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Young at Heart

In the weeks preceding World Youth Day Krakow 2016, Pope Francis gave several addresses in Rome that were not directed at youth, but that concerned the future of youth. In one he posed the question, “How Can Youth Dream of a Future If Grandparents’ Testimony of Success Is Hidden?” In that presentation, the Holy Father said: “As a society, we have deprived our elderly of their voice; we have deprived them of their space; we have deprived them of the opportunity to tell us of their life, their stories and their experiences.” That statement caught my attention and affirmed my family as they give me, Mom/Grandma Dorothy, voice, space and the encouragement to tell stories and share experiences.

Nothing gives me more pleasure than the gathering of my family - sons and daughters, sons and daughters in marriage (in laws) and my twelve grandchildren (9-25 years). My immediate family, presently twenty-five of us, hail from five states, Washington, Missouri, Virginia, New Jersey and New York. The whole family does not come together as often as I would like, but our shared time in small groups is quality time. We break bread, tell stories and tell our family history. Laughter (from budding comedians) and teary eyes abound. Discussions about our current reading choices or about a new movie or about the standings of our favorite sports teams could be the focus. Curiosity about Grandma and Papa’s courtship days or about early professional experiences command a rapt audience. The enthusiasm and joy is infectious. It does make one feel young at heart, even if one is the matriarch.

In addition to coming together in large or small groups, fruitful time is experienced when I visit one on one with a granddaughter or grandson. Recently, I received a phone call and email from my eldest grandchild, Katherine. She was calling to ask about a visit with me for some R&R. Nothing would please me more was my response. Katherine is twenty-five, a registered nurse in one of New York City’s prestigious hospitals. Demanding work schedules and the very ill patients under her care can be stress-producing. Our visit together would, hopefully, diffuse some of that stress. A few hours at a museum, a walk through Central Park, dinner and a show rounded out a very busy, fun-filled day. Our visits together are not always so packed with activity. A good bit of sharing focuses on being a single Catholic professional in “the city that never sleeps.” Worshipping at churches that cater to her lifestyle and upbringing is important to Katherine. Meeting contemporaries who share similar values is also sought. As I listen to my granddaughter confide in me about life in the big city 2016-style, I smile to myself about many situations that have changed little in the 60 years since I was a young professional in NYC. I am also amazed, perhaps even bewildered, at many of the changes that have occurred. For me, those many years ago, it was the New York Professional Sodality (CLC) that provided a place, good people (including my dear husband) and a lifelong vocation.

The authors in this issue of Harvest are a mix of the regulars with a host of new voices. Their ages represent a big spread of years (8-80) and experiences. They reflect the diversity and multiculturalism of CLC-USA.

In the President’s Corner, Ed Plocha writes of a disturbing fact in today’s world, that of the nameless young victims of war. He reminds us of the importance of calling these children by name, humanizing them and giving them the identity owed them. Ed also recalls words of Pope Francis at World Youth Day when he challenged the young people to act courageously in living the faith, especially as they move out of their comfort zone and connect with individuals on the fringes of society.

Our Guest Ecclesial Assistant is Fr. Jim O’Brien, S.J. His presentation is one he prepared for World CLC Day this past March. He proposed three points for our reflection: recent history of CLC-USA; “the guidance of the Holy Spirit in bringing us globally to a clearer and more authentic realization of CLC’s awesome charisms;” and choosing perspectives for the future in light of this Jubilee Year of Mercy.

A dear friend to many of us and a giant in the CLC nationally and internationally, we celebrate the life of Fred Leone even as we mourn his passing. Fred became a friend to me as he shared the CLC presidency with my husband Ray when Fred was out of the country in the 70s. He proved he was young at heart, when he was inviting me to be part of a retreat he was organizing a couple months...
before he passed. In “My Memories of Fred C. Leone,” Marie Schimelfening gives us a detailed account of Fred as husband, father, professional and especially iconic CLCer.

It was with sadness and almost disbelief that the CLC members received the news that our National Ecclesial Assistant, James Borbely, S.J., had died. President Ed Plocha prepared remarks for his funeral that are included in these pages. They will inform you of Fr. Jim’s contributions to CLC-USA, especially as he facilitated the discernment process.

In an address in Krakow, Pope Francis told those gathered, “Unless those who call themselves Christians live to serve, their lives serve no good purpose. By their lives, they deny Jesus Christ.” In her article, “A Call to Transform,” Fenian Kenney urges young people and adults to revisit the Church’s mission to serve. Using her experience as a Notre Dame University Summer Scholar, Fenian provides a glimpse of the world’s current reality and what it means to be a Catholic in the same. Our author proceeds to share her service involvement to date. (Note: Fenian is granddaughter of George Willett, part of the Harvest Editorial Team.)

Cathy Dante, a Campus Minster at Marquette University, tells of her pilgrimage with thirteen students to Magis Days and World Youth Day. In her article, “On Pilgrimage to Poland,” she tells of the group’s experiences in Poland and with Gesu Companions CLC upon their return to the states. Her ‘Lessons Learned’ is a valuable wrap-up and a potentially useful tool for all those working with college youth.

S.E.E.D. Ministry of CLC-USA and Dong Hanh is a program in service to youth. Young and older adults provide Ignatian spirituality retreats for children ages 6-17. S.E.E.D. leaders are typically college-age young women and men who volunteer to develop and deliver these retreats during the summer. Within this issue are reflections of three S.E.E.D. leaders.

- Bethany Vu describes her growth in spirituality from her early days as a S.E.E.D. retreatant to her present one as a teacher. The support of family and community members and her reliance on Ignatian principles and practices help put a clear focus in her daily life.

- Matthew Nguyen is a first-time S.E.E.D. leader. He shares about this summer’s retreat experience with phrases like these: feeling a constant presence of God; God acting through me; a sense of peace and gratitude; giving back more than I received. All this points to his desire for the next retreat.

