-spot visits. They trusted each other fully, worked closely together and shared their process, information and the

fruits through the whole period. Thankfully in this way, we could keep the same flow till the final communal discernment.

3. When we first discerned to open a new apostolic center to support multi-ethnic children, we carried out research on various aspects. We tried to cover as many statistics and data and documents as possible and carried out a field study for numerous times, which required lots of efforts and patience. At every step where we were not sure or did not agree with each other, supplementary researches and checkup processes were carried out, which led us to the concrete final discernment.

4. After making a united communal discernment within the team, we shared the process with the national community members. We visited each region and had sessions, where we shared not only the whole process but also the feelings and inner movements. We shared how much we felt confused and discouraged, how slowly the process moved, and how often we felt at a loss. Despite all this, we expressed how deeply we felt and experienced God's grace and how he continuously encouraged us and walked with us. Everyone in the team shared his or her own experiences so that all the other CLC members could feel the grace, fully understand and accept the communal discernment. Thus the communal discernment of the team became the communal discernment of the whole community, which inspired and encouraged each member to think about what they could do in their place. They supported the establishment and operation of the center passionately by finding donors and volunteers and of course by volunteering as teachers and helpers themselves. We believe the sincere sharing process can make a discernment of one team or one apostolate become a precious asset and gift of all the members in the community not just that of those in the team.



Heejeong Nam

When asked to share our experience with the world community, I felt not only happy but also burdened. Could it be possible for me to properly deliver in words the precious time, when our community felt fully united, expressing our gratitude to the Lord and sharing love with each other? It seemed to me that I was too little to do that. However, I also knew He always works through such a limited person like me. So I decided to give all my heart including such feelings to God and happily accept the call.

Awakening Awareness

As a person from a farm village, I had been interested in the environment. But I came to have an awakened attitude toward environmental issues 17 years ago when I made my first commitment in CLC and when my local community was trying to find a communal apostolic activity. At that time, the Korean government planned to reclaim a big tidal flat called “Saemangeum” in the western coast. It was a huge civil engineering project to form a massive land area for growing rice. The government insisted that it would help the national economy. However, the project would actually spell disaster and would completely destroy the tidal flat and the local ecosystem. My local community joined an anti-Saemangeum movement and actively carried out activities to stop the project.

Unfortunately, however, the project was implemented as planned despite strong resistance from many people and NGOs. Nevertheless, I learned how important it is to take care of the world created by God. At that time, I was just a housewife with two sons and my major had nothing to do with the environment. But as a CLC member, I came to see my personal vocation as a

mother and housewife from a new perspective; my role is to take care of people and the environment. I joined a healthy food movement and learned about it in earnest. I became an instructor teaching eco-friendly healthy food in schools, organizations and public offices. I wanted to communicate with more people so opened an education center for a healthy dietary life and a green restaurant. Meanwhile, with some committed members in my region - Seoul, I tried some activities to protect the environment and support our apostolate. We made natural cosmetics and sold them in CLC. The revenue was used to support our apostolic centers. We worked hard but our effort was not well-organized.

Coming Together, Fellowship, and Seeing a Deeper Reality

Then in 2013, members involved in different common apostolates from different regions who were interested in the environment got together to create a small group within CLC named “Saving the Life”. One member moved to a rural village so we could grow some vegetables there. We met



She is a permanently committed member, who tries to spread an eco-friendly lifestyle within the community. She is the leader of an eco-group in CLC called “Saving the life.”



Poor juveniles are most directly affected by environmental degradation, and have few adults who love and encourage them. They usually eat unhealthy food.

once a month, eating meals made of what we had grown together and sharing the gratitude and happiness of living as a CLC. The abundance from such a delicious and graceful community dining really healed us. Also, we made healthy food like kimchi with the vegetables we had grown and traditional sauce like soybean paste and hot pepper paste. We kept making cosmetics and the revenue was used to support apostolic centers and environmental protection. Doing so, we felt the call to operate our group more communally in a CLC way and we began to think about doing activities with the whole CLC community.

We communicated with the workers in CLC HOPE School, which is an after-school center to support poor juveniles, and members in Seoul who accompany them. Poor juveniles are most directly affected by environmental degradation, and have few adults who love and encourage them. They usually eat unhealthy food. Based on the conversation, we decided to provide them with an opportunity to have an ecological experience where they could grow in eco-sensitivity and learn the importance of the environment. By meeting and talking with CLC members who support and care about them, they can learn about desirable adult life. Most of all, they can experience one of the most vital life-sustaining activities - healthy eating.

On a sunny day in May 2016, about 40 people including CLC HOPE school students, workers, CLC members in Seoul as well as the group "Saving the Life" got together in the small farm. We were divided into three groups: one was to sow seed, learning the hardship of farming and appreciating the efforts of farmers; another was to make soybean paste, learning the importance of traditional food; the other was to make mugwort gaetteok - Korean rice cake with mugwort, learning the importance of healthy food and the happiness of eating together. After that, we got together for lunch. It was like a scene of a farm community which is disappearing now. Some children took a nap in the shade while

others took a back shower and had fun. The students looked so comfortable and happy. It wasn't easy to prepare for a meeting of about 40 members. But we could feel that these young people really trusted us and they tasted how happy it is to live together with others so we really thanked Jesus.

In the afternoon, we walked for about 40 minutes to the truce line which divides the Korean peninsula into two. We could actually see the territory of North Korea across the river and it was the first time for many of the participants to actually see it. They realized more clearly our divided reality. Feeling compassion for our brothers and sisters in North Korea who are suffering from difficulties though they live so closely to us, we reflected on our history and prayed together for peace.

The sharing after the experience was full of grace. We talked about how pleasing and encouraging it was to be with the community and how deeply Jesus was guiding us to overcome our limitations and difficulties. When we first designed the event, we thought that it would end on the day. The event itself was a very interesting, pleasing and moving experience. However, God's plan was far more than this.

