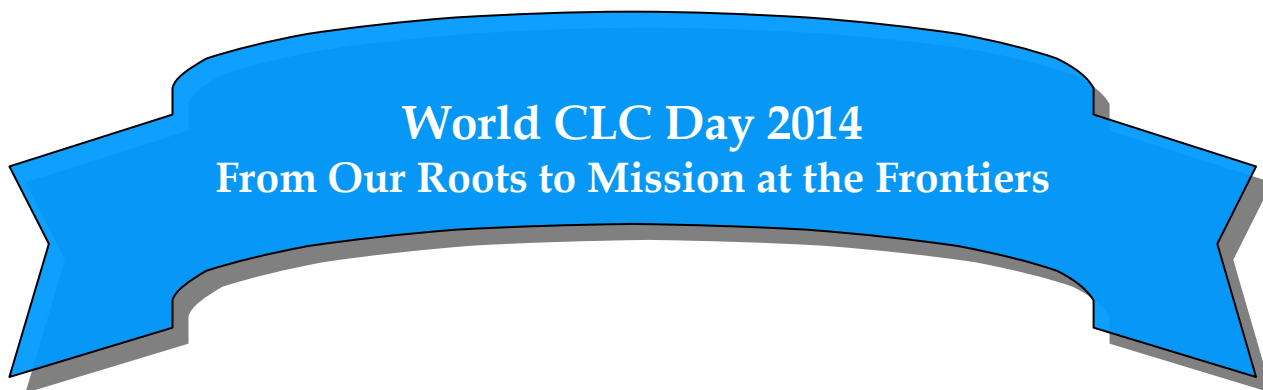




Link between the Executive Council and the World Christian Life Community



Dear friends,

This past year has been a rich and gifted one as we have celebrated 450 years of Ignatian lay communities around the world! To conclude this jubilee year, we invite the whole world community to join in solidarity and appropriate celebration of joy and gratitude on World CLC Day.

Even as God unites us further into one World Community, God increases our numbers and diversity within this one world community. Accordingly, local communities and national communities are invited to assemble in meaningful celebration, to gather the fruits of this past year that have been most important for them, and to continue to look forward in the 5th Centenary in greater generosity and hope. From the rich buffet of offerings at the World Assembly in Lebanon, we offer a few suggestions for your reflection and sharing.

A major focus for our world assembly was the theme: From Our Roots to Being on Mission at the Frontiers.

1. From Our Roots

The World Community has just come through a tremendous moment in the preparations toward and especially the actual World Assembly event – Lebanon 2013. Besides being the highpoint of the celebration of our 450 years of Lay Ignatian communities, the Assembly in Lebanon was a milestone in the claim of our identity as a World community. We opted together that we would hold our Assembly in the Middle East, a land wherein we find some of our deepest roots, a land of incomparable beauty and history, a land rich in religious and other contrasts, a land that has witnessed so much human collaboration, interaction and advancement of the human course, a land currently riddled with war and trouble, indeed a land to which human strife is no stranger.

The World community felt invited to celebrate its history and identity in this Holy Land, and the Assembly became a great moment of grace within which we recognized ourselves more truly as disciples of Jesus – a man who lived in his life the joys and contradictions of human mystery, so strongly manifest in the Middle East. And so the Middle East itself spoke to us of our identity and our deepest longings. This land became a frontier that mediated for us the rediscovery of our common grace as a world community, our common wounded-ness, and our solidarity with the community of humanity and of the earth.

Additionally, as we reflected over the major moments of our history over the last 450 years, we have felt much gratitude for the gift of CLC as founded, nurtured, adapted and shared by Lay members of communities and their leaders from generation to generation, and by special companions especially our brothers, the Jesuits.

