You have given all to me...

now I return it.
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EDITORIAL FOREWORD

“You have given all to me
...now I return it.”

The time period when an old year ends and a new one begins gives us a really great opportunity to look at our lives in retrospect. How have we, as members of Christian Life Community, spent our time and talents? Do we smugly say, “Well, I am doing such and such, my schedule is full. I try to praise, reverence and serve God in my life. I am grateful for what I have. I guess I am doing my share to further the Kingdom.”

But how do we really attempt to make some ‘return’ for what has been given so freely? What a special gift we have received through the experience of the Spiritual Exercises and the opportunity to attempt to ‘live’ our Ignatian Spirituality in daily life; knowing that, in spite of our unworthiness, we are ever-blessed with a sense of the Great Love that assists and awaits us at every turn in our daily journeys. Do we feel enveloped by that Love? Could anyone truly merit this wonder? How can we possibly live so that each choice we make is one that echoes love and an expectation that we are trying to incorporate a sense of God’s will in our choices as well as our deeds? Are we cognizant of our call to always be geared to choosing those words, decisions and actions which will foster the greater glory of God in our world?

When we pause to pray or sing a version of the Suscipe of St. Ignatius, do we envision it as an unattainably lofty ideal or does it become for us a daily initiative? Do we really ask the Lord to fill our ‘memory, understanding, entire will’ so that we will be always available (disponability) to not only seek, but to do the will of God in each choice we make?

If so, it stands to reason that we will be ever-sensitive to what needs to be done—the search for and practice of the magis. Do we allow ourselves to look for the ‘more’ in thought as well as concrete instances?

And when we arrive at the end of that beautiful prayer, just how do we intend to ‘return’ the all that has been given?

Perhaps then we’d find…

…a greater sense of gratitude for all we have been given
...how much more completely would we find ourselves in His presence,
...how much more we would be open to His will, rather than seeking confirmation of our own desires
...how many words would not cross our lips
...how many times a no or maybe would become a hearty yes, or why not
...how more willingly would we venture outside of our comfort zone, seeking the magis
...how much more loving service would we give to others?
All for the greater glory of God!

Isn’t that what we, as members of Christian Life Community, are all about?

Our issue’s authors have provided us with some wonderful thoughts on this theme of making some kind of ‘return’ for all that we have received.

“How do I respond as the debtor that I am?

“Dear God, how are you calling me to penetrate the human condition around me so that You can flow through me into it?

“We help each other to discover how best to be Christ in our modern world.

“Indeed, in receiving what I was giving back to Him, the Lord gave back to me even more than I could ever imagine.

“There is a need and a hunger for our CLC way of life.

“Opening up my life to serve others was very much a calling.

“As God continues to give us God’s ALL in Christ Jesus, one essential ‘ventana’ (window) into our grateful response of serving God is the service of sharing… returning our ALL by living the good news generously with and for others, especially those sisters and brothers most in need, not necessarily in DOING more, but serving better and more lovingly.”

A.M.D.G.

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

For the Greater Glory of God
Returning All as a Member of CLC

Tom Bausch, President

Although this issue of Harvest will be distributed early in 2007, I write these words during the Christmas season; this year a season where my prayer and thinking has been marked by a deep gratitude for all God has given me over the past sixty-eight years; all freely given including my deepest identity, the me “He has called by name” for all eternity. My CLC is using James W. Skehan, S.J.’s Place Me with Your Son for our meetings and one of his meditations focuses on Robert Southwell, S.J.’s A Child my Choice. I was deeply moved by his words from this poem:

“He mine by gift, I his by debt, thus each to other due.
First friend he was, best friend he is, all times will try him true.”

These words just deepen in my heart my many meditations on “The Contemplation”. He has freely given all, including His life, to me. How do I respond as the debtor that I am? This is not a contract; it is a relationship born and existing in His absolute friendship. But how do I respond and repay since He needs nothing? As He did with me, I must respond in service to the poor, and that is what being a member of CLC is all about. But all are called to a response of serving the poor in love! How does all of this play out for those of us called to our way of life and commitment in CLC? As a member of CLC and as a Community of CLC how do we return all?

For an answer I have turned to the first eight of our “General Principles”.

In the preamble of the “General Principles” we commit ourselves to a very comprehensive way of life called Christian Life Community. “We respond with gratitude to God for this gift of Jesus in every circumstance of our lives.” (1) (These numbers refer to the specific GP.) All of us in CLC have taken, or are working towards, permanent commitments, “constantly to seek answers to the needs of our times, to work together with the entire People of God and all people of good will to seek progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and dignity for all.” (2) We return all to God as part of a community that finds its roots in the 1540’s with Favre and Leunis and others. (3) We are gifted with a history we honor. Learning the history of CLC is an essential part of formation.

We return all to God by committing ourselves to bear witness to those human and Gospel values “within the Church and society which affect the dignity of the person, the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation through a preferential option for the poor and a simple life style”. (4) What is a simple life style? Does the option for the poor call all of us to live in Kibera slum in Nairobi? Not according to the Principle and Foundation.

As members of CLC we do not operate out of only emotion or only intellect, nor are we dilettantes responding to the cause of the day. “Our vocation calls us to live (Ignatian) spirituality which opens and disposes us to whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily lives.” (5) Last summer I talked to a young woman returning to Ethiopia who wanted to start CLC there. Six months later she wrote to tell me that she does not have the time to start a CLC, for she is responsible for five hundred HIV-AIDS orphans. In this concrete moment of her life she appears to be very discerning and a CLCer in spirit as she selected the greater good — God’s poor!

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of returning all to the Lord as a member of CLC is “Sense of Church”. Too many of us, including me, focus too often on the Church as human only, really a disbelief in the reality of the Incarnation. We should thank God that John Paul II apologized for so many sins on so many occasions. Think of how Ignatius dealt with similar issues in his day, and he was tossed in jail, something few of us have experienced!
(I do not believe that a person is fully formed as a member of CLC if he/she has not read at least one biography of Ignatius.) The words of the GPs are very clear.

“This sense of the Church impels us to creative and concrete collaboration for the work of advancing the reign of God on earth, and includes a readiness to go and serve where the needs of the Church so demand.”

I do not know about others, but I think that I am quite good at selling what I want to do for God to God. I am less good at hearing Him as He asks me to do what He desires, except on those occasions when He hits me on the head with a two by four.

Our way of returning all is lived in community. Local community —yes and very specifically! Our cluster — yes! Our region — yes! CLC-USA — yes! However, our charism calls us to live especially in World Community. “Our common commitment, our common way of life, and our recognition and love of Mary as our mother bind us together.” (7) As Americans we tend to an individualistic “me and Jesus” and “do our own thing spirituality” and are even called to this behavior by our government. (After 9/11 we were urged by our President to go shopping.) We give back by being counter-cultural; yet, like Christ Himself, not by hating our culture, but by inserting ourselves as Christ incarnate today in all of society and culture and being a channel of its sanctification.

To return all for us means that as members of CLC, “Our life is essentially apostolic.” (8) We do this in three ways:

• Each of us is called by Christ and sent out of our CLC community to make Christ present in our specific surroundings in family, work, public square, recreation, education and so on. (8a)
• We are called to serve as community on all levels in a great variety of forms. (8b)
• We are very specifically called to work for the reform of structures in our society. (8c)

Finally, we are called to return all by responding in the manner that Mary, “the model of our own collaboration in Christ’s mission”, responded. Each of us, and all of us as one community, give all!

Yes, as members of CLC we give all, in a radical freedom, from who we are in God’s eye —“ laity in and with the Church, in the United States , or wherever we live, in the period in history God has placed us, and with the specific talents, infirmities and sinfulness that are each of us. Remember, we proclaim in the Easter Vigil, “Oh happy fault, oh necessary sin of Adam.” As CLCers we pray the Ignatian Incarnation meditation of love penetrating the human condition and ask, “Dear God, how are you calling me to penetrate the human condition around me so that You can flow through me into it?” We return all by cooperating in the Paschal Mystery with Him.

I have three suggestions for concrete and specific action in our local communities.

• First, develop the faith sharing and study portions in at least eight of your future meetings around each of the eight characteristics, one at a time.
• Second, build some of your meetings around a biography of Ignatius — there are many good ones.
• Third, over time use the study section of your meetings to focus on parts of the Compendium of Catholic Social Thought. It is very user friendly.  