Multiplying Grace and Expanding Eco-Work

About a month later, the vegetables grew well enough to be made into kimchi. Then a new idea emerged within the group. Usually, we make kimchi out of the vegetables and donate the revenue to support our centers. However, the idea was to share it with all the centers and CLC members for free so that they could experience a sharing dining community. We discerned to make our experience everyone's experience.

To that end, we sent some kimchi to all three CLC HOPE schools and all the local communities including the national secretariat. We asked them to have time to experience a dining

community and to think about the students, the environment and healthy food. We also asked them to share the feelings with pictures and comments in CLC Korea's online chatting room. The results were far beyond our expectation.

There were so many beautiful comments: Jesus with our community. Happiness and pleasure from being with God who takes care of life and nature. One warm family where life is overflowing. Pleasure from having such a delicious meal even without doing anything from sowing to getting the food ready. Happiness from being given for nothing and deep gratitude to everyone who had given so much effort. Fullness coming from love which filled my hungry stomach while wrapping up a day with the community. Happy chattering in a large family. Warmth and friendliness.... and so many more. All experienced the time to be one. We just sowed the seeds and they grew for themselves. We just shared the vegetables and they created such richness. It was a time to directly experience the miracle of Five Loaves and Two Fish in the Gospel. It could be possible as the Lord was with us and led us. He made all things plentiful. Nothing else could explain it.

This year, the members in the group planned to make a project to help the students in HOPE school deepen their eco-sensitivity again. We want to move one step further so we are planning a program for their parents. We also plan to spread an eco-friendly way of life in CLC and in our life. To that end, we try even small things to restore the broken ecosystem ourselves and will share the results with the whole community. We continue to farm in our small land and encourage the Korean version of 3R movement (We call it CSER – Conserve, Share, Exchange, Reuse – movement.) within CLC. We will continue our efforts to find God working in the world and to participate in His efforts.

I'm sure that our Lord who always makes everything abundant will fully

bless and nourish this small effort of ours. Please grant us grace to be always open to You who keeps calling us amidst this world.





General Principles: CLC's Principle and Foundation

Herminio Rico, SJ



Herminio Rico is a Jesuit from Portugal. He was a CLC member before he joined the Society in 1981. In 1999, he received a Ph.D. in Moral Theology from Boston College. He was National Ecclesiastical Assistant for CLC-Portugal from 2004 to 2014. Since December 2016, he is World CLC Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant, residing in Rome.

The pairing of two words to describe an attitude or endeavour of prominent importance in our spiritual experience is characteristically Ignatian. It could show only a liking for repetition, also typically Ignatian. However, if we look closely, they are never exact synonyms. Rather they are balanced in a slight tension. They set an interaction that challenges and complements the acting of each one on the other. The dynamic sum of both movements points to the full richness of the experience. Some examples: take and receive, love and serve, seek and find; and the one I want to explore here, principle and foundation.

Principle

The General Principles take us back in time, to the beginnings – so appropriate as we celebrate 50 years of the General Principles and CLC. “Principle” also means starter of processes, source of movement, prompter of stories and creator of history. In what the General Principles have already accomplished, we see the history of grace of CLC, the many blessings received. Then again, in our world, it is not sufficient to start a movement, it needs to be continually sustained. Principle is also this impulse that con-

stantly works against attrition and entropy. It is always the necessary mover, sustainer of development and growth. Without a permanent lifegiving connection to this vital sap, there is no way to prevent stagnation, dryness, decay and death.

The General Principles outline the CLC charism, describing a style of living and a path of personal and communal, human and spiritual growth. Visioning ideals and setting goals, they map the road for CLC, but they also provide the encouragement to persevere, the light to choose and decide, and the creativeness to devise and to build the actual path that constitutes the vocational journey of each member and each community. All of that is there, in what they point and remind, teach and warn, challenge and propose, offer and promise. To allow the General Principles to accomplish their potential in our personal and communal life as CLC members, we must be familiar with them, revisit them frequently. We need to develop a relationship with them. We let them entice us, surprise us and question us in new and ever surprising ways. Yes, they can always do that. Just try them! The General Principles unsettle, and may even cause some healthy



restlessness, but they are also capable of being a constant source of inspiration, progress and life.

Foundation

The General Principles are also foundation. Here and now, among all the changes and uncertainties, before so much complexity, feeling pressured into so many hasty decisions, a trusted foundation is such a valuable thing. They tell us where to stand, give a sense of security, never let us lose heart or give up in our search for a deeper meaning under the surface of things. With their formal approval by the Holy See, the Church confirmed our vision and desires, establishing CLC as a Charism of the Spirit, at the service of the Kingdom of God, a reliably graced way of following Christ and serving his mission. No less than such a stronghold is what the General Principles offer us.

The GPs are the guardians of our identity, the criteria for our discernments, the benchmark of our fidelity. They help us to move where we want to go, but they also tell us who we are already. They define our vocation, and, therefore, they are constantly reassuring us in our identity, revealing to us the kind of persons and communities it is possible for us to become. They are a lighthouse, guiding us in our Christian journey from the tradition received to the future of our responsibility. They are a rock we can always rely upon and our stronghold of wisdom.

Do you love the General Principles?

The General Principles challenge us and make us grow, but they also offer us reference and steadiness. They help us to discover who we are, and they bring out the better in us, by driving to fulfilment our deepest desires. They are a source of life and of steadfastness in self-giving. Deep personal involvement, assurance of treasured fruits, long term commitment to a developmental process: these are traits of a valuable love relationship.

Our love for the General Principles, though, does not happen by an easy falling in love by a serendipitous encounter with them. It may become the kind of love we pray for in the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises: the result of an intimate knowledge we need to search for persistently, by listening, contemplating, meditating, reflecting on ourselves.

