

PROJECTS

World CLC Day 2023:

Called to live with a hope that is joyful, active, and creative!

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*“If, for example, you come at four o'clock in the afternoon,
then at three o'clock I shall begin to be happy.
I shall feel happier and happier as the hour advances.
At four o'clock, I shall already be worrying and jumping about.
I shall show you how happy I am! But if you come at just any time,
I shall never know at what hour my heart is to be ready to greet you . . .
One must observe the proper rites . . .”*
(Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, The little Prince, Ch.21)

To the National Executive Councils and all CLC members:

Introduction

When we celebrate World CLC Day every year on 25th March, we always remember the Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to Mary, and the Incarnation of our Lord. The Virgin Mary is for Christian Life Community a *model of our collaboration with the mission of Christ*. We feel her maternal presence as one who cares for us. She accompanies us on our journey of fidelity to the vocation that each one of us has received. Her example inspires us to a hope that is joyful, active, and creative.

In our community's journey towards the Amiens General Assembly and beyond, we are **Discerning Paths for Hope**. As God paves our World Community's paths, we seek help from Mary, Mother of Hope.

Joyful Hope with the Annunciation

The Feast of the Annunciation takes place because Mary said Yes to the angel Gabriel's invitation. Beckoned into an unknown future, Mary listened. Told startling things, Mary dared to question. Helped to see what God sought from her, Mary declared a wholehearted and joyful “YES” to the God of her people. The God of Abraham and Moses was a God of freedom, in whom she could place her trust.

Mary's Yes meant accepting Life and becoming the vessel for the Word to become flesh. And although it may have seemed difficult for her to understand - as so often for us - she believed in the

promise, placing her trust in God beyond her personal desires or expectations. Faithful to this promise, Mary carried the Gospel in her womb. She looked forward to the arrival of her son, trusting what was moving within her. Through accepting the angel's invitation, Mary discovered her vocation to be the Mother of God. Like Mary, may our expectation be joyful.

*What helps me and my community to hear the invitations of God?
What prevents me or us responding affirmatively to those invitations?
What personal/communal commitments, desires, and dreams need more attention?*

Active Hope with Advent

To celebrate our World CLC Day, we as the World Executive Council have written this text in advance. We know the need to prepare the way. As we write, we are journeying through Advent, a privileged time to prepare for the celebration and contemplation of the Birth of Jesus.

Christmas is a day of joy and wonder that we can only welcome if we prepare ourselves. Advent then is a time to accompany Mary in those final days before giving birth. We are invited to imagine her last weeks of pregnancy, travelling on the road to Bethlehem with Joseph (who knew about uncertainties, about loving, about accepting, about dreaming). Mary is preparing her heart. Perhaps she hoped that the angel would return and better explain what was unfolding, but she came to understand that God called her to faith. And so, Mary understood the logic of the Gospel where smallness becomes greatness, and greatness becomes small, humble, and simple.

Advent is a time for us to desire to be born again with the Lord. Alongside Jesus, there is hope for new life. With Mary, may our waiting be active.

*How do I and my community wait for the God who wants to be born among us?
What practices do I/we need to be watchful and cooperate with God's incarnation in our world?
What can we do to prepare ourselves to celebrate, welcome and live with joy the Good News?*

Creative Hope with the General Assembly

Our CLC World Community has entered into several months of preparation for the 18th General Assembly in August 2023. As we approach Amiens, it is by Jesus' side that we seek creative hope. With Jesus, we are discerning concrete ways to proclaim the joy, love, peace and hope we find in His name. We are invited to pray the grace with constant enthusiasm: "Lord, help us to go forth; show us the way"!

Together we wait upon the good news for the life of our community which the Lord will speak at Amiens. But in our technology-laden lives, we often avoid waiting. We hurry along distracted by many things, plugged in but switched off to how God seeks to meet us. Busy, we may still remind ourselves to pray our Awareness Examen. In so doing, God invites us to slow down, and let

appreciation bubble to the surface. We are invited to wait with a patient heart, looking gratefully back over today, and looking forward towards tomorrow with trust.

When we gather for the great thanksgiving of Eucharist, we experience God's abundant love. Sent out to our lives, we learn to love people and creation through our relationships and community. Like the disciples of Emmaus, however, in times of loss or crisis we can separate ourselves from community. Jesus meets us on that road and sets our hearts alight again. We are therefore a community which finds great life in Jesus' presence.

While the task is great, Jesus calls us to faith, and to witness to his Gospel in our lives. He encourages us to go out to the horizon as witnesses, sending us "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). On the path towards the future, we are called to meet God, build community, and preserve creation. May our World Community be filled with enthusiasm and energy as we continue **Discerning Paths for Hope!**

Our Lady of the Way, pray for us.
Saint Ignatius Loyola, pray for us.
Saints and witnesses of CLC, pray for us.

*What hopes do we need to build in our community life today?
What does "Discerning paths for hope" mean to my community?
Where do you see signs of hope in our world that we may support and nurture together?*

Please share the fruits of your prayer with us! We will gather these reflections to share on the CLC website and Facebook. Simple is fine. We very much welcome your creative ideas and expressions, too! The fruits of your prayer and discernment will help us as we pray and discern at our General Assembly. Send responses to the World Secretariat (exsec@cvx-clc.net).

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