- Christopher Tran had some doubts about being a S.E.E.D. leader this year because of other priorities, especially as the team prepared for the retreat. Through prayer, trusting God and using his gifts with children, he was at peace. “I am reminded of the tender love of God in my life through the S.E.E.D.ings and the Dong Hanh community.”

In “World Youth Day,” Bartholomew Lapsa writes of his blessed and phenomenal experience. The sharing of faith with so many from other cultures, especially from war-torn countries, availing himself of the sacraments, and being located in a city where St. John Paul II and St. Faustina lived and worked were inspiring. Bartholomew was especially moved by hearing and reflecting on the words of Pope Francis.

Elaine Melissa Ureña introduced some of us to a nickname for St. Ignatius, Nachito. In her article, “Los Nachitos: Young Adults Following Ignatian Spirituality in Today’s Society,” Elaine describes her young adult community in Miami. Grounded in the Spiritual Exercises they believe in a future world and Church led by youth committed to the faith and to truth.

Dimitrios Rentel, in “The Mercy and Love of Our Lord,” reminds us that to be a Christian includes not only the declaration of our belief in Jesus Christ, but also in the practice of love and mercy. Forgiveness, trusting others and honoring others above oneself will lead the way to becoming ‘holy and pious Christians.’

And last but not least, we have the youngest of our authors, Antonio Santamaria, eight years old. In “Alitas de Cristo Soars in Miami,” Antonio tells about a group of children who meet regularly to learn about Christ, their Christian faith, the saints, the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy and the Jubilee Year of Mercy. In this ‘pre-pre clc,’ they are learning about Ignatian spirituality, too.

It is my expectation that many of you will be energized and look to the future with greater hope after hearing from the young among us. I do believe some will experience feeling young at heart.

With gratitude to the Lord,
Dorothy M. Zambito

Cover Photos:
Top: Chicago Polish CLC
Middle: Alitas de Cristo
Bottom: S.E.E.D. Leaders
“I have called you by name...”

“I have called you by name, you are mine...you are precious in my eyes and honored, and I love you. All who are called by my name I created for my glory; I formed them, made them.” (cf. Isaiah 43)

The first rule of war – or any form of conflict in which humans are called upon to kill other humans – is to justify the violence and convince the combatants that they are killing for a righteous or noble cause. Heroism is rewarded. This makes the second element in the equation, namely, the need to go through a mental transformation that de-humanizes the enemy, a little easier. The soldiers must internalize that they are eliminating “things” or objects that are obstructions to the greater good and ordered society. The enemy must be “reified,” made a “thing” in order to absolve those inflicting the damage that in a civilian context would be a loathsome activity. In war, this equation makes for greater efficiency of the enterprise to destroy, eliminate, contain and ultimately gain control. Once that line is crossed it becomes easier to kill, easier to live with others’ deaths and suffering, and easier to accept the inevitability of “collateral damage” with minimal qualms. The casualties are tallied in the aggregate. As individual persons they become “anonymous.” And so the killing, hunger, displacement and spread of disease goes on in Syria, South Sudan, Ethiopia and other countries. The carnage does not shock quite as much because we have grown used to and perhaps complacent with the numbers reported. It is, after all, a part of the human condition.

The anonymity, however, is shattered and our hearts touched when we see individual victims, especially the children, who are the casualties of war. Images of the lifeless body of a three year old Syrian boy of Kurdish ethnic background, Alan Kurdi, who washed up on a Turkish beach September 2, 2016 received world-wide attention. This footage broke our hearts. Earlier, on August 18, the entire world was moved by the video and photos of a five year old boy, Omran Daqneesh, covered with dust and blood. He was rescued from the rubble of his family’s home that had been struck by Syrian war planes in the city of Aleppo. While Omran survived, his brother, Ali Daqneesh, 10, was not as lucky. He died after suffering internal bleeding and organ damage.

These boys became “real” to us. They were not simply statistics. They were not anonymous. They each had a name. They each had a face. They are a reminder, however, that most of the children who are victims of the violence remain anonymous. The opposition activist group Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported the number of children killed in the conflict had risen to 14,040, while at the same time 9,106 women were also killed by late May 2016, [Wikipedia: Casualties of the Syrian Civil War]. These are not mere statistics, not nameless footnotes of collateral damage. These are the innocents who are among the victims of war. The images of the children touch us at our very core.

This issue of Harvest is dedicated to Youth, the fourth frontier identified at the 2013 World CLC Assembly in Lebanon. It appears shortly after the celebration of World Youth Day (WYD), July 25 – 31, in Krakow, Poland. Some journalists called this a week-long “pep rally,” led by the Catholic Church’s greatest cheer leader, Pope Francis.

As usual, the Pope challenged youth and all of us to live the mystery of our faith more deeply. In Ignatian terms, to seek the magis, the “more” in living our vocation as Catholic Christians and by extension, to us, members of Christian Life Community. I will highlight and comment on a few thoughts from the Holy Father’s remarks at the World Youth Day prayer vigil on Saturday, July 30th.
Rand Mittri, 26, a Syrian from Aleppo, set the stage at World Youth Day by telling the Pope and those gathered that Aleppo was destroyed and “the meaning of our lives has been cancelled. We are the forgotten.” Visibly moved by this testimony, Pope Francis challenged those gathered and followers of the event from around the world to look at and see all victims of war as persons, not anonymous statistics. We do this, he said, by naming these persons because by so doing we show our respect for and solidarity with them in their plight.”