Most probably, the best way to celebrate the fifty years of the General Principles would be to get to know them better, in order to love them deeply. There are some good helps for that in past issues of *Progressio*: *Progressio* Supplement n. 38-39, September 1992 http://bit.ly/Supplement38-39_en; and n. 36, January 1991 <http://bit.ly/GP-GN> (comments after http://bit.ly/Supplement36_en the text of the GPs and GNs); and a series of articles in the different issues of *Progressio* for the years 1968 to 1970.

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“Amar & Servir”

A CLC-Brazil formation program for youth

Alexandre Tenório



Alexandre Tenório is the coordinator of the National Executive Council CVX Brasil

Brazil and the world today

There are currently 207 million people in Brazil, of whom 25% are between the ages of 15 and 29. There are, therefore, more than 50 million young Brazilians, of which 56% have declared themselves Catholic in a recent survey conducted by the IBGE, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics.

This huge Brazilian contingent, like young people everywhere, are faced by a world in undergoing ever-accelerating changes, fluent, and characterized by volatile concepts. In our current “global village,” human interaction is often permeated – if not replaced – by technology. Our world is becoming more varied, faster and has never been so uncertain.

How do we evangelize in this scenario of uncertainty and change which envelops the young? How must we adapt our language? How do we make ourselves heard? Which tools can we use? How do we make use of the new without discarding what is eternal? How might we formulate our good news that there is a singular vocation in Jesus Christ, his Church, and CLC? Such apostolic challenge becomes urgent when we consider how many young people are limited by the lack of human and Christian education in our world. They are left vulnerable to easy

seduction from the values of consumerism, immediate satisfaction and individualism: today’s social diseases which undermine the Plan of the Father, as proclaimed by Jesus.

CLC in Brazil

Today CLC is present in 13 Brazilian states, from the southern tip to the northern Amazon region. A total of 56 local communities and 6 pre-CLC’s are organized in seven regions. The Brazilian community only has a minority of young people. Currently, our average age is almost 55 years. Looking at the Brazilian Church as a whole, the situation is not much different. Although the presence of young people is more noticeable than in CLC, their numbers get smaller day by day. We have been asking ourselves: are we failing in our pastoral approach to youth?

CLC, following a discernment begun a few years ago in our National Community and confirmed by the last World Assembly in Beirut, has been taking steps to make youth one of our priority fields of apostolic activity. In response to these reflections, we have, in recent years, examined with discernment the issue and have taken some initiatives. We tried to learn from some existing Ignatian programs for young people, such as the Ignatian Encampment in Brazil and Minimanila in Chile, and after making some changes, we set up a Youth Training program called Amar & Servir (To Love and to Serve).

Amar & Servir Program

The Amar & Servir is offered by CLC Brazil, and its purpose is to form young leaders who through a process of deep reflection and discernment can live out one’s Christian vocation, using the tools of Ignatian spirituality. It is primarily aimed at young adults between the age of 18 and 29 who



have already had some kind of Ignatian experience, not necessarily in CLC. We are looking for young people who:

- ◆ desire more formation and deeper knowledge, living in community with other young Christians from their region and also from other parts of the country and the whole Latin America;
- ◆ are willing to make an eight-day silent retreat, to get to know more intimately Jesus' way, and to hear the calls that the Lord might be making in their own lives;
- ◆ are ready to design, by the end of the program, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, a "life project" for the living out of their Christian vocation;
- ◆ want to use the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola as a means to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with Him for the building of the Kingdom of God.

The program lasts 15 days and is divided into two mandatory and complementary modules.

- **First**, the young participants experience the Spiritual Exercises in an eight-day directed retreat.

- **Secondly**, they take part in a seven-day course of human and Christian formation, where they are offered an integrative vision of their role as young Christians, not only within the family and the Church, but also in the society of which they are part. We seek to address topics that are relevant to contemporary youth, as well as issues related to the needs of the Church today, such as: volunteering and Christian leadership; articulation between faith, culture and technology; sexuality, affectivity and diversity. We also speak about CLC itself and Ignatian methodology.

The sequence of the two modules is not random. It is on the basis of the retreat and encounter with the Word of God, the experience of the Ignatian method and the listening to the calls of the Lord, who looks at us in love, and therefore take the next steps. The training course constantly recalls the retreat and connects with its experience. During this time, the young participants live in community and together undertake the usual house chores of the



place where they are staying.

Also during the course, each one has a day of missionary immersion, in which there is contact with the local environment and the actual needs of the local people. Usually, it consists of voluntary work with the poor, which always gives the young person a strong experience from close quarters of the true and real-life experience, often quite different from his or her daily personal life. This encounter with the other in suffering is often a transforming experience.

At the beginning of each evening, there is reflection on the experience of the day through an Ignatian review and the sharing of feelings in small groups.

At the end of the program, the “Life Project”, which was developed during all this second stage, is ready to be finalized. Through it, each one makes a commitment to God, to the Church, to oneself and to society to work for God’s plan in establishing a Kingdom of justice, fraternity and love.

There is also plenty of opportunity for relaxation, fun activities and entertainment, such as watching movies, taking part in Ignatian games and other activities. Heartfelt joy is an ever-present aspect of the character of the Brazilian people.

It is important to remember that the Amar & Servir program does not have as a priority the aim to enlist young people into CLC. That will be a welcomed bonus, if the young person identifies himself with our own charism and vocation. Of course, we would love to have them journey with us. Prima-

rily, however, the program wants to offer young people, with the tools of the Spiritual Exercises, the skills to discern in their own lives the ways to love and to serve better in the Church and in society. It is, therefore, a service that CLC provides to young people, to the Church and to society in general.

We have already organised six Amar & Servir editions in several regions of Brazil, reaching about 150 young people. The last one took place in Belém, in the Amazon, and the next one will be in the city of Fortaleza, in January 2018. Registration will open in September 2017 on the website www.cvx.org.br and any young person fulfilling the conditions mentioned above can participate.