We give back by being counter-cultural; yet, like Christ Himself, not by hating our culture, but by inserting ourselves as Christ incarnate today in all of society and culture and being a channel of its sanctification.
It has been a Wonderful Life—Family Life CLC

Edward Bourguignon

Let me tell you a story about a Christian Life Community that has been praising God over fifty years. It is a story of individuals changed dramatically by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, people who believe “You have given all to me…now I return it”, people who have chosen and followed a Way of Life indicated in the General Principles of CLC. These people have grown from college Sodalities to Alumni Sodalities to Adult CLCs over the span of those years. There have been periods of growth, new life, suffering, loss of loved ones, disease, medical ailments, new members and numerous children and grandchildren along the way. The journey continues as this CLC meets the challenges of age and the realities of the new millennium.

It all began shortly after World War II, when returning veterans went to college at John Carroll University. Some were influenced by the Jesuits and joined the Sodality at JCU. In 1950 the Spiritual Exercises were given to lay people in the Cleveland area in an eight-day closed retreat. The result was one of excitement, change and lasting commitment. An Alumni Sodality was started in the Diocese of Cleveland, with Joseph O. Schell, S.J., as the director and a group of highly motivated individuals, both men and women. About the same time, Nick Reiman, S.J., an assistant at Gesu Parish in Cleveland, started a Men’s and then a Women’s Sodality, with members trained in the Spirituality of St. Ignatius. These latter two sodalities were combined to form the Leunis Sodality.

Within the Alumni Sodality, some members married, and children soon followed. The hectic schedule of the Alumni Sodality was not possible for families with infants. Therefore a number of couples, after discernment, decided to form a Family Life Community, under the umbrella of the Leunis Sodalities. This was the beginning of the Family Life CLC in Cleveland in the early 1950’s.

Although the new Sodality was not as active as the Alumni Sodality, it remained committed to the General Principles, spirituality, discernment, way of life and mission promoted by the Sodalities. The members of the initial group, many still active at the current time, supported each other in family matters, provided encouragement for individuals to make annual eight-day retreats, cooperated in many diocesan ministries, especially Pre-Cana conferences and help with the Marriage and Family Life Commission of the diocese. Meetings were still held weekly, but at the couples’ homes.

Gradually over the next decade a number of couples moved away as other couples joined. Annual retreats were a real problem as the families grew in size. During the 60’s a solution was found for retreats. The Diocese of Covington, Kentucky, had a retreat house, Marydale, with a summer camp for children on the grounds. Arrangements were made so the older children would be camp counselors for the younger children, while the parents made a week-long retreat in the retreat house. This satisfied both the financial and baby sitting burden caused by the annual retreats. These preached retreats were held annually until 1972, when individually directed Ignatian Spiritual Exercises were offered. Actually, two groups of couples attended this retreat, one group had a preached type of retreat while the other eleven couples made directed retreats under the direction of two young Jesuits, Mike Lavelle, S.J., and Bill Creed, S.J.. After this retreat, the directed retreat made it possible for individual couples to make their annual retreat alone or with others guided by a director, large group retreats were not necessary. Jackie Murphy, an original member of the Family Life CLC, continues to encourage members to make their annual retreat.

Shortly after the retreat, Father Mike Lavelle was invited to become a member of the Family Life CLC, which was now one of the four groups in the Leunis Sodalities. Weekly meetings continued for the individual groups and quarterly meetings for the entire Leunis CLC. After discernment, the Family Life CLC separated from Leunis and each Leunis group

Ed Bourguignon joined the Sodality at John Carroll University in 1955 and continued in the Sodality at the University of Detroit. He has been a member of the Alumni CLC in Cleveland, the Leunis CLC and finally the Family Life CLC, which he joined with his wife Marilyn in 1969. Ed also started a Sodality while in the U.S. Army when stationed in Baltimore.

He has been involved in helping to start a number of new CLCs in Cleveland; he and Marilyn are currently lending their assistance to yet another new CLC there. In his role as Regional Executive Assistant he is available to lend support to all of the Cleveland CLCs.

Ed’s commitment has also led him to assist in the planning and developing of The Ignatian Spirituality Institute at John Carroll University, where people are trained to be spiritual directors and directors of the Spiritual Exercises. (Two classes have already graduated.)

Continued on next page.

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then became an independent CLC. The Cleveland Cluster was formed, which included other CLCs in the area.

The Family Life CLC believes that the whole family is part of the community and should be involved in CLC activities. The sacraments for family members were celebrated as a community. Special picnics and other outings were scheduled for everyone. What wonderful, noisy times! For a number of years a summer camping trip was made to Potter County, PA. There was one cabin owned by Ed and Jackie Murphy. It had minimal facilities, but each couple brought tents, and shared the stream for bathing. Group meals were prepared and enjoyed by all. Liturgies were celebrated when a priest came with us, or at the local small church in Austin, PA. Many former members and their children would also join in these Fourth of July excursions. The meals, socializing, fishing, and games were enjoyed by all. The night sky and deer watching were memorable.

The Family Life CLC has been actively involved in both Regional and National meetings and taking on responsibilities and leadership roles when called upon. My wife Marilyn and I served as National Co-Presidents during the 90’s. We attended the World CLC meeting in Hong Kong, where Marilyn was a delegate and I served as a reporter for Harvest. A number of National Conventions were held in Cleveland over the years, where the Family Life CLC provided help and leadership, especially the one at John Carroll University in 1995, which was planned and organized by the Family Life CLC. Jack Quinlan serves as treasurer for the Regional CLC Group and any event held locally. I have been active as the Regional Executive Assistant, for the Cleveland CLCs. Rosemary and Norma share Regional Representative duties. Marilyn continues as the guide for the CLC.

Individual members have always been active in mission. The community helps with discernment whenever a member feels a call to a special mission. Recently, Ann Klonowski, after community discernment, joined the first year faculty of St. Martin DePorres High School, a Cristo Rey School in Cleveland. I also initiated the effort at John Carroll University that eventually became the Ignatian Spirituality Institute that provides training for people to be spiritual directors and directors of the Spiritual Exercises. (The Institute has graduated two classes so far). Each other member is engaged in mission, wherever that call might lead.

Other new CLC communities have been started with the help of members of the Family Life CLC over the years in the Cleveland area. Alleluia Women CLC and Potters Clay CLC are two CLCs in existence and a new community is currently in formation.

As with any organization with a long history, death has visited us and affected our lives. Members who have died include Mary Lou Coyne, Ed Murphy, George Biltz, Bob Meaker, John Sullivan, our Jesuit member Fr. Mike Lavelle, Jim Fasimpauer, Dan Roach and Julie Schnitzer. Our community has mourned their loss as we celebrated their life with us.

The original members of the Family Life CLC who are still active are: Tom and Gerry Powers, Jack and Catherine Quinlan, and Jackie Murphy. Other current members are Ed and Marilyn Bourguignon, Norma Meaker, Mary Agnes Sullivan, Ann and Al Klonowski, Rosemary and Mike Lann, Gaye Weigand, and our newest member, Mary Rose Stock (active with the Sodalities since the 1950’s).

The majority of our members are over seventy years of age now, with some over eighty. It has been quite a life, quite a Christian Life, “You have given all to us...now we return it”. We still meet weekly to share our lives and inform ourselves on current issues. We help each other discover how best to be Christ in our modern world. Our community has recently discussed World Water Problems, Immigration Policies and other current events. We have an “election preparation meeting” before national and local elections to study issues and candidates. We continue to find the books on forming new communities by our previ-
ous National Ecclesial Assistant, Larry Gooley, S.J., a good source of renewal for our own community.

In supporting family life with one another, we have become family for one another.

Our hope is that young couples will obtain the desire to become committed members of CLC and draw the lasting help and encouragement that the CLC way of life provides.

*We live this way of Christian life in joyful communion with all those who have preceded us, grateful for their efforts and apostolic accomplishments.*

*In love and prayer we join those many men and women of our spiritual tradition who have been proposed to us by the Church as friends and valid intercessors who help us fulfill our mission.*

Portion of General Principle #3.

### Questions for Discussion

1. **Can you recall your own feelings of “...excitement, change and lasting commitment” after first experiencing the Spiritual Exercises?**

2. **Have members of your own Christian Life Community become family for one another?**

3. **Can you cite several instances when your own CLC was the only source which provided you with ‘help and encouragement’?**

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**RESOURCES FOR CLCs AT WWW.CL-C-USA.ORG**

Visit www.CLC-USA.org for a variety of resources for community meetings. Simply click on Resources to find links to publications and web sites developed both nationally and internationally.

CLC Members can access even more materials from the Members page. (A password is required. Contact your regional rep to get the password.) Also available to members on our website are our new FORUMS. Share your experiences with materials and processes that have been helpful to your community. Or browse through the submissions and pick up helpful hints.