The Pope says, “Let us call each other, and especially the children, by name… If we don’t have a specific name for them, we should remember that we are part of the human family; we are brothers and we are sisters, we seek communion.” Thus, they, the victims, are no longer anonymous, “They have a name; they have a face; they have a story; they are close at hand.” We are one human family, inextricably linked. The Pope has repeated this message in document after document, exhortations, homilies and talks. As we in CLC seek to grow into one body, we recognize that we are also part of the larger fabric of the human family, physical and spiritual, living and dead. We are united in mystical bonds that we Catholics refer to as the communion of saints.

The Pope invites us to reach out to others, and to build bridges and not walls. Oftentimes we must leave our comfort zone. At WYD he called this a “sofa-happiness.” A sofa, he says, “makes us feel comfortable, calm, and safe. It “gives us hours of comfort and enables us to escape into the world of videogames and a virtual reality that we can create for ourselves.” But, sofa-happiness is not really happiness. It is an addiction that stimulates some to seek even more similar stimulation. It really is a kind of drug that satisfies briefly, but ultimately leaves us craving more of the same stimulation. The metaphor of a sofa is widely applicable to include obsessive shopping, binge TV watching, mindless hours spent in front of the computer screen and other forms of compulsive behavior. These activities numb us into a form of paralysis that makes us drowsy and dull to the reality around us, isolates us from our truest and deepest self – the self that seeks communion with others. The Pope uses the image of a sofa as an excuse from being engaged with the world and those around us.

True spirituality is reality-based. If we opt for reality, we find the “magic of encountering others, making friends, sharing dreams, walking at the side of others.” Meaningful relationships satisfy us. It is our response to Jesus who has called us all “friends” (John 15:15) and invited us to join him in the labor to build community and the Kingdom.

To respond to this invitation and our calling, we must go beyond our comfort zone. In the Holy Father’s words:

“Jesus is not the Lord of comfort, security and ease. Following Jesus demands a good dose of courage, a readiness to trade in the sofa for a pair of walking shoes and to set out on new and uncharted paths: to blaze trails that open up new horizons capable of spreading joy, the joy that is born of God’s love and wells up in your hearts with every act of mercy; to take the path of the ‘craziness’ of our God, who teaches us to encounter him in the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick, the friend in trouble, the prisoner, the refugee and the migrant, and our neighbors who feel abandoned.”

With the Pope, I encourage all of us to reach out with renewed energy and vigor; to engage with one another more deeply. Our CLC groups provide a venue for engagement. We encounter each other in our groups; we are present to, pray and discern with other members. We learn to trust, share and think in terms of “us.” The “I” is always in context of the “we.” In living the Ignatian CLC charism we see God in all things. For Ignatius this is what true “freedom” is all about. We believe that everything in God’s creation can be a way to God. As members of Christian Life Community, our lives are characterized by prayer-inspired service and the conviction that we are called to love others as God first loved us.

The Holy Father says, “The times we live in do not call for young ‘couch potatoes’ but for young people with shoes, or better, boots laced. It only takes players on the first string, and it has no room for bench-warmers. Today’s world demands that you be a protagonist of history because life is always beautiful when we choose to live it fully, when we choose to leave a mark.”

So, don’t be a couch potato. Leave the comfort of your couch and lace up those boots! Encounter others; make friends; become engaged with them. Share their dreams. Be present to them and support them in their pain and their sorrow. Encourage them. Walk alongside them on their journeys. If we all do this, we will experience the magic of the power of being one body, one community dedicated to the building of the Kingdom, with others in Christian Life Community, the Church, society and the world. Ad maiorem Dei gloriam. For the greater glory of God.
Dear Friends in the Lord:

Greetings! I certainly would prefer to be with you in person. But it’s a consolation to know many Pittsburgh CLCers are clustering together at Pius X, and a special cause for gratitude that Fr. Frank Kaminski has made himself available to join you there. Thank you, Frank!

As my contribution to the day from a distance, I’d like to offer three points for your consideration:

1) First, I offer some recent history regarding CLC-USA. I see it as quite foundational for our efforts today and for the graced future.

2) Secondly, I believe that a brief reference to CLC World Assemblies will help us appreciate how active and almost tangible has been the guidance of the Holy Spirit in bringing us globally to a clearer and more authentic realization of CLC’s truly awesome charisms.

3) Finally, and more pointedly to our immediate task this afternoon is the choice of some perspective for probing into the future. You’ve enjoyed an already lively visual presentation of our Pittsburgh CLC profile as it has manifested itself in the past year. Now we want to seek a way for advancing harmoniously together in the Lord’s love both in our prayer and in our apostolic outreach for the year ahead. We have chosen as this focus, Pope Francis’ designation of this as the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Divine Mercy, a perspective which seems quite relevant to our particular purpose.

1. A New Way of Being Together

A little CLC-USA history will clarify and substantiate an important added significance for our gathering as a “cluster” today. It will take us back to 2010-2012 and the decision stemming from the National Assembly in 2009 in Washington, DC that we needed “a new way of being together.” The ten Jesuit provinces, experiencing reduced numbers, were in process of being reduced to five, thus calling for a rearranging of our ten CLC regions. Hispanic, Korean and Vietnamese immigrants had brought with them in recent years a wondrous solidarity and an inspiring Ignatian practice. Their numbers, though, were concentrated in disparate locations and were largely isolated from our so-called “Anglo” communities.

This, therefore, called for a more integrated structure and interaction among us. Fifty or so of us from around the country came together on four or five occasions at the Gilmary Retreat Center near the Pittsburgh Airport - the officers of the National ExCo, about fifteen members of the advisory National Coordinating Council (NCC) and the rest invited from MAR and elsewhere to broaden the base for the various discerning sessions that ensued. Let me mention some salient points resulting from these meetings. They can fill out the picture a bit regarding CLC-USA’s newly discerned directions.

- A major development is that the NCC will no longer be merely an advisory body, but rather the originating source for CLC’s overall growth and development in the country. In other words, the governing base will be the individual small CLC groups of whatever cultural or national origins, and our manner of existence will be ongoing communal discernment.