In addition to the Amar & Servir program, we have also worked on other youth initiatives such as weekend retreats for young people. Recently we have created a national secretariat to research and implement strategies to act on this front, as well as to strengthen ties with Society of Jesus in its various activities with youth, especially in the Magis Houses and Spaces.

More and more we realize that youth is not only the future of the Church, but it is also its present. We need to work together so that they become the leaders of the building of their own history, based on the calls that the Lord makes to them right now. We want to exercise a new pastoral ethic in which young people do not need to be “taught” by us, but are given the tools and conditions to discern the movements that the Spirit raises in them, movements which always lead in all things to love and to serve.



The Mission of the Centre Ireme

CLC Rwanda and its Edifying Testimonials



Camille MARARA

The theme of the Pan-African Assembly 2016 which took place in Kigali from the 17th till the 21st November, was: “*Choosing life throughout life*”. During the visit to the psycho-social centre IREME, the members of the World ExCo met with one of the associations of beneficiaries of the services offered in this centre, with the staff of the centre and the members of the apostolic mission of CLC Rwanda.

The name Ireme is derived from the Kinyarwandan verb “*kurema*”, meaning “*to create*” or “*to give life*”, symbolising here a setting which builds, restores meaning in life, and awakens hope and a desire to live. The centre makes the beneficiaries feel welcomed and assured that there is someone willing to listen to them. Consequently, this creates a bond of friendship between them and the persons accompanying them.

Presentation of the Centre

History of the Centre

The Centre Ireme is an initiative of CLC Rwanda which fits in with its calling to a “Common mission”. In 2005, the CLC Rwanda ExCo attempted to find an area of common mission for the community and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, the choice fell on accompanying persons infected with and af-

ected by HIV/AIDS. A sending-forth mass was celebrated for the success of the project. At the beginning, it became just an individual mission which didn't achieve the expected results.

A place to welcome people and coordinate activities was found and an organisation with both permanent and temporary staff was established. The Centre Ireme was thus created and a period of informal and individual work made way for a common mission which operated on a spiritual as well as psycho-social level. The co-ordinated activities started in 2013. When it was inaugurated, the Centre had 50 beneficiaries. In October 2014, the number had reached 107. Taking into account financial and human resources as well as reasons of efficacy, the Centre had to limit itself to this number, disappointing a good number of persons asking for help.

The Structure of Ireme

The ExCo is the main organ representing the General Assembly. The CLC President is its legal representative, the EA its spiritual director and the apostolic commission the organ of origin and charged with monitoring and follow-up.

The Centre's co-ordinator oversees the co-ordination and implementation of the project. He is assisted by profes-



Camille Marara is the coordinator of the Centre Ireme

Below, from left to right:

- Two beneficiaries in the middle of companion Alvera (on the left) and coordinator Camille (on the right).
- Ribbon cutting and inauguration of the Ireme Center by Father Karekezi, late Pere J.C. Michel and President Yvonne





sionals and voluntary companions who receive the necessary formation for the different areas of intervention.

Our Main Objectives:

- ♦ Providing the beneficiaries with moral and spiritual support through spiritual conversation.
- ♦ Providing the beneficiaries with counselling, enabling them to accept the illness and to look positively towards the future.
- ♦ Organising activities to educate the beneficiaries and creating social and communitarian networks for mutual support.
- ♦ Providing material support for education, health and self-development for the beneficiaries.

Main activities

- ♦ The main activity is spiritual accompaniment. Trained CLC members meet the persons they accompany and build links of friendship and trust with them. This process opens the beneficiaries to a process of being open to God and others.
- ♦ The psychological accompaniment touches the medical aspects (prevention, treatment and counselling). The clinical-psychologists care for the beneficiaries who show signs of severe psychological trouble.
 - ♦ The socio-economic accompaniment covers health, education and the micro projects aimed at generating revenue.
 - The beneficiaries have access to health care through medical insurance.
 - 37 students benefit from paid scholastic fees, materials and complimentary food.
 - The beneficiaries are organised in associations for revenue-generating micro projects. These associations receive start-up loans. 73 beneficiaries grouped in 7 associations have been aided financially.

Experiences in Centre Ireme

Ibyiringiro Corunum Association accompanied by Camille and Alvera Jeanette NIRERE, member of the Association was interviewed:

We are an association of 10 people led by the health centre of Kimisagara under the direction of a congregation of Catholic nuns. The NGO partners could not meet our needs anymore.

We found ourselves more vulnerable and poor. In 2013 we were approached by CLC members. After some meetings and starting from our initiatives, the Centre Ireme trained us in accounting and management in order to help us start and manage a business of second-hand clothes. The Centre also lent us funds to get our business going.

We rented a stall in a neighbourhood market, we did well and then we expanded our market. We started to go and sell our merchandise in daily markets in the outskirts of the city of Kigali. What we earned helped us meet our families' basic needs and we felt re-integrated into society.

Our companion, Alvera, also taught us how to prepare doughnuts and set up a small restaurant where we sold food to the sick people of the health centre. Apart from these activities we also received counselling from the clinical psychologist Muhire. We repaid the loaned amount within the set time limit.

The problem we now face is that the government has prohibited the importation of the type of clothes that we used to sell. We now need more financing to sell locally-produced clothes or start a different business.

Twiyubake Association accompanied by Immaculée Beata UWANYIRIGIRA, president of the association:

Widowed, I used to live with my two children in a semi-destroyed house, poor, sick, discouraged and marginalised.

I had the pleasure to come into contact with the Centre Ireme, thanks to the visit of Immaculée and another CLC member.

At first, the centre financed my small shop, but as this was not doing as well as we needed, they offered me a job as a gardener at the Jesuit school where my child could go to study with the children of well-to-do families. From that day my life changed completely. Thanks to my salary, I could reconstruct our house; I became a normal woman once again to the great astonishment of my neighbours who used to marginalise me.

The Centre gave our association a loan to cultivate mushrooms. Unfortunately the project was not feasible and we returned the money. We are planning to ask for another financing package to start another project.