### More resources coming soon from

**World Leadership Formation Course**

Twenty-eight participants, facilitators and World ExCo members met and worked together for eight days in late November at a lovely retreat house at Monte Cucco in Rome. The task was to prepare themselves to offer resources and training to leaders and potential leaders in many National Communities around the world. The participants came as individual CLC members from twenty-three countries and all of the regions of the world where CLC exists. They left as one body, committed to bring both the knowledge and experience of their time together to others in CLC leadership.

More on this exciting event will be in the next *Harvest!*
An Introduction to Mustard Seeds CLC

Kim-Anh Vu

Mustard Seeds (Hat Cai in Vietnamese) is a Dong Hanh CLC group that has been formed since 1985 within the campus grounds of the University of California, Irvine. The idea of having a Dong-Hanh group within a university originated with a few students attending a weekend retreat that was adapted from The Spiritual Exercises by Fr. Julian Elizalde, S.J., who was a Spanish Jesuit who could speak Vietnamese fluently. For more than twenty years, this group continues to have an active presence within the Catholic community of the university. Embracing the Ignatian spirit, they meet weekly to pray and to live community life, as well as to help each other integrate different aspects of their busy student lives. They participate in service projects in Tijuana, Mexico, and music ministry on campus, as well as Dong-Hanh activities.

Recently, the members of Mustard Seeds were invited to prepare a retreat for young children ranging in age from six to fifteen, by the parents of the Dong-Hanh Christian Life Community. It was an invitation that followed—CLC, Our Way of Proceeding. Five members were missioned from the group to carry out the retreat with the full support from the group as well as from the Southwest Dong-Hanh Region.

It was a collaborative effort of the parents and the students to bring the S.E.E.D. Retreat to the children. This came from the many months and years of the parents asking the question: “How do we begin introducing the Spiritual Exercises to our young children as they are also considered members of our family community? How do we introduce to our children a personal God Who loves and cares for us unconditionally?”

Many were the questions that led us to the first S.E.E.D. retreat on September 20-22, 2006, in Flagstaff, Arizona, amidst the pines and ponderosa trees. There were twenty-two children and five retreat leaders, with the support of all the parents and one priest.

Those were wonderful days of blessings. Beginning with orientation, the children were led into the retreat with the dynamics of different activities: the treasure hunt; interviewing the saints; learning about God, each other and self in nature, morning prayer with music and songs, evening Examen with some quiet moments for gratefulness; and entertainment night where the parents, children and retreat leaders put together their talents in skits, dance and music. The parents marveled at the children’s ability to translate biblical messages into today’s circumstances. The children laughed at their parents’ silliness. We all enjoyed God’s presence among us. Truly, we were living the Ignatian CLC Way of Life—spirituality, community and mission.

Upon reflection, the Lord has blessed the Mustard Seeds with so much during the last twenty years. We were given a spirituality that has brought us close to God and to each other. We found ‘home,’ where we truly belong. In service to each other and the community at large, we understood more deeply the meaning of our lives. I was once a Mustard Seed, when it started in 1985. How the Lord labors to form and guide the group! How He has journeyed with us thus far to provide all of our needs and more!

“Take, Lord, receive...
You have given all to me, now I return it.”

When I graduated and it was time to leave the Mustard Seeds, I prayed this prayer. I did not know then that twenty years later, it would be the Mustard Seeds’ members who would be giving a retreat for our very own children. Indeed, in receiving what I was giving back to

Kim-Anh Vu is Vice-President of Dong-Hanh CLC. She and her husband Hung are members of Nazareth DH-CLC Community in Phoenix, Arizona.
Both Kim and Hung are active in Family Ministry for Dong-Hanh and the Diocese of Phoenix. They are working to develop a formation program for the Dong-Hanh way of life in the context of the family.

The web site for Dong-Hanh (Vietnamese CLC) is: http://www.donghanh.org/main/trangchinh.htm

Continued on page 11
A Special Retreat —

Search
Embark
Experience
Develop

Frank Vuong

There are many instances in life in which we actively search for meaning, a purpose given only by God. This search for truth is not limited to any age group nor is it limited to any location or time. About one month ago, six young adults who normally would be studying for college exams, went out on a journey to lead a retreat for children of all ages. Six young adults who were inexperienced in leading any sort of spiritual retreat, left Southern California to reach out to another group in Arizona. This retreat team, consisting of Anthony Pham, Mark Pham, Steven Nguyen, Thu Nguyen, Vinh Tran and Frank Vuong, answered God’s calling to support and be supported by a community of fellow Christians, nhóm Nazaret. The search to see God in a new light in our lives had only begun.

Embark. This retreat for children was truly a journey, and God was definitely the guide. It all started with an invitation sent to nhóm Hạt Cái, asking if leading a retreat for children would be of interest. Upon receiving this invitation, the retreat team soon was established after discerning whether or not it was God’s calling for the individuals who desired to take up this opportunity. We had countless meetings and numerous late nights when the retreat team would go over every single detail of the retreat. To be honest, we had no idea what we were getting into. None of us had ever led a full retreat in our lives. Yet, we found trust, hope, faith and guidance through God as we kept reminding ourselves that we were doing this for Him. Every disagreement we had in our planning process was settled through the thought of the smiles on each child’s face and we hadn’t even met them yet. The planning process of retreat took us almost two months. We had to find time in our busy schedules that consisted of school, exams, studying and work. The planning and preparation never ceased until the minutes leading up to the retreatant’s arrival time. Although the planning seemed stressful, we had so much fun bonding with each other and getting each other more excited as we thought about the children. I remember at one point we had started counting down the days, minutes, and seconds left until the start of the retreat. Through love, faith, and putting it all into action, we embarked on this journey to allow the children of nhóm Nazaret to embrace and encounter God in a whole other way.

Experience. After a long drive from Southern California to the retreat site in Flagstaff, Arizona, we found ourselves anxious and excited. I remember how the retreat team and I were preparing the meeting room before the retreat officially started. Each one of the retreat leaders was soon ambushed by remarkably energetic little people, the children. We were stormed by children who had met us for only the first time, yet began to hug and embrace us as older brothers and a sister in Christ. We were hoping to give the parents and children a warm welcome, yet ironically we were the ones who were even more warmly welcomed. At that moment, I saw God in the smiles on each child’s face. I saw their eagerness to spend time with the Lord through praise, worship, community time and faith-sharing. I saw God also in the parents as they placed their entire trust and faith in the retreat leaders. I had never experienced so much support from people I hardly knew. We all were experiencing God’s graces this retreat. We were witnessing mountains being moved with prayer.

Develop. Throughout the retreat we focused on introducing God to the children through different aspects. We helped reconnect the retreatants with God through experiencing one another as friends and ultimately as a family in Christ. We played activities that would help the children see God in nature and in other people. One specific activity we had was painting a scene of nature. Each child would look around at the beautiful pine trees that

Frank Vuong is a senior at University of California at Irvine.
His field of study is Biology/English.
He has been a member of Mustard Seeds/Hat Cai since his Freshman year of college.
His future plans include medical school, becoming a doctor and starting a family practice.
His interests include photography and being an active member of Hat Cai.
surrounded us and appreciate God’s work of art through making his/her own work of art in the form of paintings. Another activity was the scavenger hunt. All the retreatants were separated into random groups in which they would work as a team to find clues that would lead them to a retreat leader. Each retreat leader dressed up as a saint for this game. The retreatants had an awesome time finding the retreat leaders dressed as St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bernadette, St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Peter, hiding around in the forest as they waited to tell their stories of their wonderful journeys of faith. We also had discussions and presentations on various topics. We explored what The Sign of the Cross meant and why we do it. The children found Who God is to them as the Heavenly Father. We discussed with the children the Catholic belief of the Holy Trinity. Last but not least, we helped them to find their place of comfort in a community, and they actually built real communities—out of cardboard! This retreat was jam-packed full of activities, games, and presentations that were all centered around God in a way that would help develop the children’s spirituality.

S.E.E.D. Looking back now, I can see how it was only through God’s grace that this retreat experience happened. Through the unsurpassed support from the parents, the incomparable participation and enthusiasm of the children, and the deep passion of the retreat leaders, this retreat was a dream come true for all of us. Never had I thought I would be privileged enough to lead a retreat like this at my age. This certainly was a true community experience that allowed me to not only bond with children but the adults as well. The S.E.E.D. Retreat 2006 was definitely an irreplaceable experience that bridged the gaps between generations, age groups and spiritual lifestyles. I am honored to say that during those three days of searching, embarking, experiencing and developing our relationship with Jesus, I know that this truly was an act of building God’s community.

Lord, You are the planter, and I am the seed. Amen.