- A representative of each small group will be designated to carry the consensus of the his/her companions to the next level, that of the local cluster. In the case of cultural
groups with their special backgrounds and concerns, they may choose to keep in touch over larger distances with the help of social media. Various other occasional and regular interchanges will develop as they did within our former regional structure. And, of course there will be a National Assembly every five years as the blessed way of translating to this country the graces acquired at the level of the previous World Assembly.

This grand vision has experienced its moments of difficulty and desolation since 2011, and is running behind its original schedule of implementation. Happily, this seems not to be the case in MAR and especially in the Pittsburgh area. We find ourselves inspired to move ahead, to create a model at this local level for facilitating the growth of the CLC charisms in other places. I submit that today we are being invited into a graced moment of growth not merely for ourselves but for other centers around the country. Is this conviction merely a wild-eyed burst of enthusiasm? Or have we possibly arrived at the point of a promising expansion in visibility and cooperative outreach for CLC-Pittsburgh? My vote is strongly in favor of the latter. My rationale goes along these lines:

- Today will bless us with an overall consolation as we reflect upon what the Spirit has been doing in us and in the recent past. We will return to our small groups with new questions and ideas, thanks to what we have seen and heard in today’s conversation and interaction.
- We will experience a strong desire for the facilitators from our five groups, however designated, to come together with an agreed-upon regularity, face-to-face or via conference call or Skype, to advance the conversation carried on today at Pius X.
- As a cluster, as many of us as possible will continue getting together for World CLC Day to examine and celebrate how the Lord is growing in us as a body. This energized process will bond us more affectively and effectively with regard to recruitment, formation, mission and finances.

Recruitment: To say nothing of the prospects for a more vibrant and visible witness to the CLC way of life, do notice that the brochures for the 2016-2017 Bridges Program are scheduled for the taking today. Thus all of us will have almost six months for prayerful, gentle, persistent efforts to invite likely others into the Spiritual Exercises instead of gaining relatively few persons in the six weeks or so we have been making available for recruiting a new Bridges class.

Formation and Mission: As we encourage next-step retreatants to consider CLC, forming new groups or joining existing ones, there will be a growing accent on formation and mission, and a wider availability for ways of advancing spirituality and connecting apostolically. Spiritual direction will be called for and discernment as to what an ever-loving God is speaking to our hearts. More of us will discover the desire to declare publicly our annual, and even permanent, promises to live the CLC way of life. The Prayer Companions program and the emerging Families Turning project may become attractive.

Some other energizing outreach may arise out of our individual families, parishes, workplaces, neighborhoods or the wider world. An involvement of some few days at the Lord’s Ranch along the Mexican-Arizona border or some other outstanding prophetic CLC presence may beckon the hearts of some of us. The idea of attending an annual MAR Regional Meeting with CLCers from the Philadelphia-Northern Virginia corridor, the thriving groups in North Carolina, and possibly even folks from Cleveland and Cincinnati may not remain something beyond our reach. Nor will a yearly silent retreat seem out of the question.

Finances: Some of us with greater financial acumen may decide to be more actively engaged in expanded fund-raising to supplement our personal resources and make such activities budget-possible.

Finally, I note that Fr. Frank Kaminski, recently missioned to work with the Jesuit Collaborative, is present with you at Pius X. This organization seeks to coordinate and encourage Ignatian spirituality at Jesuit institutions along the East Coast—some twelve colleges and universities, well over twenty junior and senior high schools, a multitude of parishes and several retreat houses. Fr. Frank, in an earlier life, had an outstanding history of CLC-Jesuit collaboration in Chile. He is the first official contact with MAR from the Jesuit Collaborative. This could well become a mutually promising future alliance.

2. CLC: A Prophetic, Discerning, Lay, Global Community

Thus far we have been reflecting on the American scene. We would do well, I suggest, to take some little time to engage some worldwide developments within the CLC. The title introducing this section has been twenty-five and more years in the making. It’s literally awesome to review the preparations for, the discernment discovered, and the directions flowing from the successive World Assemblies of that time period. The Holy Spirit’s actions are clearly discernible. These several particulars may serve as indications of the Spirit’s gentle movements.

- The Spiritual Exercises have come to be seen not merely as one of the CLC’s sources of spiritual energy and insight, but as its principle point of entry into the Christian mystery.
- CLC is not a large, loosely connected number of small groups of individuals finding support for living their separate Christian lives. We make up one graced worldwide apostolic community.
- The small local communities and their individual members are not being led into particular apostolic choices by their leadership. They arise from how each individual/group discerns its mission as laity in a continuing dialogue with the Holy Spirit.
- This exchange is exercised through fidelity to the daily examen. CLC members are people learning and growing into a prayerful, discerning way of life. Our charisms lead us into the choice of apostolic ministries which speak in the name of the Father.

continued on page 19
It is with joy and gratitude that Christian Life Community-USA celebrates the life of Father Jim Borbely, S.J.. We remember him not just for what he did and the many contributions he made to our community; but we remember him for who he was: a strong presence, encouraging and challenging us to strive for the magis, the more.

Father Jim’s experience with CLC included facilitating the discernment process at the World Assembly in Guadalajara, Mexico in 1990 when Christian Life Community adopted the General Principles and General Norms. For years afterwards, he served as a consultant and resource person to CLC-USA as we sought ways – in our diversity – to grow into “one body” and to more effectively organize our national community for mission. In 2012 he assumed the position of CLC-USA National Ecclesial Assistant. He served in this capacity until his death. It is hard to overestimate Father Jim’s contribution to CLC. As one member said of him, “When I think of the meetings I attended with him, the image that comes to mind is that of a navigator. He had a very refined gift of sensing where we were and how best to get to our goal. And, perhaps more importantly, how not to get there.”