Alexis KARUMUNA, student, accompanied by Astrida

I was born in 1993. As an orphan I live with my grandmother who is 75 years old, diabetic and suffering from high blood pressure.

When I was 13, my uncle tested me for HIV/AIDS and when I tested positive he hid the truth from me. In 2013, thanks to Astrida, my companion, I was introduced to Centre Ireme where I could benefit from cure, advice and other forms of support. I was regularly accompanied and followed up by Muhire, the clinical psychologist.

Four years ago, my health – which by that time had seriously deteriorated – improved considerably. My weight was 30kg in 2017; I now weigh 59kg. I could even continue my studies at university-level. The bad memories I have are the marginalisation and stigma which I suffered. The formation and support of the Centre pulled me out of the darkness and discouragement and I can now see the light and hope of life. I received counselling formation and I am now a voluntary worker at the health centre of Remera. I feel indebted to the

Centre and I want to help in raising awareness and so help other young people. I am worried about my grandmother.

Godeberthe MUKAGATERA, accompanied by Suzanne

I was born in 1962. I learnt that I was sick in 2003 during a prenatal consultation for my 8th child. From that day, my life became a nightmare. First, I felt the fear of dying slowly and leaving my children without any help because their father had abandoned me immediately. Later, I was gripped by the fear of being stigmatised and marginalised by those around me.

Thanks to my neighbour, a member of CLC, I could be integrated into the Centre Ireme where I received support: moral, spiritual and material. From there I rediscovered the joy of life. Un-

Below from the top to bottom:
- Beneficiaries of the Center Ireme: Association of beneficiaries IBYIRINGIRO (HOPE)
- Reception, joy and dance at Center Ireme / Staff, World ExCo and the beneficiaries of the Center.



fortunately, to cope with the needs of my big family, I had to sell drugs, which earned me a prison sentence.

After coming out of prison, I was completely changed. I confided in my companion and wanted to be baptised into the Catholic Church. Suzanne was my god-mother at the church and all the big family was reunited for the celebration. I became a new woman, and thanks to the help of the Centre Ireme I am now ready to go on with my new life.

Best practices at the Centre

- ♦ The Ignatian-inspired CLC use the Ignatian approach of DSSE (Discerning, Sending, Supporting, Evaluating) which is the fundamental tool for the philosophy of the Centre. Spiritual accompaniment is the process which differentiates between the centre and other institutions intervening in the domain of HIV/AIDS.
- ♦ The organisation of fundraising activities as a means for the mobilisation of funds, lobbying and appeals to partners.
- ♦ The organisation of a monthly prayer of intercession for the common mission.

The challenges and expansion of activities of the Centre

- ♦ Human, material and financial resources are limited in relation to the needs of the Centre as formulated in the strategic plan 2016-18.
- ♦ The Centre depends on the mem-

bership fees of CLC Rwanda and donations of local partners.

- ♦ The vast majority of infected and affected beneficiaries are poor and vulnerable.
- ♦ The Centre needs other partners to be assured of its autonomy and capability to meet the needs of the beneficiaries.
- ♦ In view of the demand, the Centre sees the necessity of extending its apostolate to help struggling families and young people.

Conclusion

In 1990 Pope John Paul II issued this statement regarding the AIDS pandemic: "The tragedy does not only threaten some nations or societies, but all humanity. It knows neither border, ... nor social condition... Only a response which takes into account the two aspects of the sickness: medical as well as the human, cultural, moral and religious dimensions of life, can offer complete solidarity to its victims and raise hope. It is then that the epidemic can be fought and controlled."

It is with this perspective that CLC Rwanda took its humble steps in this battle, a journey which is still long. May the Holy Spirit, our Light, source of all Hope, continue to strengthen us and may Centre Ireme remain the oasis which waters a refuge of joy and hope for the thirsty, the tired and the marginalised.

*Original in French
Translated by Manrico Bugeja*



Visit to the Center Ireme/
World ExCo, Ibyiringiro
Beneficiaries Association, staff
and accompanying staff of the
Center.

Conversation between Godeberthe Mukagatare and Camille Marara



Camille MARARA

Mary, Immaculate Virgin, Woman of pain and hope, be benevolent to each person who suffers and obtain for everyone fullness of life. Turn your maternal gaze especially to those who in Africa are in extreme need, because afflicted by AIDS or by another fatal disease. Look at the mothers who weep for their children; look at the grandparents who are without sufficient resources to support their grandchildren who have become orphans. Clasp all of them to your Mother's heart, Queen of Africa and the whole world, Most Holy Virgin, pray for us!

Pope John Paul II

Could you introduce yourself?

My name is Gadeberthe Mukagatare, and I was born January 1, 1962. I'm a farmer and I've been separated from my husband since 2002. From 1993 to that date, we weren't legally married. I had seven children by him and was pregnant with an eighth child, a girl. I'm bringing my children up by myself.

Who is your accompanier?

Suzanne Ruboneka of the Peter Claver community and Catherine Mukabaya of the John Paul II community.

When did you learn about your state of health and how did you react?

I learned that I was sick in 2003 at a prenatal consultation for my last child. It was a shock; I fainted but then thanks to medical care and counselling at the Health Centre, I pulled through, despite the challenges. I kept my health problems secret, since I was afraid of being put aside, stigmatised, accused and judged by the community. I waited until my children were older before telling them about it. It was difficult.

How did you meet your accompanier?

She was my neighbour, and we had always got along well. I went to see her one day, to tell her about the conflict



Suzanne and Godeberthe

with my husband, and then trusted her enough to tell her that I had HIV/AIDS and that my husband had given it to me.

What pushed you to tell her about your situation?

She was working for "Pro-femme/Twese Hamwe" (a collective for the promotion of women and peace and development). She was an activist for women and children's rights. I was sure that she could understand me and give me support, since I was very alone, and that's what happened. She was a good neighbour, and she would send me clothes, food and money. And at harvest time I would offer her something. Little by little she became my confidante.