“If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

— Matthew 17:20

Continued from page 9

Him, the Lord gave back to me even more than I could imagine. His love and grace continue to overflow into the lives of our children, gifting them and blessing them. Yes, He has given back to us so much more than what we have offered to Him. Indeed, “our cups were overflowed” when we witnessed the joy and peace in the smiles of our children. We thank God deeply for sowing seeds of love in their hearts. May He continue to receive them and give them back to the world with hearts anew more and more each day.
Reflections by the Children

Participating in S.E.E.D.

My name is Trung, I am eight years old and I am in the third grade. My relationship with God is good and my faith is important to me. In the retreat I encountered God in my friends, the retreat team and nature. I discovered that I am good at painting. My painting seems to make people happy and everyone said it was good. I learned about the four saints on the scavenger hunt. Their names are St Francis of Assisi, St. Bernadette, St. Peter and St. Ignatius. My favorite things about the retreat were the scavenger hunt, the relay race and the meditation. I met lots of new friends and I learned that I can work well with other people to build community. Since the retreat, I help around the house more by making my own lunch every morning.

by Trung Nguyen

Since the retreat, I know that I don’t have to go to my hiding place anymore. I have God to go to.

by Lillian Vu

My name is Phi, I’m nine years old and I’m in the fourth grade. The retreat helped me understand what it really meant to be a follower of God. In the retreat I encountered God everywhere I looked. I never realized how important it was until I was at the retreat with my friends and their parents. The retreat team played the biggest role of all. They helped me to see God like I never imagined before. The last thing is nature. It played an important role in what I learned and how much it had to do with God.

I discovered how much I didn’t know about God, how much I enjoyed the retreat, how much fun it was to just be there and listen and talk to God. I enjoyed the games most of all, even though they weren’t the most important part of the retreat.

I especially learned a lot about God. I learned of His importance and how much He loves us, but the thing that stands out most is that God is everywhere, He is us. I learned this when we asked ourselves, “Who is God?” and we heard that God is everywhere. I learned a lot about my friends, too. We did a packet about ourselves and I learned a lot of things about them I didn’t know before. I think though, that the most important thing I learned was about myself and how far away from God I was.

I liked the scavenger hunt and the relay race. I learned about saints closely related to God and His mother, Mary, while on the scavenger hunt. In both events, I learned how well I was able to work with others. I worked and got along with others very well and it was more fun with them than without them. I made friends with a lot of people and people I hadn’t met before because it had been a long time since I had gone to Dong-Hanh.

This retreat changed my relationship with God and my faith in Him. I understand better and I can hardly wait for the next retreat.

by Phi Nguyen

I am Anna Tran from Chandler, Arizona. I am fifteen years old and in the ninth grade. My faith is very important to me: it is part of my daily life. I go to church at least once a
week, sometimes more. And every other week, I go to a Dong-Hanh meeting, where I share my faith and feelings.

In the S.E.E.D Retreat, I got a chance to see God in my friends because they are there for me. I’ve learned more about God from the retreat team. I see God in the beauty of nature. And I especially see and learn about God through my parents.

Something I’ve never done before was going on a scavenger hunt to find a saint’s possessions, so that the saint would tell me about him/herself. Something I would never try on my own is to make myself a long shaving cream beard. I’ve found out that I like to listen to other people’s needs, even if it’s something small that might seem unimportant. And I can use my listening skills to make other people happy by simply listening to what they have to say.

During the retreat, I did not learn anything new about God, but the retreat has re-touched my memory of the knowledge of God. It made me remember the truth about God that I have learned before, but had forgotten. I’ve also learned about other people, their interests, thoughts and their faith. I’d like to add something that I’ve learned about myself is that, although I am fifteen, I may act like a five year old and draw like one.

I enjoyed most of the activities we did at the retreat. I’ve learned eccentric songs with awkward hand motions, and I’ve learned about others and myself. During the retreat, I met new people, young and old. And it’s been a pleasure meeting them.

by Anna Tran

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Suscipe

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding
and my entire will.

All I have and call my own.
You have given all to me.

To you, Lord, I return it.
Everything is yours; do with it what you will.
Give me only your love and your grace,
That is enough for me.

- St. Ignatius of Loyola

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Questions for Discussion

1. How do you perceive your own efforts at ‘giving back’ to the Lord as a way of thankfulness for the gifts in your own life? How might others?

2. Do you think the S.E.E.D. acronym applies to people joining Christian Life Community?

3. Which of the children’s reflections on the S.E.E.D. retreat resonate most closely with your own private relationship with God?
Questions for Discussion

1. Is your own YES a continuing one, applicable to new situations and needs?

2. When your regional members gather, is room left at your meeting together to consider new options/fields of mission?

3. Which of the four questions posed to the groups of retreat participants—
   a) is most important to you personally
   b) is least important to you personally?

Giving back…to Others

Ady Viera

NCLC-USA has DISCERNED and SENT the South Florida Region on the mission of establishing and promoting Spanish-speaking CLCs in the United States. This mission is new to us; we’re continuing the discernment process to figure out how best to carry it out. The following recounts one of our first practical experiences in helping Hispanics learn about Ignatian Spirituality and possibly attract them to CLC.

The Hispanic Ministries of St. Gabriel Parish in Charlotte, North Carolina, invited me to present a one-day retreat to a group of Hispanic parishioners. One of these parishioners knows me and my interest in the Exercises and in CLC. The retreat was to include information on Ignatian Spirituality and be specifically about the Exercises, as well as prayer and discernment for future pastoral work. All of the talks were to be in Spanish. The projected attendance would be thirty, and I was left completely in charge as to what to include and how to structure the day. The Ministries named the retreat THE CALL.

As I was leaving Miami to go to Charlotte, I reflected on how I had been SENT in mission. I didn’t have to wait too long before God spoke to me. “My plan for you and for the people of St. Gabriel was in My heart always; by you saying YES to it, and by the attendees also responding with a YES, My plan will be on its way. I had the SUPPORT as well of members of my community who helped with planning the retreat and of St. Gabriel’s Hispanic Ministry, whose members copied the information to be distributed, invited parishioners, prepared lunch, etc.

The projected thirty showed up, and then some more. We ended with sixty-two participants, ranging in age from a child of nine to elderly parishioners in their eighties. The group included students, professionals, blue collar as well as domestic workers, who came from South and Central America, the Caribbean, Puerto Rico as well as other places.

The opening prayer was about my reflections while on the plane and how we all had already said YES to HIS call. We then went over the Four Weeks of the Exercises, which I illustrated mainly with experience and testimony of my own life in the following of Jesus. The group’s attention never wavered, including that of the children, and I was very impressed with the respect and love they showed each other. There was a lot of interaction during the talks.

At the end of the talks we broke into groups of ten to EVALUATE the day. These questions were asked of each group—

- How can I be more diligent in helping those who are in need?
- How can I discern the greater good in my daily life?
- How should I evaluate and place in order my priorities to give more glory to God?
- What is the positive value of suffering (sin)?

The retreat lasted from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. We finished with a Eucharistic Celebration and the group members then shared with me their desire to learn more about CLC. I promised, in the name of all CLC members, continued SUPPORT for a more in-depth experience of Ignatian Spirituality, possibly starting with the Exercises in a week-end format. I also committed to help form Christian Life Communities in Charlotte.

NCLC-USA has DISCERNED and SENT the South Florida Region on this mission. We now need immediate SUPPORT to help the Charlotte Hispanics. Many do not speak English; English-speaking CLCs in the area may be able to help, especially with the young people. There is a need and a hunger for our our CLC way of life in Charlotte. We have been blessed with the call and need to continue responding YES. Please keep this mission in your prayers.

Ady P. Viera was born in Cuba; she has lived in the United States for the past forty-six years. She was a member of Rosa Mistica Sodality since 1963 and since 1992 has been a member of CLC. She is currently the coordinator for CLC Montserrat and a member of CLC Magnificat.

Ady is married to Cristobal Viera, a surgeon, and is the mother of four children and the grandmother of five. She has volunteered more than 12,000 work hours at Mercy Hospital and at the St. John Bosco Clinic, and has worked at the Clinic’s dispensary since 1992.

Ady is married to Cristobal Viera, a surgeon, and is the mother of four children and the grandmother of five. She has volunteered more than 12,000 work hours at Mercy Hospital and at the St. John Bosco Clinic, and has worked at the Clinic’s dispensary since 1992.
I was born in Miami, Florida, to Cuban parents who were both exiled from Cuba to the United States at very young ages. My mother arrived in New Jersey at fourteen and my father came to Florida at fifteen. By being uprooted from not only their land, but also their language, culture and family, has marked them and in turn me, in very strong and life altering ways.