While he was an effective group facilitator, Father Jim had another, pastoral side to him that many did not see. In a one-on-one encounter he was a person who could listen attentively, show understanding, empathy and even tenderness. As a spiritual director he could hold someone’s pain and provide spiritual comfort.

We celebrate his life, but we also will miss his presence among us, his wisdom and his guidance. We hope and pray that we can continue to live into being the one body and the discerning community that he encouraged us to be.

IN MEMORIAM

James Patrick Jacobsmeyer, June 6. Jamie was the son of Kay and Jerry Jacobsmeyer, longtime members of John XXIII CLC.

James Felling, July 7. Jim was the husband of Joan, a Past President of CLC-USA. They were instrumental in establishing the Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life, the 19th Annotation in the St. Louis metro area.

William Hufker, July 14. Bill and his wife, Ginny, have been active members of John XXIII CLC. Bill was one of the original members in leadership in the Sodality at Saint Louis University. He helped guide the group as it became CLC after Vatican II.

Fred C. Leone, July 14. Past President of CLC-USA and Vice President of World CLC. See page 10.


Dr. James (Jim) Regan, husband of Mary Regan, Ichthus Community (North Central Region).

Patricia Riewaldt Edson, sister of Terry Finney, Ichthus Community (North Central Region).

Carmen Rivera, August 30, mother of Nancy Rodriguez, of Faber CLC New York.
The best description that I can give of Dr. Fred C. Leone is the “eternal optimist.” Those who knew him would not have a problem saying that he was truly an optimistic person. Whenever our national or local CLC was in a bind, whether it be financial or planning a convention or a difficult program, Fred would say, “We can do this!” And more often than not, we did it because of his optimism and enthusiasm. Yes, it rubbed off on many of us. So when I think I can’t do something that is asked of me, I remember my dear friend who would say to me, “You can do it.” Then I do not hesitate.

Fred was a statistician by profession. He served as Executive Director of the American Statistical Association (ASA) from 1973 until his retirement in 1988. Under his leadership, membership in ASA grew substantially as he guided its transformation from a scientific society to a professional association with an international presence. While he travelled around the world on business, he always made it a point to visit with local CLCers. He was never forgotten.

He received his baccalaureate in mathematics at Manhattan College, and continued his education at Georgetown University where he received his M.S. in 1943. Like many of his generation, he interrupted his studies and enlisted in the Navy and received a commission as a naval communications officer on the USS Ticonderoga with the Pacific Fleet during WWII. He continued his graduate studies at Purdue University, receiving his Ph.D. in mathematical statistics in 1949. Fred was on the faculty at Case Institute of Technology from 1949-66 and served as professor at the University of Iowa from 1966-73. During the 1968-69 academic year he was on the faculty at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil as Fulbright Fellow. He co-authored with Norman Johnson, *Statistics and Experimental Design Engineering and the Physical Sciences* (1964, 1977), a widely used text for applied statistics. Fred also served as editor of *Technometrics* from 1964 to 1968. In 1987 he was awarded the Shewhart Medal for outstanding technical leadership in the field of modern quality control from the American Society for Quality.

Fred and Betty had nine children. The first two, twins, died at birth. Whenever I visited with him, we would always talk about each of his children including 21 grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren. When possible (almost always), he would attend his grandchildren’s graduations and weddings. About three years ago he even went to Germany for a granddaughter’s wedding. Fred loved to be with his family and loved to have parties. His 90th birthday was quite a celebration!

The Leones began their journey in CLC when they were first introduced to Sodality in 1956 in Cleveland, Ohio. They continued on that road throughout their lives. I first met Fred at a Sodality/CLC National Convention in Omaha, Nebraska in 1967. That was the year that our World Movement was re-named Christian Life Community. That was almost 50 years ago. My travelling journey with them included Iowa (1971-73) for many meetings at their home; Augsburg, Germany in 1973 for a World Assembly; Washington, D.C. when they moved in 1973 and for many other visits and meetings. Other meetings included the Philippines and Rome assemblies and many of our own national assemblies.

In my years as Executive Director of CLC-USA I had the privilege of working with five presidents. Fred was one of them. He was actually the one who invited me to St. Louis, Missouri to interview for that position in 1971. I don’t know how many people were able to say no to Fred. I can’t remember any.

Fred was President of CLC-USA from 1967-71 and a member of the World ExCo for nine years (1970-76 and 1979-82). During his time on the World ExCo he worked with a team, including Nick Rieman, S.J., the World Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant in Rome, on the first (early) revision of the *General Principles* (1978).

In 1975 the World CLC became a non-governmental organization (NGO) accredited to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Fred always recognized Betty as the initiator of this request to the World ExCo when he was Vice-President. We continue to have
accreditation and a CLC working group at the UN. Betty said that together with other NGOs, we (WCLC) could influence public opinion on issues of global concern.

Fred loved to write and so many CLCers would have seen his articles in Harvest or in Progressio. It was a joy to be a co-author with him on occasion and especially as we wrote the CLC History which appeared in 2013 in Harvest. “Fred, thank you for the time we worked together on this project. I will miss our conversations, our meals together, our watching movies and our prayer time together. And more, I will miss the times that we reminisced about our CLC way of life and the many friends who accompanied us on our journey.”

In 2005, two years after Betty died he wrote a book entitled, Journey. It was a story about his journey in life. After each chapter he concluded with a reflection and a prayer. On the last page he wrote, “Each time I read the above sections, I ask myself if I have done enough in my over 82 years of life here on earth. It looks as if God isn’t ready to take me Home yet. Evidently, God wanted her (Betty) Home. I am seeking what new journey God may be calling me to and wondering how long it will take before I join Betty. … And now I conclude, Here is my story, and may your journey and my continued journey be fruitful in God’s eyes.” (Fred stipulated that the proceeds of Journey would go to the CLC NGO UN Working Group for its special projects.)

