



Link between the Executive Council and the World Christian Life Community

World CLC ExCo Meeting, 2012



Dear Friends in Christ and CLC,

Greetings to all. We bring you news following our recent fourth annual CLC World Executive Council meeting held here in Rome at the Montecucco Retreat House from Sat 11th to Tues 21st February. Each day was characterized by our now well established rhythm of morning prayer and evening evaluation and Eucharist. We thank you all for your prayers and support during this special time for us all. They are greatly appreciated. The weather may have been very cold (even some snow) but the companionship and sense of global community support was very strong and warm. On this occasion, we had an additional sign of God's love, generosity – and, indeed, the Incarnation itself. Franklin and Sofia's 5 month old son, Sebastian was present for much of the Exco meeting – and a joy for us all.

The meeting was a time to rejoice in the progress being made in CLC on a number of fronts and at all levels around the world, often in the most testing of circumstances. It was also a time of anticipation for the graces and opportunities that the Lord was offering us. Especially, we were mindful of the following:

- The immanence of our forthcoming World Assembly 2013 in Lebanon with the unique circumstances in place and time that it presents.
- The 450th anniversary of CLC and Ignatian Lay communities
- The progress with the “Apartment Project”, a further sign of CLC growth, maturation and generosity.
- The further development of our Advocacy and Networking initiative.
- The reports from around the world of CLC life and spirit being lived in daily life.
- The progress with our financial management efforts.

We give thanks for how matters proceeded – with openness and trust and a spirit of service.

CLC around the world

Our Exco meeting began with a series of reports and discussions of CLC life around the globe. No report here can do the subject full justice. Suffice it to say that we are left with a sense of a depth of CLC community life, of personal growth, and a commitment to apostolic effort where opportunity presented itself.

Of particular interest was the *All Africa* Assembly held in November 2011. This Assembly took place in Douala, Cameroon and was attended by 31 delegates from 13 countries. It was a considerable achievement given the language differences to be accommodated and the costs and difficulties for many countries to attend. The outcome of the Assembly included the following priorities: family, preparation for marriage, ministry to the divorced, youth, and the marginalized. A Coordination Team has been established to help in the implementation and continuity of leadership.

Other Regional activities include quarterly transnational virtual meetings among *Latin American* national communities on various matters including the next generation of the Magis program, post Fatima reflections, advocacy and social commitment, new structures and communications, and more recently a virtual regional formation program on “The political dimension of our social commitment as CLC in Latin America”. Support for new communities in Guatemala and Honduras continues.

Elsewhere, the *Asia/Pacific Region* continues to grow in number and depth. They seek to continue to implement the goals of their 2010 Regional Assembly having established their coordinator, their website and now seeking further progress with other goals, eg formation. Typical apostolic works include ministering to refugees, youth, and the poor. In most countries, a special challenge is faced by the Christian faith being very much a minority faith in a sometimes quite hostile environment.

CLC, in the *Middle Eastern Region*, faces special challenges at the moment due to some political instability in the Region. Nevertheless, we are encouraged by reports of various works, especially formation programs, and the commitment and generosity of Lebanon, to continue with our proposed World Assembly there in 2013 (see later in this report).

The *European Region*, containing some strong national communities, continues its apostolic commitment both within Europe and beyond. CLC continues to grow in the Eastern part of the continent (as in Slovakia, Latvia or Romania). These communities are requiring some special assistance, especially those in their early stages of development and seeking global incorporation.

While the *North American Region* is not as formally organized yet as some other CLC Regions, we heard encouraging reports about member countries. Canada (English speaking) continues work on the second stage of its formation program. Together, with Canada (French speaking), both continue their support work in Haiti. CLC (USA) is embarking on an important review of its structures seeking to promote a more integrated national community.

Finances

It was pleasing to receive a finance report showing a steadily improving situation. Over recent years, a number of strategies have been employed to stabilize our financial situation. Although the current modest surplus can be accounted for by the extra issue of *Progressio* in 2011, the result is still good. We expect to be able to report favourably to the next World Assembly. These strategies and the generosity of the world CLC community reflect a commitment to the recommendations of previous recent world assemblies about financial co-responsibility. Work is continuing on this matter.