What hurt you the most?

First of all, to know that what I had would never heal, and then the despair to think of dying and leaving my eight children alone. And then the fear of being branded and excluded in the neighbourhood. I was also afraid that my children would catch HIV/AIDS;

What a relief, after my children were tested, to discover that they were all healthy. They're my reason for living and they've given me the strength to fight for my life and to raise them.

How did you come to know about the "Centre Ireme" and its services? What memories do you have of it? Do you have disappointments?

Suzanne, my accompanier, took me to the "Centre Ireme" after explaining how it works. On arriving, I was given a warm welcome and was listened to by a councillor. At each visit he offered me a glass of milk and bus tickets. He always accompanied me respectfully to the roadside to take the bus. The Centre took care of health insurance for two of my children and I continued to go there for advice and moral and spiritual support.

It was also a place where I met other beneficiaries of the programme, or neighbours who worked in the Jesuits' garden (but the state of their health remained confidential). Little by little there was dialogue and we shared our problems, so that I no longer felt so alone.

At the Centre, my accompaniers often spoke of the force of prayer. I told them I prayed, but in fact I was living in an obscure world (despair, the sale of illegal drinks, drugs, bad company).

What marked you the most? Were there any disappointments?

My greatest disappointments were:

- Separation from my husband, who left me to legally marry another woman;

- My two unmarried daughters had unwanted pregnancies;
- I went to jail for drug-trafficking and selling illegal liquor. In the prison of Nyamagabe I was far away from my family (200 kilometers) and also was deprived of my antiretroviral medication for a few days, until the Health Centre could transfer it to me.

What marked me the most:

- When you listen to the advice given by the doctor and the staff, when you come back to the Lord, life has meaning again. It changed me. I'm doing really well.
- I was in prison for six months, and during all this time a member of CLC and my accompaniers looked after my children.
- On returning, I was surprised that they didn't condemn me, and on the contrary they encouraged me to return to church and to receive the sacraments.
- My accompanier also took me on pilgrimage to Kaguba, to the "Sanctuaire de la Miséricorde" (Sanctuary of Mercy). I was wary before going, but during the pilgrimage – as well as during my stay in prison and on returning home – I think I received a special force from the Lord.
- She also accepted to be my godmother, and I'm really proud of this.

What advice could you offer to other people benefitting from "Centre Ireme" or working there?

For people like me:

- Accept your state of health, recognise that life goes on, scrupulously respect the doctors' and staff's advice.
- Turn to the Lord; give up a disordered way of life.

To the staff of the Centre:

- Carry on with the care and support they give. Their work is exceptional.

- Continue to help with school fees, health insurance and funding for projects which can generate income.
- Youth education, to prevent unwanted pregnancies and AIDS, is essential.
- Strengthen real friendship; my experience taught me that hard times show us who our real friends are.

Do you have any particular problems now? How do you plan to resolve them?

- Poverty. I lost my land because of urban development. I don't want to go back to illicit activities to earn money.
- I'm going to have to move from the city, and the expropriation will be insufficient.
- I'm still responsible for some of my children and grandchildren. Paying their school fees and feeding them is a worry.
- With my expropriation fee, I plan

to buy a small plot of land and a house, far from the city.

"The Church in Africa, the African Church, has a mission towards the universal Church. In her poverty and humility, she must remind all her sisters what's essential to the Beatitudes." E. Mveng, sj.

« One of the best fields of application of the theology of consolation is without a doubt the ministry of people who suffer from HIV/AIDS. Given the major crises and catastrophes that trouble the African continent, its children should work to develop theologies of affliction and consolation, of the Cross and Glory.»

Thanks to Godeberthe Mukagatare and to her accompanier and godmother, Suzanne Ruboneka.

In all things, to love and to serve for the greater glory of God

*Original in French
translated by Cecilia McPherson*



Godeberthe and her family



Hildegard Ehrtmann: far beyond CLC

Veronika Jodlbauer



Veronika Jodlbauer is a CLC member from Germany.

Hildegard Ehrtmann, born in 1931, grew up with seven siblings in a Catholic family in the days of the German Nazi regime. Her father was active in the resistance movement, had to spend some time in prison, the members of his resistance group were sentenced to death and subsequently killed. Very much formed by that time, Hildegard was highly committed to truth and justice for all her lifetime.

She was an active member of the Marian Congregation of her diocese. As a social worker she went to the USA for a two-year master's degree program and was in touch with the renewal movement within the Marian Congregations there and in Canada. Returning to Germany, her major concern was to promote CLC in Germany. This would shape her whole life.

In 1964 Hildegard became secretary and close collaborator of the Jesuit promotor for Marian Congregations in the National Secretariat, set up by the Jesuits some years before. She began to travel through the country and to tell the existing Marian Congregations about the renewal towards CLC. This was work with a lot of heart blood, not without conflicts, because not everyone was ready to share Hildegard's enthusiasm and catch this fire.



At the same time, she began to look for and find female companions to form a small life community, as she had come across in Canada, entirely at the disposal of CLC. This community became the core of the newly formed and developing CLC in Germany. The little house that the community lived in, near Augsburg in the middle of a cemetery, became a place of international hospitality, whenever CLC members from around the world came to Europe. Meanwhile Hildegard had already become a member in the World Executive Council (1970-79).

I met Hildegard in 1980, when she had just finished her activities on the CLC World ExCo, but continued to be the National Secretary for CLC in Germany. I had just come back from a stay on the Philippines, where Stan Lee, a CLC member there, had referred me to her as a spiritual guide. Obviously, I had to travel to the Philippines to discover the woman in my neighborhood! She should become very important for my life. She helped me to come to terms with experiencing poverty and my own inability to help, and to slowly find a way towards the Spiritual Exercises which made God and Jesus Christ the foundation of my life. It was also her merit that I became more and more engaged in CLC and eventually worked as their full time employee for many years.