Fred was always committed to his family, his parish, his own CLC and to CLC worldwide. His relationship with God was very important to him and such an example to many. Without fail he would make his eight-day Ignatian retreat. While still living in the Washington, D.C. area he organized a group from his parish to make a five-day retreat at the Jesuit Retreat House in Faulkner, Maryland. He did it for about three years.

In September 2015 Fred moved to Galion, Ohio to Magnolia Terrace (assisted living) which is close to his son, Larry who is a medical doctor. He called me shortly after moving there and said, “This is the place God wants me to be right now until God calls me home.” Fred and I shared many calls and several visits after that.

In the meantime, Fred was not going to just be there and do nothing. He called me again, this time to help with organizing a retreat for the residents. In May of this year, he called upon his own spiritual director to come from Pittsburgh to direct a two-day retreat for them. He was happy. About two weeks before he died Fred called me and said, “Marie, we have to begin to organize the retreat for next spring.”

Fred died July 14, 2016 three weeks shy of his 94th birthday. I heard from a family member that about two days before Fred died, she found a couple pieces of paper that had three names on them written by him. They read, Betty, John and Michael. Yes, Fred was ready and so was God.

...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 to fulfill our mission. (General Principles #3)
It was with no small sense of trepidation that I left home for the first time this summer. Trekking from Philadelphia to rural northwest Indiana, I arrived at the University of Notre Dame to begin a two-week immersion in Catholicism. After a vigorous vetting process, I had been selected as a Notre Dame Summer Scholar to participate, learn and grow my nascent, quite immature faith. Specifically, the course was entitled *The Contemporary Church and its Evolving Mission*, taught by two lay theologians, Dr. Michael Griffin and Sheila McCarthy. We met as the sun broke the Indiana plains at the Grotto each morning for silent prayer; then we would ascend the steps of the main building to begin our investigations in a classroom directly under the iconic gold statue of Our Blessed Virgin Mary, for whom the university is named.

Who were we? We were youth, mostly sixteen and seventeen years old, all of us Catholic, representing ten states from all parts of the country. As I would come to realize, this course was not for the faint of heart. We vigorously dissected the whole of *The Future Church* by John L. Allen Jr., with each student responsible for a chapter’s presentation and the ensuing and often-passionate debate. I found myself, like my summer colleagues, working long past midnight not simply to understand the material, but to formulate an authentic response that encompassed not only the intellectual, but also the emotional and ethical implications of the text and discussions. And what can I offer readers of *Harvest* as to what we learned together? Although they are myriad, I wish to offer some ideas of what we as young Catholics melded together on the particular topic of service.

From the time of Saul of Tarsus, Catholicism has considered its most central mission the spread of Christ’s teaching to all parts of the known world. True, that world has grown in both enormity and complexity, and so has our mission. We, as Catholics, unlike other worshippers, find it our essential duty not simply to withdraw from the outside world, but to embrace the economic, political and social implications that our cultural institutions have rendered. Consider the binary opposition of a post-modern Capitalist economy with that of a post-colonial Socialist society. The difference in mores, level of income, material acquisitions, and cultural ideologies could scarcely be more stark, and yet, the essential humanity of us all is the same. Different as an Upper East Side New Yorker may be from a Chilean child in Santiago, we, all of us, at the core share the same human moral compass.

The skeptic may say that the ever-widening gap of the rich and poor, the subversive economic undertows and pure foreignness of each of us on every part of the globe leads to a certain paralysis of action. It becomes facile and indeed popular to distance ourselves from what lies outside our immediate realm of instant gratifications. But that is not consonant with our profession of Catholicism. Let us not confuse liturgical piety, Church law and sacramental observance with what lay deeper at the fundamental bedrock of our faith. All of us comprise a single humanity, each of us precisely with the same worth, and each of us, both rich and poor, developed or not, with the mandate to alleviate suffering, establish a more just society, and materially replenish those most presently vulnerable. In this we may come to see the isolated “other” as mere reflections of ourselves. The question we discussed was how we, as teenage Catholics, can advance this process of service at home and across the globe.

For me, the answer presents itself in the different stages of my life. I have been blessed with a mentor, my 93 year-old grandfather who continues to rise early each day to open the church, to attend Bible studies, and to remain active in CLC. When I was
younger, I witnessed him and his friends practice spiritual and corporal acts of mercy at a local homeless shelter. Homeschooled as a child, I had time to develop my own service project. I chose to rebuild or refurbish old dollhouses, with the proceeds going to those needing assistance. I sold my first dollhouse to aid a donkey sanctuary and soon others followed. To date, the sales have assisted with feeding and clothing the homeless, as well as ensuring afterschool meals for children in need. Books have been purchased for a local day care, as well as sent in a shipment to a school in Africa. I am currently working on a dollhouse and the proceeds will go to a scholarship fund for a young girl whose father was murdered in Philadelphia.

More of the answer came when we, as a class, visited a Catholic shelter located in downtown South Bend, named “Our Lady of the Road.” Here, the guests in need could find shelter, do laundry, shower and enjoy a decent meal. What struck us students was the commitment shown by our professors and the volunteers. In my years of education, with varied teachers, I have never witnessed such hands-on and self-less dedication. We joined in to cook, clean and feed the guests. As a group, we felt a kinship, and possibly for the first time, a moral direction for our lives. What we shared was more powerful than anything we could have been taught. I returned to the shelter a few weeks later having consigned another dollhouse, and used the proceeds to purchase much needed supplies. This trip, I spoke at length with Matt from the Catholic Worker community. I realized that, to those in need, Matt is not a manager of a shelter; he has become family to them; and they are unique family to him. There was a palpable level of compassion, respect and mutual esteem. I believe that feeling was God’s mercy, filling the room and touching all within in different ways. Pope Francis said, “God comes to break open everything that keeps you closed in. He is encouraging you to dream. He wants to make you see that, with you, the world can be different.” I view each encounter I have shared with my mentors and fellow students as a gift from God that has allowed another door in my journey to be opened to facilitate living my faith authentically.