An online payment tool has been installed in our website. This tool will make it easier to transfer contributions (dues, *Progressio* subscriptions, donations, etc) to world CLC accounts. (See more details in <http://www.cvx-clc.net/1-en/contributions.html>)

The Accommodation Project

The “Accommodation Project” has been proceeding very satisfactorily. The goal to cover all direct (sale) and indirect (eg taxes) costs for the Apartment was €330,000. At the time of the Exco meeting, €213,000 was in hand; a further €40,000 is promised in the near future, with the balance being met by further late donations (contributions still welcome) and a generous interest free loan.¹

While we are deeply appreciative of the very substantial donations from a few national communities, we are equally appreciative of those smaller donations from other national communities and individuals for whom their contribution has been at some sacrifice. We can truly say that the acquisition of the Apartment is the result of a global communal effort by CLC and is something with which every CLC member can identify.

¹ Please see the CLC world website for the latest updates. www.cvx-clc.net

We are pleased to report that the decision to name the Apartment after one of our most significant past Executive Secretaries, “Josée Gsell” (b. France, 1925-1999), has been very widely endorsed. In doing so, we acknowledge Josée’s great contribution to the early life and growth of CLC.

Apostolic Fund

Work continues on the development of this fund. We expect to complete guidelines over the next few months. In the meantime, pilot projects have been approved in Ecuador and Rwanda. Also, some humanitarian aid has been sent to Sudan (now South Sudan).

Our 450th anniversary

In 2013, we celebrate the 450th anniversary of the establishment of CLC and its predecessor, the Marian Congregations (also known as the Sodalties in some countries). Celebrations are planned for 2013 and you will be advised of these soon, after due consultation. Many suggestions have been made for celebrations at all levels – international, national and more locally, stressing also more than four centuries of lay collaboration with the Society of Jesus and others in the Ignatian family. At the international level, thought has been given to a pilgrimage (along the route followed by Fr Jean Leunis SJ on his journey from Brussels to Rome), to a special commemorative Mass with the Jesuits in Rome, to a paper being a reflection on our history and identity and more. Consultation with national communities will begin on this soon. The next issue of Projects will give a more complete orientation towards the importance of this anniversary for us today and possible ways of commemoration.

Next CLC World Assembly, Lebanon, 2013

Following wide consultation, Lebanon was earlier decided upon as the venue for the next CLC World Assembly (2013). At this meeting, Exco put in place the processes needed to facilitate all that is required. In doing so, we were especially conscious of the historical significance of the location (Lebanon), of our 450th anniversary occurring in the same year, of the need for sensitivity to where the Holy Spirit is drawing us in the future and the many other matters you have drawn to our attention both at Fatima and since. As fruit of our discernment, we decided on the following theme: “From our Roots to the Frontiers”. By now, national communities will have received an advice officially convoking the next CLC World Assembly, raising the matter of national delegations and future World Exco nominations and initiating a process of preparation and reflection. Our World CLC day in 2013 will be focused on our Assembly and the celebration of the 450 years anniversary.

Advocacy and Networking

Work continued on the conceptual development and practice of CLC advocacy and networking. In particular, we see CLC advocacy as part of the apostolic processes of

service, accompaniment, and advocacy. As such, advocacy is therefore not just a top-down process but one intimately linked to people's suffering and needs as experienced at a personal level. CLC advocacy therefore is part of an integrated response (according to our General Principles and Assembly mandates) seeking to address both immediate needs and wider systemic causes developing advocacy from the concrete involvement on the spot (bottom-up approach).

To achieve this goal, we, as CLC, need to collaborate among ourselves (even globally) and with other like-minded organisations, especially the Society of Jesus. An example of this was our recent initiative directed at the low education expenditure levels of the Dominican Republic. CLC participation was from 30 countries of 5 continents – results have been encouraging already. Through such efforts, we also learn to refine our intervention strategies.