Hildegard played a main role in introducing individually guided Spiritual Exercises to Germany. Accepted only gradually by the Jesuits, an increasing number of lay people participated in individually guided retreats. She and Alex Lefrank SJ, who shared Hildegard's passion, began to train lay people as spiritual guides in the 1970s. Numerous two-year seminars have been held so far, meanwhile offered by second and third generations. From here, a retreat movement has spread throughout Germany, and has become manifold, far beyond CLC.

At the same time, Hildegard was constantly on the road spreading CLC and

supporting its development. Up to her retirement in 1991 and beyond she was active in various committees, but even more so in guiding formation groups for Spiritual Exercises and giving retreats.

During the last few years it had become quieter around Hildegard and over the last few months she had been waiting, full of longing, for the Lord to call her. On May 30th she received this grace.

Hildegard's Easter

María Magdalena Palencia Gómez.

At this point in my life when I'm already almost 81, I find new reasons every day to thank God for so much good received. And in this sense the news of Hildegard's departure to the Father's house continues to be, every day, a source of deep gratitude for her, for her life, for what she meant in my life, and for what she gave to and enabled for many, particularly in the Christian Life Community. Although I first met Hildegard in 1973, - in Rome and Augsburg - it was not then that our relationship really began, for I was a little inaccessible, very efficiency-conscious and busy, and I looked and appreciated only from a distance.

Our 'friendship in the Lord' began three years later - Manila and the Manila Assembly - during the trip from Manila to Baguio, in a small truck with few comforts and driven by a capable but somewhat daring driver. The trip affected her more than me, probably because of the difference in the driving habits of constantly careful German drivers and the quality of the roads they drive on. Within just over three hours we had the opportunity to begin to know each other. We shared about ourselves, our origins and families, our previous and current activities at that time, about our vocation to the Marian Congregation and the call to live it fully in the CLC. We talked about our experiences of life, our illusions, our struggles, our sorrows and joys, of just everything that came to mind. And yes, when we arrived in Baguio it felt like we really knew each other and had known each other for a long time.

I must mention here that this kind of experience happened to me on many occasions. Meeting and getting to know CLC members from various parts of the world, having a little chat with them in a very short time often leads us to discover our great affinity. We are able to share 'faith and life' in depth as true brothers and si-

sters and friends in the Lord, for what unites us in the depths of our hearts does not know borders, races, or even languages, as we always find a way to communicate. One more great reason to thank the Lord!

The closeness with Hildegard certainly enriched my life in many ways. After our deep sharing during the trip to Baguio I found out that she was the first "Lay Woman" whom I had met who was a Spiritual Director of the Exercises. In the daily meetings of the Spiritual Directors to which I was invited, in view of the special service that I was asked to give during those days, I came to appreciate her deep knowledge of the process of the Exercises and her own experience of the Spirituality emanating from them, her respect for those whom she accompanied, and her total trust and almost contemplative admiration for the action of God in each person. An immense gift from God for me was to be able to visit Hildegard for the last time just last year and to reminisce with her, forty years later, our first exchanges. Despite her advanced age and the natural limitations of it, during the days that I was staying under the same roof, she jealously guarded the times necessary to accompany in



Magdalena Palencia is a CLC member from Mexico. She was the World ExCo Secretary from 1976 to 1982

Hildegard with Pope John Paul II in 1979





the Exercises a person who, under her guidance, was staying on the upper floor of the house. I therefore want to highlight, in the first place, her lifelong dedication to this service or ministry, from which came the continued spiritual accompaniment for many from whom, on more than one occasion, I heard testimonies of lived deep consolation.

How could I miss the great contribution of Hildegard to CLC? Of course, the first thing she could give to the Community, perhaps even unintentionally, was her witness of a life as a lay woman fully committed to the service of the world and the Church, from the perspective of an Ignatian spirituality fully rooted in her and lived by her. We shared service to Exco for three years. I was her heir, since she served as Secretary during the two previous terms, and in this term together, she was the Vice President. It should be noted that these two previous terms occurred in the immediate aftermath of the Assembly in Santo Domingo, where we experienced a big crisis that became a seed of true growth. Thanks to the dedication and right personality of those who were elected, who, in a troubled situation, were able to grow into a strong united Exco and to take on the reconstruction and reorientation of the then still World Federation!

As always, as members of the Exco elected in Manila, we did our best not only to attend to the usual specific roles, but also, as a true community, to respond to the mandate received from the Assembly and to the needs that were becoming evident from the world reality that we were experiencing. We saw to the formation of appropriate commissions for Spirituality, Education, Youth and Mission/Service within Exco and enriched them with the participation of some other members. Hildegard headed the commission on Mission/Service. This gave me the opportunity to share closely with her a deep and fruitful work that since that time confirmed to me the importance of the Mission being carried in the context of Service and the need for all Service to be rooted in the Mission to avoid it becoming mere activism.

During all the sessions of the Exco and the Commission, Hildegard was always a very active participant and was especially attentive to the voice of the Spirit. On one occasion, she had the freedom and the strength to make us stop a project for several days, when she realized that the evil spirit had led us to hasty decisions. Her

alarm call helped us take a step back regardless of the time pressure and review the path after a prayerful pause, and to listen and discern better our responses.

The experiences we lived and gathered during the different contacts with the 'national federations' led us to the conviction that our essence, not only within Exco but also at the universal level, was not that of a federation but of a Community. I remember with special admiration and gratitude the feeling of joy and the great consolation that helped us arrive at this realization and the subsequent decision to propose to the Rome Assembly the great step that it took to contemplate and accept this realization. So, the World Federation of Christian Life Communities recognized itself and accepted itself as a Single community, called to serve a single world.