There is a solution: We, as young Catholics, must keep discerning how God is calling us. We must initiate greater personal sacrifice in order to heal the many divisions in our society and the world so we can bear witness to what Pope Francis calls “everything we have to give, all the love we are capable of spreading.” Yes, the youth of today can embrace the modern complexities of our society effectively with simple, humble, daily acts of service.
On Pilgrimage to Poland

By Cathy Dante

The subject line of my email from Campus Ministry read: World Youth Day. This was not a typical email. My work as a residence hall minister at Marquette University covered many things. But, World Youth Day? I was curious. I opened the email.

There was the invitation. Did I want to lead a group of students to World Youth Day in Poland in July 2016? I had been to World Youth Day in 2005 in Cologne, Germany. That was Pope Benedict’s first ever World Youth Day, and the experience stays with me today. Over the years I thought about going one more time, but it never seemed to work out. Too busy, too expensive, too far away. Now I had the chance. I said, yes!

Our first meeting as a group was later that fall. We spent the next eight months preparing for our pilgrimage to Poland for World Youth Day and Magis Days which is an event for delegates from Jesuit colleges and universities. We prayed together, raised funds together and then parted until we met in Poland in July for our pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage brings graces, unexpected and surprising. Graces shared reveal even more. I invite you to read on as I share the graces we received and the lessons I learned about ministering to – or is it with? – young adults during this pilgrimage.

Magis Days

Magis Days was the highlight of the experience. A gathering of delegates to World Youth Day from Jesuit colleges and universities from across the globe, our group of 13 gathered with about 2000 other people to celebrate Jesus through song, dance and prayer, united by our Magis bracelets that identified us as pilgrims and gave us access to the events. The students also traded items, a tradition for World Youth Day, exchanging trinkets that represented our home area or country for those from another area. My group exchanged American trinkets for bracelets and other things from Ecuador, Portugal and Tanzania.

Encountering other cultures was a theme in the next phase of Magis, the experiment. Those familiar with Jesuit formation may know the term experiment, when novices experience ministry that stretches them beyond what is familiar. The Magis delegates were split into groups and sent off to a week-long experience. Marquette delegates departed to walk the Camino, take acting lessons, dress like a clown, dance, make masks to reveal themselves, study leadership, pray in silence and immerse themselves in another culture.

While we were apart, we encountered people from other countries, living, learning, laughing, and serving with them. My Magis group included one of my students, two other Americans, four from France, six from Zimbabwe, one from Birundi and one from Mozambique. Our hosts were a Polish actor, Janek Szczygiel, his translator, a Jesuit scholastic originally from Poland now living in Italy, a Jesuit from Germany, and a group of Franciscan women who allowed us to stay in their convent in Ostrowiec, Swietokrzyski, in the hill country of Poland. With more than eight languages among us, we discovered we had the common language of our bodies as places for encounter with God. Our teacher, Janek, led us through exercises like playing with an imaginary ball or expressing gratitude without words. That language of imagination and physicality created bonds and taught us more about communication than any language class could. The experience of acceptance was particularly powerful for my Magis group.

Other Marquette delegates had a different experience of acceptance. Some encountered stereotypes of Americans. We eat too much. We are loud. We treat each other rudely. We always win, no matter what the cost. One pilgrim later called this “reverse culture shock,” recognizing the truth within the stereotypes, a distressing experience that may take a lifetime to appropriate.

While the stereotypes of Americans were difficult for those that encountered them, overall the Marquette delegates experienced many graces. One student had danced all her life. Through...
the prayer of her Magis group, she recognized that dance is not only a ministry – it is one to which God calls her. Others who made their first silent retreat recognized what they had in common with someone from Syria, in contrast with the media’s take on Syria. Despite our separate experiences, a common grace came forward, the desire to lead others and share what they had been given. These graces prepared them for the next phase, our pilgrimage to World Youth Day.

World Youth Day

While graces were present for World Youth Day, they were different from the ones of Magis. Pilgrimage is hard, and World Youth Day was no exception. Trains stopped working. The number of pilgrims was more than the train system could take, and the normal ride of 1 ¼ hours stretched out to more than 2 ½ hours each way. Our accommodations were not typically American. We slept on gym floors. The showers had no curtains, and bathroom doors did not lock. And then there were crowds. And waiting. And rain. And sleeping outside. It was hard to seek God in these challenges. Yet, somehow, God found us.

One of the graces we received was seeing Pope Francis from about 15 feet away. One of the pilgrims shared early that her bucket list included a selfie with Pope Francis. I prayed on it for her. When we arrived in Krakow, the students asked me how to see Pope Francis. I told them the truth. I did not know. I suggested they pray to ask the right people to find out the information they needed. They did. One asked a police officer who shared the approximate time and location when Pope Francis was arriving. We made our way there, waiting for only a few hours. Our efforts were rewarded with a view of Pope Francis in the Popemobile. By coincidence, we had a Marquette flag with us. Our group was overjoyed and consoled. And, the student got her selfie.

The Marquette pilgrims also grew in the grace of leadership. The call to leadership became a touchstone for the group even while in Poland. Several of them grew impatient with other Americans. “The other groups complain so much,” one of them told me. When they remembered the call to leadership, they responded. They began to minister to others beyond our group, including an American student from another school who was too sick to participate. They made sure she had food and medicine, checking on her daily. Facing the challenge of impatient crowds on the train, they sang and told stories, creating community. One tried to calm down pilgrims when people began to rush the train station.