I am the eldest daughter in my family and also the eldest granddaughter, giving me a strong sense of both responsibility and honor. I carry the weight of being the first American born member of my family. This responsibility brings with it many obvious pressures; that of succeeding, and to better the lives of my family. Less obvious, but many times more difficult, is the task of retaining my culture, language, and family values in the United States, which many times feels like a foreign country to me. This contrast results in the daily struggle of balancing between two worlds. The need to balance is a theme that runs throughout my life.

While in high school, I had a teacher who encouraged me to become a part of the school’s Christian Leadership program. I thought that it would be fun because the Christian Leadership students always got to skip class and got a grade for doing what I thought was “NOTHING”. How hard could it be to listen to other people’s problems and do a few fun icebreakers? Very quickly I learned that what I thought was an easy grade was anything but that. Opening up my life to serving others was very much a calling. The leadership program pushed me to discover things about myself that I never knew. During my two years in the program I used skills that I never thought could be applied to “religion stuff”/ ministry. I took the lessons I had learned in English class in public speaking and used them to get over my fears of giving charlas (testimony based) to groups of underclassmen. I took the quick thinking skills I used on the soccer field and used them many times when the retreat plans needed to be reorganized. And so the balancing game continued between my average teenage responsibilities of school, sports, friends and my call to now lead other young people in building a personal relationship with God. As time went on I started to think that I needed to do more. That what I was doing for my peers was great but there was MORE outside of my high school. And so began my search for that MORE!!

Throughout college my search for MORE took me in the direction of working with children. I thought “what better group to dedicate my life’s work to but the most vulnerable of all!” In those college and post college years I also dedicated time to leading different ministries in my parish like youth groups, and then young adults. During my involvement in Young Adult Ministry at my parish we had another leader who was very involved with a missionary organization called Amor en Acción (Love in Action). He spoke to us about helping to collect supplies for their summer missions to the Dominican Republic. He also shared their great need for people who could travel to the missions and had experience working with children. So I thought: What a fun thing to do on my Summer vacation from school.

A great friend and fellow teacher encouraged me and we decided that both of us would do the Summer mission. I wasn’t sure what I was getting myself into at first, but that need for MORE kept pushing me to explore. That summer my life changed in ways that I could never describe. I saw young people leading in their communities in ways that I thought couldn’t be possible. They had such an urgent sense of service and responsibility! I couldn’t understand how that could be possible within their everyday struggle of living in the barrio. After living and working in the barrios of San Pedro de Macoris, my life could never be the same. My priorities were turned upside down and inside out.

Monica Santos lives in Miami and is a member of a Young Adults CLC, which is part of the South Florida Region. She has an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Miami Dade Community College and is currently the Mission Coordinator of Amor en Acción at the Archdiocese of Miami, Fl. Amor en Acción is a Catholic lay missionary community of the Archdiocese of Miami that has been working with local bishops and pastoral agents in the Dominican Republic and Haiti since 1976. Amor en Acción provides assistance with local projects of evangelization, nutrition, education, medical assistance, housing, and water.
Upon my return to Miami from the Dominican Republic there was nothing that I did that didn’t remind me of the children and young people with whom I had shared time. If I were in my classroom and saw a box of broken crayons being thrown away I thought about Carlito, the child in the barrio to whom I had to explain what a crayon was and how to use it because at the age of four, he had never before used one. During young adult gatherings I would become angry about group discussions on where to hold our next social as I thought back about the jovenes of the parish in San Pedro who needed to time their gatherings not to what park or hall was available, but to when there would be electricity. Those questions and many more continued to gather in my mind and many times were the focus of my daily prayer. What could I DO?? Where is justice in the world?? What did GOD want me to do?? Am I doing what GOD wants with my life?

Little by little, through my time teaching and working with young children, the focus of my work began to change. In between designing curricula, accreditation and payroll reports, I truly lost focus on my original inspiration/calling. And that question of MORE came back! Was it enough to have a successful Early Childhood Center that I owned and operated?? Was this God’s great plan for me? Was leading a group of young adults on Wednesday nights all that God wanted from me? Were two weeks in the Summer working in the barrio enough? If it were then, why did I still have an empty feeling in my heart? So in a very true moment of the Spirit, I decided it wasn’t enough. God was calling me to MORE and I needed to change my life right then and there. I had to regain focus on what is real and true to me while discerning the will of God and my role in creating the Kingdom of God. Through lots of prayer and spiritual direction, the answer became clear that I needed to listen to God’s will and serve the poorest of the poor.

So in what I called “Radical Change” and what my family and friends called “Crazy Decision” I sold my business and followed the call that God had made to me about serving His people.

I started out with what I thought would be three months of volunteering with Amor en Acción in their main offices at the Archdiocese of Miami’s Pastoral Center. Some of my first assignments were filing, answering phones, and just about anything that others didn’t have time to do. I went from having an assistant to being the assistant. Those few months helped me to see all the different aspects of missionary activity. It also opened my eyes to the inner workings of the Catholic Church. I committed to one year in mission, meaning that I would prepare and lead groups on mission trips to the Dominican Republic and Haiti on a regular basis and I would also work within the diocese to promote mission education and Catholic Social Teaching. Amor en Acción became my job, my ministry, and my passion. It is so hard to describe it to others, because it has a thousand and one different aspects; no day is ever the same. A day in my life could mean leading a group of students up a mountain to visit their sister school in our sister diocese in Haiti or sitting in a room in Miami with the Archbishop, discussing missionary work in our Archdiocese. My favorite days continue to be when I am able to share with students about mission spirituality and give my personal testimony of encountering Christ in the face of the poor.

Which brings me to where I am today. That one year commitment has grown into a life-time commitment to not only the community of Amor en Acción in Miami but also our sister community in Saginaw, Michigan, that has been collaborating with us for the past ten years and all the different communities and friends of the Dominican Republic and our Sister Diocese in Port de Paix, Haiti.

I continue to learn MORE everyday about what it means to be a leader. And everyday it becomes harder because the MORE I learn the MORE is required of me. I have had some wonderful teachers along the way who have taught me by their great examples what it means to LEAD. I feel a huge responsibility to continue in the tradition of those who have come before me: strong, educated Hispanics, committed to serving their brothers and sisters wherever they may need us.

A. M. D. G. ☪

Questions for Discussion

1. Can you recall a teacher/mentor who got you to ‘move’ into social action?
2. Into how many different ‘missions’ has your search for the ‘magis’ led you?
3. What did you have to ‘give up’ to follow those paths? Was the decision difficult?
“More” is “Better”... Our ALL, A.M.D.G.

John LeVecke, S.J.

December, 2006

I absolutely love my apostolic life and work in which I currently find myself. Working with my CLC colleagues continues to bring me great joy and challenge in visioning as well as helping to create an even more substantial U.S. community. In many ways, I want to say “bring me more”... but then, I wonder, am I crazy? The Spirit of John the Baptist, my patron Saint, encourages me to decrease in my person, to assist more in preparing a new way for CLC-USA, so that our way of life might be able to increase through the Society and into the Church. My challenge is that I find myself working at what could be two full-time jobs (Regional and National) simultaneously. So, I do not consider “doing” more by adding projects and responsibilities to my plate as my response to the Magis, but rather, trying to be all the more present to this challenge, and working to do better what I am doing now, especially in trying to support, empower, and “increase” lay leadership of CLC. Sometimes, when I feel overwhelmed by it all, certain musical lyrics come my way as a graced and prayerful “lift-up.” Josh Groban, especially with his You Raise Me Up, does exactly that in the context of realizing that God has given all to me. And my personal call is to now, in a better way, try to return it:

When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary;
When troubles come and my heart burdened be;
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence,
Until you come and sit awhile with me.

There is no life — no life without its hunger;
Each restless heart beats so imperfectly;
But when you come and I am filled with wonder;
Sometimes, I think I glimpse eternity.

You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains;
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas;
I am strong, when I am on your shoulders;
You raise me up: To more than I can be.

[You Raise Me Up, by Josh Groban]

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines on in darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:1-5)

This is the saving meaning of the promise of the Incarnate Word, God-with-US, Emmanuel companionsing us in our communal CLC living throughout the year. From His poor, humble birth throughout his earthly life and mission, Jesus never ceased to take people most in need by outstretched hand and open heart, raising them up to more than they ever thought they possibly could be. This is what the Risen Lord continues to desire to do with, in, and through us. Before His Ascension, Jesus shared with His friends what He needed them to do: “Go and share the good news with all people.”

As God continues to give us God’s ALL in Christ Jesus, one essential “ventana” (window) into our grateful response of serving God is the service of sharing...returning our ALL by living the good news generously with and for others, especially those sisters and brothers most in need...not necessarily in DOING more, but serving better and more lovingly. True lovers share, and St. Ignatius Loyola encourages us to trust ever more deeply that God’s grace and love are “enough.”