For Reflection and Sharing

- *What have we learned after reviewing 450 years of our history?*
- *Have we felt gratitude for the gift of CLC to us personally, to our country, our world?*
- *How can we celebrate this gift?*

2. Sharing our CLC Callings and Journeys

We are now a world body with members in over 60 countries. We are involved in various stages of life, in different circumstances, with different cultures and in different ministries. Yet, as experienced at the Assembly and in our world community, we share our unity of Spirit and Ignatian Charism. We are brothers and sisters sharing a very valuable gift as Christian Life Community. There is a growing and strengthening sense of unity and solidarity of our one world community. We grow together; we are not alone; we share in one another's joys and sufferings. For example, we share in the suffering of our brothers and sisters in the Middle East who experience the impact of war and violence. We share in the suffering of our brothers and sisters in South Sudan, some who have been forced to flee their homes and live in open-air fields, in makeshift housing of cardboard and sheets. We share in the suffering of those whose family members have been kidnapped and/or murdered due to injustices in their countries. We share in the joys, too! We celebrate with those families who welcome a newborn baby! We celebrate the victories of communities who have organized to educate children who would not otherwise receive an education. We share the joy of communities who touch the lives of people in meaningful ways, such as in marriage renewal programs and youth retreats.

Together as CLC, we recognize the call to go deeper, using those Ignatian practices of prayer and openness, and in listening to where the Holy Spirit is moving us. Together, we hear God's invitation to live out more deeply the vocation as lay people engaged in the world, giving witness to Christ's message of love and peace and joy.

For Reflection and Sharing

- *Recall some of the stories of CLC communities worldwide. Which of the stories of CLC members/communities move you?*
- *Remember our CLC community in the Middle East – Lebanon, Egypt, Syria - as a gift to the world community.*

3. To Our Frontiers

So, where are our frontiers? At the Assembly, we heard firsthand from our brothers and sisters in the Middle East as they shared their stories and immediate concerns regarding the violence in their countries. We heard from CLCers and Jesuits involved in ecological and environmental projects, work with families, global poverty, “voting with your wallet”, advocating for education for all children, outreach to youth in the Church, and more! We experienced deeply how varied our frontiers are, how they take different forms.

Some of us have immediate and overwhelming needs right in the midst of our families. Our frontiers may be very personal and call for much courage, as we search for God’s presence and paths in our concrete realities. We hope our communities grow in the ability and generosity to accompany one another in these paths. Others are called to step up and take on greater responsibility in their workplaces and their local communities. Others are called to participate in Ignatian institutions such as schools, universities, retreat centers, youth and young adult ministries, advocacy networks, etc. For example, the Uruguayan CLC founded a children’s afterschool center. You will have other examples. Still others are called to advocacy—perhaps locally, nationally, or even internationally—and to take action on behalf of the most vulnerable. Some examples that the Assembly heard about are the Dominican Republic’s initiative on education, advocacy at the UN, the CLC project in the Amazon. As we continue with openness to God’s call, we may have heard or may hear yet other such invitations and experience the grace to respond.

One day during the World Assembly, members spent a session where they self-selected into one of four groups: mission in daily life, mission in institutional works, international actions, Jesuit -lay collaboration. It was interesting how the groups flowed so smoothly. It was an experience of affirmation about the energy of God’s invitation and our openness to respond from so many different levels, yet have the strong sense of being involved in one Mission of God. As we recognize the diversity of gifts in ourselves and others we can appreciate and support this diversity of mission and cultivate greater generosity therein.

The life of our Community calls us, supports us in journeying further towards our frontiers by first being aware of our place—family, workplace, social setting, environment—and the needs around us. We are called to reach deep within, and to find the life and passion that Christ inspires in us to meet those needs. We are called to live more closely with Christ, to live simply, in an attitude of love and peace, walking with those who suffer, who are vulnerable, sharing the joy and love and peace of Christ.

For Reflection and Sharing

- *How am I called to be more responsive in attending to and hearing God's call within me?*
- *How can I improve my support of the growing sense of mission of the members of my local CLC group?*
- *Is our use of DSSE moving us to greater openness and generosity for moving to the frontiers, individually and as community?*

Conclusion

Following our celebrations, we encourage all national communities to share some of the fruits of your celebration in one way or another – pictures, music, skits, art, narrative - with the world community through our world secretariat. We commit to find ways to share your perspectives and fruits with the rest of the world community.

Edel Churu
Vice-President

Ann Marie Brennan
Consultor