I recall especially the serenity with which Hildegard knew when to take responsibility when for personal reasons Marte Vizons, who was the World President at the time, was unable to attend the World Assembly Rome '79. His absence left Hildegard, late in the day, to exercise the role of leader both in the Assembly and at the audience that the Community had with Pope John Paul II at the beginning of his pontificate. The Osservatore Romano, in the next issue referred to "... signorina Hildegard, ha rivolto al Papa alcune espressioni di saluto e ringraziamento per l'incontro ... " [PS. Translated as: Miss Hildegard greeted and thanked the Pope

for the audience].

These and many other memories prompt me to give thanks for the life and presence of Hildegard. I think it is important to mention as well another rich trait of her personality, which I would describe as a rich vein of childlike disposition, which she kept to the end, and gave her a sympathetic and very pleasing spontaneity in certain special moments. One such occasion was when I taught her to 'drink tequila' according to the Mexican ritual by combining in the mouth lemon, salt and the drink and to swallow them all together. Other times were when someone made a joke she really liked, or when she received a small gift, or when she was contemplating a landscape, a sunset, or when she heard the testimony of something or someone. Often there was a pause, as if for her to withdraw inside for a moment, before exclaiming with an almost lit-up expression: wunderbar! (Wonderful!)

Borrowing a phrase, very dear to my family, I can only say: "Thank God who brought me to her and thanks to her who brought me to God,"

*Original in Spanish
Translated by David Formosa*

Still Alive

Veronica Villegas

At last, after crawling from Germany to the Philippines, snail mail delivered Hildegard's obituary to my mailbox yesterday, June 30. In the weeks before yesterday, I often caught myself waiting for the next email update on Hildegard's condition; though actually the news of her death reached me half an hour after it happened on May 30. So in the next breath I would shake my head and tell myself, "Hey, what's the matter? It's real. Hildegard is dead."

Still, I feel Hildegard alive.

I see her face aglow with enthusiasm. Hildegard was enthusiastic about al-

most everything. She was a WOW person, a Wonder Woman. She was full of wonder even for what seemed to me of little value. When she was my spiritual guide in my early twenties, she saw me – with sparkling eyes – as a wonderful person. That's how she taught me to appreciate myself; that's how she showed me how God sees me. That's how she taught me to see God and find Him in the whole sweep of creation – from the splendour of a human being to the lowliness of a snowdrop peeking from beneath the winter debris.

I hear her laughter. It was easy to make her laugh. In her I found someone who enjoyed even my silliest

Opposite page, from top to bottom

- Hildegard with Fr. Arrupe SJ and Patrick O'Sullivan SJ 1979
- Hildegard and Walther Fincke, former pres CLC Germany.
- Hildegard with Veronica Villegas
- HE and Alex Lefrank SJ hiking in the mountains.

jokes. She laughed often out of wonder. And quite often I felt amazed to find out that concealed behind the hearty laugh were bouts with severe migraine and other intense bodily pains. That's how she taught me to encounter God in pain and, by His grace, to befriend suffering.

I watch her dance. During one of my spiritual direction sessions with Hildegard, she gave me "The Dance of Obedience and the Straw Ark", a book about Gomer's conversion. Page by page, Hildegard awakened me to the dance of life and led me to accept God's invitation to dance with Him – on smooth paths and rugged terrain; in light and in darkness. She taught me to stick it out with my Partner through all the seasons and mysteries of human existence. But came a time when I walked away from my Partner. Even then, Hildegard kept dancing on my behalf.

I see her labouring. In GP 5 we read: "...we hold the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius as the specific source and the characteristic instrument of our spirituality." As a greenhorn CLC member in 1967, I swallowed this general principle in a state of ignorance. But through Hildegard's patient efforts (along with that of Fr. Alex Lefrank, SJ), the meaning gradually unfolded during my two year stay in Germany. Through retreats, international formation courses, and long-term seminars that Hildegard and other resolute pioneers laboured to design and facilitate, I learned to embrace the Spiritual Exercises as the distinct fuel to the fire within me.

Unwrapping the meaning of GP 5 was a burning quest for Hildegard, particularly in the first years of CLC. I glimpsed how hard she worked to help a newborn world community understand, accept and live out the SpEx spirituality. She stayed the course through difficulties. After 50 years, is it not evident that her labours have borne fruit?

It is the 50th anniversary of CLC. What a fitting year for the end of Hildegard's earthly labour and for her entry into eternal rest! Yes, Hildegard is gone physically. Holding her obituary, looking at her picture, reading the text brings home that point. If ever I visit Augsburg again, I will no longer see her in the familiar rooms of the Leonhardsberg apartment. There will only be a silent tombstone in Herrgottsruh to see and touch.

But an obituary and a tombstone cannot dim the radiance of Hildegard's legacy. In this golden jubilee of CLC, I claim her life and death as part of what I celebrate. I claim her legacy as part of the Gold God has polished through the years; as part of the precious Gold God has given to us to treasure and share.

I thank God for Hildegard. And I thank Hildegard. She was mentor, spiritual mother, beloved friend. She taught me life – the CLC way of life. She hardly knew she was teaching me. She was just herself. But herself was both the message and the medium. And in death, she lives on as she continues to give life to me and, I am sure, to many others.

Hildegard with her CLC group and with her Life Community



2017

May

- Convocation to the Buenos Aires 2018 World Assembly

September

- **Projects 168:** Our next CLC World Assembly – “CLC celebration, consolidation, renewal”

October

- **31** Last day for submission of nominations for World ExCo candidates (Extension)

November

- **5** Nominated candidates are informed of their nomination
- **15** National ExCos are given the names of nominated members from their national communities
- **Projects 169:** World CLC Day 2018- “Caring for our gift, offering it more generously in joy”

December

- Pledges for the Solidarity Fund by December 2017

2018

January

- **15** Last day of submission candidates’ acceptance of nominations
- **21** Proposed amendments for the General Principles and/or the General Norms should be sent to the World Secretariat.
- **31** Updated National Community profiles (Updated date)

February

- **15** Deadline for submission of World Assembly delegates
- **15** Requests for support from the Solidarity Fund should be sent to the World Secretariat.

CVX - CLC
50 years