And what is this “good news” we are called by name to generously share? That God loves us in Christ Jesus so much more than we love ourselves or can begin to fathom; that...
we will never be alone – God will always be in our hearts, and desires that we always will be in God’s heart; that if we stay connected with God and one another in a union of hearts and minds, no matter what kind of stormy seas we might face, even death itself, we can hold fast to the Christmas/Easter paschal promise of being raised up to be MORE than we could be on our own.

Good news like this can be spoken, as lovers need to do, but it also must be shared in how we strive to serve. It has to be shared by loving hands and compassionate hearts that desire to better respond to opportunities to reach out and grasp others and don’t let go. At times in our lives, we all find ourselves in need of relying upon another’s shoulders, like the man in this story:

A man fell into a deep pit and he couldn’t get out. Many had something to say about it:

Buddha said to him, “your pit is only a state of mind.”
A Hindu said, “This pit is for cleansing you and making you more perfect.”
Confucius said, “If you had listened to me, you would not have fallen into the pit.”
A yuppie said, “Maybe you should network with some other pit dwellers.”
A reporter said, “Could I have the exclusive story on your pit experience?”
The building inspector said, “Do you have a permit for this pit?”
A realist said, “That’s a pit.”
An idealist said, “The world should not have pits.”
An optimist said, “Things could be worse.”
A pessimist said, “Things will get worse.”
But Jesus said nothing at all. He took him by the hand and lifted him out of the pit.

As we prepare ourselves for another Lenten journey, we can pray for the grace to decrease our individual focus so that we can increase a more full sharing in the birth, life, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In this Way, we more and more can be raised up, and in gratitude, joyously and generously share our lives as brilliant lights of hope and comfort to other “pit dwellers.” Through our intimate sharing in the baptismal grace of God’s everlasting love, the Risen Christ can continue His saving work in and through us – helping to lift up others, even as He continues to raise us up through others’ hands and hearts.

Once again, this is the graced “ventana” the Contemplatio provides us. God gives us God’s ALL – even a share in God’s eternal life. Flowing from that most loving relationship with the Giver of all good gifts, Jesus’ way of serving the Father’s will is to desire to share in the same way – sharing and giving His ALL. Jesus shows us the Way to serving God: living a life-poured-out, with and for others. Later in John’s gospel, after the Resurrection, Jesus encourages Mary Magdalene not to cling to Him, but to go forth and share Jesus’ loving, saving presence and risen life.

The Prayer of Generosity, urging us to give our ALL to God, who will “take and receive it,” essentially means that God desires most to fully share in our lives. In this Spirit, the Spirit of the Contemplatio, which is foundational for our CLC way of living, praising, and serving, let us pray for the grace to be ever better in generously sharing all that God gives us – both with God and all God’s beloved whom God brings into our lives, especially those most in need of the Word-made-flesh’s enlightening outstretched Hand and open Heart, so that Christ Jesus can continue to raise them up to be forever in His heart, as they are in His.
CLC Youth, College & Young Adult Update

November…

Clergy, lay people and young CLCers from around the nation’s Jesuit high schools and universities converged upon Columbus, Georgia for the annual Ignatian Family Teach-In, which took place November 17-19th. Speakers ranged from high school students to bishops who reflected on a range of social justice issues, such as the call for an end to unjust institutions, including the School of the Americas in Ft. Benning, Georgia. This annual event is sponsored by the Ignatian Solidarity Network and commemorates the Jesuits and laywomen who were martyred in El Salvador in 1989.

December…

National Youth, College and Young Adult Co-Coordinator, Carmen Santamaria, represented Christian Life Community at the National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry November 30th through December 3rd in Las Vegas, Nevada. Among the keynote presenters was Fr. Allen F. Deck, S.J., director of the Loyola Institute for Spirituality. Thousands of youth ministers attended the bi-annual event and many who visited the CLC booth seemed interested in knowing more about CLC in order to consider creating them in their dioceses.

And Beyond…

From March 9-12th, the Ignatian Solidarity Network, in collaboration with Loyola University and the New Orleans Province of the Society of Jesus, will host a National Teach-In on Racism and Poverty. The experience will be preceded or followed by an opportunity to participate in four days of Hurricane Katrina relief service projects. The hope is to inform Jesuit constituencies about the justice issues arising in the aftermath of Katrina and to be in solidarity with the marginalized. For more information, visit the Ignatian Solidarity Network’s website: www.ignatiansolidarity.net.

The Cura Personalis National Leadership Formation Workshop will be hosted in 2007 by Boston College, in conjunction with the Office of Youth, College and Young Adult CLCs. The yearly conference will focus on developing practical skills to lead college/young adult CLC groups while fostering partnerships with other CLCs around the country. For the first time ever, the 2007 event will feature dual tracks: one for college students and their campus ministers; and one for alumni/young adults. The college track will take place from May 30th through June 3rd, and the alumni/young adult track will take place from June 1st through June 3rd. Visit the CLC Youth & Young Adult website at <www.clcyya.org> for more information and updates coming soon.

From ExCo

Exciting things are happening all around the country. Reports from the National Coordinating Council Representatives at the last ExCo meeting in October included the good news that new groups are being formed in Miami, Oklahoma City, Portland, OR, and Baton Rouge, LA. The Spirit indeed is “a-movin.”

Another exciting development was news of the Guides’ Course that will take place in June in Omaha. Guides have been scarce in many parts of the country; this course should help regions fill this gap. Other topics discussed included the Solidarity Campaign currently underway, the website that is undergoing revision, and the North American Region meeting scheduled for Oct. 7th in Montreal, Canada.

If you haven’t read “The Relationship between the Christian Life Community and the Society of Jesus in the Church” sent out by WCLC and available on the CLC-USA website, it’s well worth your time. It may put CLC into a new light for you. The document seeks to “flesh out” the evolution of leadership from that of being dependent on Jesuit guidance to joint collaborative efforts.


For minutes of ExCo and NCC meetings and other reports from ExCo, visit the members page on the CLC-USA web site: www.clc-usa.org/members (password required).

To keep up with Youth and Young Adult events, visit their web site: http://www.clcyya.org.
KOREAN CLC REGION

National Meeting Report

This is the very first NKCLC EXCO in-person meeting since the National Korean CLC network has been established in 2004. The meeting began at the house of NKCLC’s president, Hae Ja Rhee, on the evening of December 1st and ended at noon on December 3rd. Thirteen members out of nineteen came from California, Georgia, New York, Chicago, Washington, DC, Philadelphia and Toronto, Canada. The meeting started with an opening mass by Fr. Jung (Jesuit) followed by each regional president’s reports. The second day, we had sessions to discuss who we are as CLCers (i.e., living together in our communities) as well as defining the role of NKCLC. On the afternoon of the second day, representatives from committees such as NCC, communication, multi-cultural, and formation reported on their activities along with other in-house NKCLC members (i.e., retreat coordinator, financial coordinator, webmaster and newsletter editor). On the morning of the last day, we gave reflections on what was discussed and what needs to be done for NKCLC’s growth in the future. Everybody feels thankful to God for making this meeting work. We feel we are one in Christ.

Throughout the reports given by the regional presidents, representatives and coordinators, there are common issues in which we need to work together to live the CLC way of life. The issues are as follows:

- **Formation** – The New York Region’s ICL (Institute of Christian Life) course was introduced and will be up on the website with updates once a month. Also, the National Guides’ Training Course (6/24-7/1/2007) was introduced with urgent requests for applications. A newly developed region needs help with formation from other established regions.

- **Communication** – The communication coordinator reported the status of ordering CLC medals. Also, there is a handout displaying the number of CLCers for each region. We have a total of one hundred and seventy-seven committed members out of three hundred forty-four, including pre-CLCers, in 2006.

  Relationship between the NCLC and KCLC region – due to the language barrier, there is some uneasiness in communication between the two groups.

- **NKCLC By-Laws** – The draft of the NKCLC By-Laws was distributed to the regional chair and coordinators for review. Any concerns or comments will be sent to the NKCLC president by January 15th. Currently, NKCLC does not have an EA. Therefore when we complete revising the by-laws, the NKCLC president would declare the NKCLC By-Laws as our operational manual.

  • Finances – The estimated NKCLC operational costs for 2007 were presented and approved by the regional chairs. Each region would pay its share to the treasurer. In addition to the NCLC dues, we pay dues for the regional, NKCLC, and local dues. Therefore, NKCLC thought that the proposed NCLC dues increase in 2007, 2008 and 2009 would place too much of a financial burden on the Korean members. We prefer the current national dues of $55.00 (which has been sustained by NCLC).

  • In the Western Region, there have been some instances of frustration, and we hope that the road ahead will be smoothed of tensions for our NKCLC members.