Encouraged by these results, we now seek to address further important initiatives. One relates to "Ecology", one of our priorities. An area of global ecological significance is the Amazon Jungle. Impacts there (particularly of the extraction industries) will have significant implications for water resources, biodiversity, global ecosystems and human habitation. Some of these implications will extend for many generations ahead and across national and even continental boundaries. In the near future, CLC will be investigating the possibility of collaborating with the Society of Jesus in an Amazon advocacy project in which CLC national communities would be invited to participate as discerned at the regional and national levels. If this option is taken, this project will include processes of education, discernment, dialogue and joint action as seen appropriate. CLC would also engage its restructured UN working groups and national links to facilitate this process. Additionally, we will look for ways to encourage CLC members, especially those working in the field of education, to use their possibilities for promoting our concerns. We will keep you informed of developments.

Communications

Exco noted the ongoing improvement in the CLC website in terms of the quality, variety and presentation of material. Further structural changes are being made to encourage community engagement and awareness around the world. Consideration is also being given to making Progressio available online, including back issues. We appreciate the issues involved here. Our objective is to widen access without disadvantaging any existing subscribers. As our website is constantly being updated, we urge regular visitation and the sending in of news material and considered articles for uploading. There is also a busy publication schedule ahead in 2012 as we approach our World Assembly in 2013 and our 450th CLC anniversary. Finally, we encourage national communities to visit our channel on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/user/cvxclc> and to send us any videos you would like to share with the CLC worldwide community.

Standing Orders Review

The Exco took the opportunity to review sections of the CLC Standing Orders relating to the role of an accompanying God-parent community, criteria for acceptance into the CLC world community and the requirements to attend a CLC World Assembly as an Observer. Together, these Standing Orders now more clearly define these roles and expectations and should be more helpful for those national communities (and future ones) now seeking acceptance to the CLC world community. An updated version of these Standing Orders will be placed on the website soon.

Meeting with Fr Nicolás SJ

Exco appreciated the opportunity to meet with Fr Adolfo Nicolás SJ, General of the Society of Jesus and the CLC World Ecclesiastical Assistant, on a number of issues. Discussion addressed the following:

- Reflections on the CLC/SJ collaboration: Fr Nicolás suggested it would be helpful to have a map of the nature of CLC/SJ collaboration around the world.
- Structural changes in the Jesuit Curia: Fr Nicolás discussed the reality confronting the Jesuits about numbers and the need for a new vision. New Centres were being established along apostolate as well as geographical lines (see www.sjweb.info)
- Discussion then addressed discernment of mission: At a personal level, how important it is to transform one's profession into one's mission and vice versa, ie seeking a convergence of the two. Within an institutional environment, it is becoming more important to make discernments at a Regional level. As a way into this discernment, Fr General suggested addressing such questions as: "Which world realities touch the heart of CLC people there?" or "Which questions stay with us?" Also discussed was the worthiness of personal "vocation", be it clerical or lay.

Other CLC visits

Exco had the pleasure to meet members from both the Euroteam (also meeting at Monte Cucco at the time) and members of the Italian CLC. With the Euroteam we discussed such issues as the 450 year anniversary of CLC, CLC Leadership and other matters. We heard inspiring accounts of the activities of CLC Italy, especially its various overseas apostolic works.

Visit to the Pontifical Council for the Laity

We were fortunate to have once again the opportunity to meet Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. The first matter discussed was the CLC All Africa Assembly. Cardinal Rylko emphasized the importance of our efforts in this Region to create authentic new faith communities with deep roots, free of the superficialities sometimes seen elsewhere. He urged us to actively participate in the forthcoming Pan-African Congress of Catholic laity to be held in Cameroon in September 2012. The CLC 450 year anniversary was also mentioned. The Cardinal emphasized the importance of this occasion as a time of gratitude, a time of grace, a time to review our

past to enlighten our future, and a time to renew our passion and hope. He mentioned that this should be a celebration for the whole Church. He also wishes the CLC world community every blessing for its forthcoming World Assembly.

Let us continue to pray and work together, responding to the graces of the time, as we move towards our 450th anniversary and World Assembly in 2013.

United in prayers and service,

Daniela Frank
President

Chris Hogan
Consultor