



Quito, Ecuador. October 2014

2014 President's Letter to World CLC.

1. A Reflection to recognize ourselves in the Spirit of the World Assembly at Lebanon

"I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ ..."

Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium No. 49

Dear Sisters and Brothers of our beloved CLC all over the World. Each one of us, and all of us together as a community are the fruit of God's grace and love for us. Our option as CLC is the fruit of the Spirit's invitation to be involved in the Project of God. We are also the fruit of a discerned response to follow the itinerary of the incarnated Christ who is our brother. The centre of our existence lies in this recognition of a God who, out of pure love, becomes human and invites us to participate in his Project (GP 1). The only 'raison d'être' of our community, as also that of all believers, is to live out fully this way of following Christ.

The call of our World Assembly in Lebanon 2013 presents us with a beautiful opportunity to recognize in our community the progressive revelation of God and his love for us. In this fundamental moment in Beirut -a little over a year ago- in a place so rich in our faith history, we recognized the deep roots that sustain us. The history of CLC (and that of the Marian Congregations) is a reflection of innumerable lives dedicated to the service of the Kingdom. This fills us with deep gratitude for our past. Furthermore, following the direction of previous Assemblies, our community celebration at Lebanon called us to a greater apostolic zeal and discernment in the face of a broken world.

All of us in CLC are challenged to move out of our comfort-zone and our self-referential ways. Human and spiritual growth is necessary, but only as a prelude for discernment. We are faced with the question "At which frontiers is Christ calling me to be present? "How can I make myself available with freedom and generosity?"

I invite you to pray with the quote of Pope Francis given above, in order to integrate this invitation in the light of our CLC journey at the personal, local and world levels. "In what way has our journey become stormy due to the risks taken in searching for the incarnate Christ?". The Spirit gave us a strong call in Lebanon: "Rooted in (the) graces of our vocation, we are invited to recognize and be at home at the frontiers with respect, openness and a sense of welcome." (Lebanon document, n. 9)

2. An Invitation from the World Assembly 2013 to accept the call of Christ from our Ignatian Charism in CLC

I do not fear the new world that is emerging. I fear rather that CLC may have little or nothing to offer this world, little or nothing to say or do that could justify our existence. We cannot try to defend our mistakes, but neither do we wish to commit the biggest mistake of them all: that of waiting with folded arms and doing nothing, for fear of making a mistake"

Pedro Arrupe s.j.

(adapted from the original)

What was stated in the previous section may give rise to some concerns about the specific mechanisms we would need to take on such a huge mission. Oh that we may discern and open our hearts to follow Christ in his life, death and resurrection! At the very least, we could ask for the desire to desire the consequences that flow from following Christ and working for the Kingdom. This is clearly the way of the Second and Third weeks of the Spiritual Exercises, a necessary path to reach the plenitude of the Fourth week *“Then I will reflect upon myself, and consider, according to all reason and justice, what I ought to offer the Divine Majesty, that is, all I possess and myself with it. Thus, as one would do who is moved by great feeling, I will make this offering of myself: Take, Lord and Receive ... ”* (S.E 234).

God is good to us as CLC and has given us the necessary keys to discover how to respond to this profound invitation contained in our General Principles. At Lebanon, the Lord gifted us a confirmation of the richness of our Lay Ignatian identity. This is the most characteristic feature of our CLC and the various tools of our spirituality are all part of that identity.

We realize from our experience and discernment that the signs of the times confront us with a “Globalization of Superficiality and Indifference”ⁱ. This has given rise to a society which is increasingly exclusive, individualistic, unjust and alienated. In other words, a society completely uprooted from God. The key to our discernment lies in this: our spirituality and its tools are perhaps among the best suited to respond to this grave situation. Therefore, it is a question of carrying to the world outside that which we already have within us.

Our lay identity already places us in areas of life where ‘other religious groups’ cannot enter easily. This enables us to get close to people and use our Ignatian Spirituality to build bridges with those who have lost all sense of meaning in life. Our spirituality – among many other Christ-centred spiritualities – finds its ‘raison d’être’ in this outward discerning movement towards the frontiers aiming to achieve the Magis.

I invite all local and national communities and regional platforms of World CLC to a deep discernment in the Spirit: In which concrete frontier is God calling us to be present in order to offer the best of our Ignatian tradition? I invite every member of CLC to deepen the call of our Assembly at Lebanon so that we can bring concrete “good news” of our presence at the frontiers to our next World Assembly. This will be a prophetic and hope-filled sign for us in the next four years.

3. Regional Testimonies which invite World CLC to seek the Magis at the frontiers

I would like to conclude this first letter by acknowledging some of the concrete initiatives which CLC is already doing. This is just a small sample among the many things being done as a response to our call.

- A. At the frontier of Ecology, Carmen Amaya and Jairo Forero of CLC Colombia have begun, with great joy and commitment, their period of insertion in the Amazon. As part of their mission received from World CLC and the Latin America region, they will spend this year in Brazil along with the Jesuits of this region.
- B. At the frontier of Globalization and Poverty, our CLC members delegated at the United Nations continue affirming our option to be proactively present in international forums. In August, they participated in a Conference for NGOs organized by the UN Department of Public Information. The Conference focused on the role of civil society in the post 2015 development agenda. As a build up to the elections to the European Parliament, CLC Europe sent an open letter to the candidates with petitions for creating a more just society.
- C. At the frontier of the Family, members from CLC Malta and Chile, accompanied by the World ExCo, participated in pre-Synod meetings in Rome touching complex and challenging issues regarding this frontier. Various reports from Africa indicate the growth of actions in favour of Youth and Family.
- D. At the frontier of Youth, CLC Asia Pacific participated in the Asian Youth Day in Seoul, Korea. Our members offered a workshop on ‘Ignatian Spirituality for Youth’ and were able to introduce several youth to our charism.

E. Despite several difficulties, CLC in the Middle East continues its process of building up the community at the national and regional levels.

Additionally, there are innumerable experiences, stories and commitments of CLC all over the world, responding to our call to the frontiers.

I cannot end this letter without expressing deep gratitude to Franklin Ibañez and Sofia Montañez for their generous service at the World Secretariat during these past five years. They have been a living witness of love for CLC and commitment to the family. May they be blessed as they prepare for the next phase of their lives back in Latin America. We also ask the Lord to bless Alwin and Rojean Macalalad as they integrate themselves into this new mission. In this, they can surely count on our full support.

With hugs and prayers,

United in One Apostolic Body,

Mauricio López-Oropeza,
President, World CLC

ⁱⁱ Fr. Adolfo Nicolás. "Wisdom Language for the Frontiers". Address to CLC World Assembly, August 2013, Beirut, Lebanon and Pope Francis. July 2013. Homily at Lampedusa, Italy.