  • Each regional president agreed that we need suggestions on how to deal with the issue of members who are missing many of the community meetings. The formation coordinator will collect any ideas by January 31st.

  • NKCLC winter newsletter was distributed to the regions.

KCLC Regional Reports

New York Region

- Christina Kim participated in the National Guides’ Course Planning Meeting in Detroit from November 3rd to 5th.

- Simon Shin participated in the World CLC Leadership seminar.

- The CLC Charism was translated into Korean and now is on our New York website.

Mid-Atlantic Region

- The CLC invited Fr. Joseph Choi for a special lecture at the Virginia Korean church on September 16th.

- We had a commitment ceremony on October 21st at the end of a one-day retreat. There are eight people who made their first commitment and fourteen renewed commitment. The mass was celebrated by Fr Benedict Jung.

- The cluster meetings were held on October 22nd and December 10th. At the meeting, we had a faith-sharing session with the scripture John 20:1-10. Each member shared his/her own thoughts on the life of living together in the CLC community.

Chicago Region

- A five-day retreat was held from October 18th to 22nd under the direction of Fr. Sang Hoon Park, S.J.

Chicago Region

The great news is that we are beginning Christian Life Communities at Loyola University in Chicago, thanks to the efforts of Matt (Jake) Jacobson. He would welcome encouragement and possible resources and can be reached at mjacob6@luc.edu. They recently journeyed to the Ignatian Family Teach-In at Fort Benning, GA.
We highly recommend reading *Directions for Communication, Discoveries with Ignatius Loyola*, by Fr. Will Lambert, S.J., Chaplain to CLC in Germany. The book is practical and inspiring.

Our hope is that we help develop a positive ethic in all of our relationships, as one way of responding to the sexual abuse crisis (even though we abuse others in so many ways).

**Mid Atlantic Regional**

Last summer, members of MAR CLC visited with the Jesuit Provincial of the Maryland Province, Fr. Tim Brown, S.J., at his office in Baltimore. The hope for the meeting, from the CLC side, was to get to know each other better, and especially for the Jesuits to see CLC in its diversity and to better understand how the organization operates. In the course of the discussion, Fr. Tim mentioned his hopes that CLC could be expanded to the five Jesuit high schools and the five Jesuit colleges and universities in the Province.

This would be in addition to the growth of the adult CLCs. To facilitate this, Fr. Tim may appoint both a Jesuit and a lay partner for these three levels—higher education, secondary education and adult members.

We are in the process of gathering outreach teams from the Pittsburgh and Baltimore/Washington areas to travel to meet with members of groups who are interested in learning about CLC. We are also working on a DVD to support this effort.

MAR is working on a revision of the booklet, *Companions on the Journey*. The new version will be included on the Province website.

**Missouri Region**

*From St. Louis University.* The Saint Louis University undergraduate program began again in early September. Campus minister Steve Fowler, new to CLC and SLU, gathered some twenty students from last year’s groups. They agreed to continue. Steve developed attractive posters about CLC for the dorms and placed them around the campus. At the same time two groups function as meeting leaders. Undergraduate juniors make up one leadership group while three Jesuit seminarians compose the other. Recently Steve sent out an e-mail of the current roster of student participants. About seventy students are involved. Steve also designed attractive CLC flyers and had buttons made saying “Ask Me About CLC.” The DVD on youth and CLC is placed on SLU’s website so students can watch it. Steve attended the LMU workshop last summer. He said he had “been to the mountain.”

*From Regis University, Denver.* Paul Vu, S.J., informs us that there are about sixty undergraduate students who have shown enthusiastic interest in CLC, along with the ice cream Paul provided. He plans to reach out to alumni from Regis and other Jesuit institutions in the area. Also, he wants to approach the university faculty. Wonderful news. Three people from Regis attended the LMU workshop last summer. Paul believes getting commitments to attend meetings will remain a problem.

*From Rockhurst University.* New groups started September 25th and there are about one hundred “active” students in seventeen groups. Eight students and Br. Glenn Kerfoot, S.J., attended the LMU workshop. There was an overnight retreat for CLC leaders. The retreat covered offered a prayer experience plus a review of leadership, small group skills and the content of the LMU workshop. At the end of the retreat there was a “drum circle” calling the Holy Spirit to bless CLC. Their hopes to sponsor a square dance crashed because of the price of the dance caller. Bill Kriege is the campus minister working with the students, along with Br. Glenn. Bill is willing to get a student to contribute [hint, hint] to the Newsletter!!

Congratulations to Kitty Gray, the Treasurer for CLC-USA. (When Kitty is not serving in her many volunteer projects, she might be biking the MS 150 miles marathon; playing in a golf tournament for some charity; rooting for the St. Louis teams, she is employed as the CFO at the Missouri Corporate Credit Union.) The MCCU recently won the “Missouri Quality Award.” The award was presented at the awards banquet during the Excellence in Missouri Conference on November 16th at the Tan-Tar-A Resort and Spa in Osage Beach, Missouri. The Missouri Quality Award is recognized as one of the strongest state-level quality award programs in the country. It is modeled after the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Again, congratulations, Kitty. We are so very proud of you. We know you bring Christ and the Spirit of Ignatius to the Market Place.

**New England Region**

We are like a tree; our roots continue to be greatly nourished by the Nairobi Documents. They called us to become communities which discern, send and support one another on our personal and communal missions.

The trunk—the bulk of our work over the past few years, continues to grow and develop.

To lay a foundation to accomplish this, we have rejoiced to see:

A regional website;
A newsletter, online and printed for those who request it;
A very nourishing annual retreat.

Our newsletter, *Sparks*, is available to all on our website, <www.clcnewengland.net>.

We called it *Sparks* because, as members of the Ignatian family, we want to go out and set the world on fire—one spark at a time.

Out of our Nairobi roots we treasure anew one another’s lives, reflected in the individual section of the website.

To paraphrase the Song of Songs, “We are small but faith-full.” Praise God!
NEW YORK REGION

Two of our Apostolic Action Groups have been very active—

The Lay Spirituality Group organized our Advent Day of Prayer on December 10th. Our featured speaker was Fr. Timothy Gallagher, OMV, on the topic of the Awareness Examen. Although not a Jesuit, Fr. Gallagher has devoted much study and prayer to the charism of St. Ignatius and has written several books, including *The Awareness Examen: Ignatian Wisdom for Our Lives Today* and *The Discernment of Spirits: The Ignatian Guide for Everyday Living*. He has also recently given workshops on these subjects to the CLC in Toronto, Canada.

Using his experience as a spiritual director as well as research for his books, Fr. Gallagher sprinkled his talks with real-life stories to illustrate the use of the Awareness Examen from the basics of adapting it to one’s lifestyle, to its challenges, as well as fruits in the lives of those who practice it. With opportunities for private reflection, small group faith-sharing and Liturgy, the day was well received by attendees.

The Peace and Social Action Apostolic Team will be preparing our Lenten Day of Prayer.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Thirty-six members from the North Central Region attended a Regional Retreat at American Martyrs Retreat House in Cedar Falls, Iowa in October. Participants’ responses were enthusiastically positive. Rev. John LeVecke, S.J., our National Ecclesial Assistant, was the presenter. The sessions followed the Weeks of the Spiritual Exercises. Each week had its own theme song of contemporary music.

Next year’s retreat will be at Creighton’s Retreat Center in Griswold, Iowa.

Our Regional Assistant, Fr. Jack Zuercher, S.J., reports that the Regional Executive Council is working very well. The members connect by teleconference every two to three months. Fr. Jack serves as chairman. The council approved his suggestion for a co-chair and Mary Ann Rouse agreed to serve. She and her husband Tim were primarily responsible for starting the first CLC in the Region and she is a past National President.

The Omaha CLC Cluster is planning an Advent Day of Prayer for Dec. 9th at Creighton University. Fr. Greg Carlson, S.J., will be the presenter. The QM, Ruth and Siloam Communities will serve as servant communities.

A number of our Christian Life Community groups have recently used a series of four meetings on Discernment. Fr. Jack Zuercher has put together the readings and reflection questions. People report that it has been a meaningful experience. If any group is interested, copies can be requested from Fr. Jack at <JohnZuercherSJ@creighton.edu>.

RIEMAN GREAT LAKES REGION

On Saturday, October 28th, CLC members of the Rieman Great Lakes Region met in Toledo to pray, reflect and learn more about immigration issues along the Southern border. Carrie Ann Monnette, who oversees Social and International ministries for the Detroit Province of the Jesuits was the facilitator for the day. She began by showing a DVD titled, *Dying To Live: A Migrant’s Journey*. This challenging film on theology and immigration comes from the Center for Latino Spirituality and Culture at the University of Notre Dame. It offered much background information for thought and discussion. During the remainder of the day, Carrie gave us much more information and suggestions for action on the important and timely topic of immigration. Shared liturgy, lunch and discussion time helped us to grow in a sense of being a regional community.

On Saturday, September 16th, the Cleveland Cluster met at Gesu Church for a morning of prayer, reflection, discussion and lunch. We based the program on a DVD from Loyola Productions, Inc. It was titled, *A.M.D.G: A World Is Not Enough*, and was produced for the Jesuit Jubilee Year to celebrate St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Francis Xavier and Blessed Peter Faber. This excellent film combined dramatic scenes from the lives of these three men with documentary footage to show how the innovative spirit of the first members of the Society of Jesus continues in Jesuit ministries today.

Cleveland cluster CLC members and many others who collaborate with the Jesuits in the Cleveland area met at Gesu Church on October 4th for a beautiful liturgy and to attend a reception for the Very Reverend Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, Superior General of the Society of Jesus. Detroit Cluster CLC members had the same opportunity on October 5th.

SOUTH FLORIDA REGION

In October of '06 James Grummer, S.J., Assistant for North America to Father General Hans Peter Kolvenbach, S.J., visited Miami and the different works of the Jesuits of the Antilles Province. Members of the CVXs.CLCs of the area had the opportunity to converse with him and Carlos de la Torre (CVX Casa Manresa) prepared a Power Point Presentation on the different activities that take place at the Ignatian Spiritual Center and the CVXs.

Later on we joined other Ignatian groups for lunch at Belen Jesuit Preparatory School

Symposium on immigration: “Immigration: Where do we go from here?”

On the 25th of October, in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, a group of Miami Catholic organizations sponsored a symposium about one of the most important issues that confront the Church today: the National Immigration Debate.
The symposium, in solidarity with the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops’ “Justice for Immigrants” campaign and with the help of different local Catholic organizations, among them RAIM (Miami Ignatian Apostolic Net, of which CVX is an important part) took place at the Roca Theater, Belén Jesuit Preparatory School.

The night was initiated with the presentation of the documentary “Strangers no longer”, which invited us to open our hearts and minds and identify with today’s migrants, to look into our past and notice the similarities between ourselves and our ancestors.

It reminded us of our moral responsibility to actively live our faith and our obligation to be a voice of change so that newcomers are strangers no longer. Then there was a panel discussion, followed by a question and answer period.

Members of the panel were--

Leo Anchondo — Attorney, National Manager for Immigrants Campaign, USCCB
Gloria Luna — Coordinator of the Justice for Immigrants Campaign, Archdiocese of Miami
William Pickle, S.J. — Director of Latino Aid and Migrant Ministry, Loyola University, MD
Fr. Mario Vizcaino — Director of SEPI
José Núñez, S.J. — From the Dominican Republic, Expert on Immigration Flows

This was the first of a series for Social and Cultural Studies

On November 11th we had our firt Regional Assembly at Belén School.

The main purpose of the day was for the members of the different CVXs to get acquainted with each other and, especially, to present the CLC as a World organization.

We started with Proyects 131 (WExCo report) by Magada Castiñeysra (CVX Casa Manresa.)

The DVD on the Nairobi School was presented and discussed by Dr. Nora González (CVX Alas de Cristo). We were able to collect enough funds to sponsor two children for next year.

Maggie Khuly (CVX Magnificat) made us aware of the mission of CLC at the UN as an NGO.

Marcia Iglesias, our Regional Secretary of Formation (CVX EL Peregrino) presented the Human Dimension of the CLC Formation Stages.

After lunch we had group dynamics on this topic and a plenary, with the presented conclusions of the different groups.

Mass was celebrated by our Regional Ecclesial Assistant, Victor Hernández, S.J.

Developing CVX in Hispanic areas of the United States

In fulfillment of the “mandate” given to our region by the NCC in July of ’05, when we became the South Florida Region, we have been contacting different possibilities to extend CVX in Hispanics areas of the USA

Through a contact made by Carlos de la Torre (CVX Casa Manresa) we now are in communication with Fr. Rafael Juantorena, from Baton Rouge, LA, a diocesan priest with Ignatian formation (he is a member of the Agrupación Católica Universitara, ACU, a Sodality of Our Lady from Cuba, established now in five different cities in the United States and Puerto Rico). He is the spiritual guide for two pre-CVXs, one of adults and another one of young adults.

Ady Viera (CVX Magnificat) gave a day of Ignatian reflection to a large number of Hispanics in Charlotte, NC, at the invitation of a relative.

There is another possibility in Houston, Texas, where a member of “Rosa Mística”. a Marian Sodality from Cuba, who is a close friend of Clarita Baloyra’s, participates in a prayer group guided by a diocesan priest with Ignatian roots. The members are interested in the Exercises in Daily Life.

We ask for your prayers in all of these endeavors.

Celebration of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception

On Saturday, December 9th, the CVXs that integrate the Regina Mundi cluster celebrated a Morning of Reflection as preparation for Advent.

Fr. Victor Hernández, S.J., our Regional Ecclesial Assistant, presented Maria and the discernment on two topics: The Annunciation and The Wedding at Cana.

This is an annual gathering for the members of the Marian Sodalities from Cuba, who come to renew our consecration to her during the celebration of the Eucharist.
A lunch ended the day of reflection and celebration.

Looking forward to the January visits of the National CLC ExCo and the National Formation Team

(It is nice and warm in Miami in the winter...you should all consider this...)

**Western Region**

On September 10th, the Western Region Coordinating Council gathered at the Novitiate in Culver City to update the Region’s planning calendar through 2007. The calendar information was furnished to all Clusters/Communities for local events planning within the context of the Region and National plans.

The Western Region Provincial, John P. McGarry, S.J., invited attendance by CLC lay members at the Province’s Fall Social & Pastoral Ministries Conference, November 6-8 at the Jesuit Retreat Center of Los Altos. Invited were the Region President, Vice President and Treasurer, and the NCC Representative. The three day meeting allowed growth in understanding of the future of the Society within the USA and the necessity for much greater participation, physically and fiscally, by the laity of CLC in the missions of the Society and its pastoral responses within our Region.

In March, the Philippians of San Francisco hosted World CLC Day in northern California with Felix Just, S.J., speaking on: *The Three Companions*, followed by small group sharing. In July, the Cluster celebrated St Ignatius Day in San Jose. The Region’s NCC Coordinator reported on the NCC meeting held in Seattle and had much good news to share with us about the plans to grow CLC. A number of opportunities to involve ourselves in justice projects were offered. In October, the Cluster gathered in Sacramento for a day of recollection on: The *Jesuit Jubilee*, presented by the Sojourners Community and Art Wehr, S.J. Presentations on the life of St. Ignatius followed by talks by Fr. Wehr and small group sharing/reflection followed. Guests were invited to “Come and See’ CLC at this event.

**Other News from some of our communities:**

**Ignatian Spirituality Institute:** Members of the San Francisco Philippians and a Diaspora member from Salinas attended the Institute in Seattle. It was mentioned that there will be an East Coast Ignatian gathering in June 2007 in Connecticut—it would be worth looking into.

**Holy Family CLC** (San Jose) Currently enjoying Pope Benedict XVI’s Encyclical: *Deus Caritas Est*. They read six to eight sections for each meeting and discuss what moved their thoughts.

**Servants CLC** (San Jose) The group took a summer break and is trying to add new members to the three originals. Members visited Father Fitch, S.J., a retired EA, in Los Gatos, and then traveled to visit a former member who has Parkinson’s Disease.

**Phillipians** (San Francisco) A member is housing the Northern Cluster library of past materials, books, photos and history previously cared for by a San Jose member who had to pass it on.

**Retreats:** A number of CLC community members attended eight-day retreats this past summer at the Jesuit Retreat Center in Los Altos.

**Members Outreach Involvement:** Various members of the Region are involved in group outreach that includes: work with the mentally and physically disabled; immigrant and low income women; high school student work experiences; the elderly, the sick and dying; prisoners, and in counseling of offenders. Some of our members offer services through their professional careers, others on a volunteer basis.

**From the World...**

**United Kingdom**

In a special edition of FOCUS from England and Wales, the following were some of the suggestions given to initiate new CLCs...

“Study how new groups can be better resourced, nurtured and guided... Develop Young Adults to other cities... Introduce CLC to local churches... Give talks on Ignatian Spirituality... ...work in collaboration with Jesuit Retreat Houses, Spirituality Centres, Networks of Spiritual Directors... ...creation of a virtual CLC on the WEB... Regular CLC or taster days/evening to introduce new people... Be open to Christians from other ‘spiritualities’ and work with them to bring Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him or do not follow Him.”

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