The most significant way I saw the grace of leadership in action was during the pilgrimage for the Papal Mass. On the seven-mile walk there, I realized that I was the slowest in our group. I feared we would miss the 8 pm train the next night.

Missing the train meant missing flights home, so I was determined to make it. After our time at Eucharistic adoration on Saturday, I went to sleep, praying for clarity on how best to respond.

The next morning, one of our pilgrims approached me, anxious about the train. The group and I talked. We discerned that I should leave early, with three other pilgrims. The rest would remain at the Mass until Communion. We would walk back to the train station, my leading one group and a student the other, praying that the Holy Spirit would reunite us in time for the train.

On the walk back to the train station, one student confided in me that she was taking one for the team. She noticed that I and other students were tired and walking slowly, and she was also concerned that we would miss our train. She had already attended a Papal Mass, and she had seen Pope Francis earlier in the week. She could let this Mass go, she decided. She sacrificed her opportunity to be at the closing Mass for World Youth Day to help others in the group. And, she was one of only two students who had a working phone. With her GPS app, she was able to save us two miles of walking. I wonder how God might call her as a leader.

The student who led the other group already showed good instincts—concern for the group, attending to those left behind, and an ability to navigate crowds. Together with his group, they navigated crowds, deciding to skip Communion in the interest of catching the train. Then, a gift: they found a Eucharistic minister on their way to the station. The Spirit provided, helping him lead them safely to the train station, where we were reunited.

Back Home

In September 2016, Gesu Companions invited the Marquette pilgrims to share a Polish meal and stories about their experience. More graces came forward, including the grace of connection. The two groups knew of each other, but had not met face to face until that day. People from each group admitted to me privately that they were concerned about meeting. The oldest student and youngest member of Gesu Companions were 18 years apart. Would we be able to find any common ground? I hoped so.

Then the afternoon came. The students arrived first, seeing each other for the first time since July. Many still wore their Magis bracelets or other trinkets they had exchanged while in Poland. The group looked at each other with relief and familiarity. “I don’t have to explain what an experiment is to you all,” said one. “You know – you did it.” Others still struggled to articulate the experience. One tried to explain the experiment to a friend on an hour and a half bus ride. By the end, the friend still did not understand what an experiment was, but did recognize the impact of the experience. I began to wonder how
the two groups would interact if the students were still seeking
words.

The noise on the stairs signaled the arrival of Gesu Com-
panions. They entered the room arms laden with food, grouping
together opposite the Marquette group. How to bridge this gap?
People bingo, with trivia relevant to both groups. A friendly ice-
breaeker game turned into a get-to-know you activity that lasted
45 minutes, allowing everyone in the group to meet each other
and have a conversation. When the game finished, we turned to
the food, continuing the conversation and the connections that
had formed bridging the difference in age, another grace.

Lessons Learned

Not only did I see graces in my students’ personal growth
and development, I also received graces that help me to be a
better minister to young adults. Here are some of them:

Music, games and dance transcend culture and language.

My Magis groups acted during the day and danced, sang and
played volleyball in the evenings. Even our acting lessons tran-
scended culture and language. I rolled my eyes when I was asked
to play tag, but I quickly realized that tag existed in every culture
represented there - African, American, Polish or French. We all
knew this childhood game. How might a new group of people
from different cultures grow closer through games like this?

Young adults are digital natives, but they can go without
technology.

News and media sources label this generation of college
students “digital natives,” because they have never known life
without the internet. I was concerned that the ability to access
the internet on their phones would distract the students from the
experience. Once we arrived for World Youth Day, they learned
that only two of them had phones that worked consistently. One
even decided at the airport to leave her phone behind, finding it
an unnecessary burden. These digital natives left their techno-
logical homeland behind for a while to make this pilgrimage.

Young adults do time differently.

Even though my ministry is with college students, I was not
expecting that we prioritize time differently. I had planned for
our pre-meetings to go for an hour and a half. Students left after
an hour. Once, when there was an event they all wanted to
attend, they left after 20 minutes, letting me know at the
beginning of the meeting that this was all the time they had.
When I asked a fellow minister about it, the reply was, “At least
they stayed for 20 minutes! They must really be excited about
World Youth Day.”

The time difference was most apparent at the shared meal
with Gesu Companions. I asked the students to be available
for three hours, two for the meal and one for us to catch up as
a group. I sent an email out, and one replied, telling me that
several people thought three hours was too long and that they
were not going to come. After some reshuffling of plans, the
students did come, committing to staying for an hour and a half
but remaining for closer to 2 – 2 ½ hours, much longer than any

pre-meeting we had had. Yet, the Gesu Companions felt the
difference. Two remarked that they wanted even more time
with the students and for the evening to go longer. They were
surprised that the students saw 2 hours as too long.

Young adults are capable of prayer.

Statistics abound about how unchurched, unaffiliated, and
not prayerful this generation of young adults is. We might won-
der if we are losing the ability to pray or to be silent with God.
The two pilgrims who made a silent retreat had a much different
experience. Neither of them had done a silent retreat before, yet
the experience was powerful for them. In fact, when we met in
September, they were wearing bracelets given to them at Magis,
still treasuring the experience.

Consolation comes in surprising ways.

I expected consolation to come through encounter with other
pilgrims and experiencing Polish culture. While there was some
consolation there, God surprised me by showing me consolation
through seeing my students grow as leaders and recognizing my
own limitations. What a gracious God who turns our shortcomings
into opportunities for grace.

It is OK to smell like our sheep.

In his address to the priests of the world, Pope Francis urges
them to smell like their sheep, to live in solidarity with those
they are serving. For a few days, I lived in solidarity with those I
served. I slept on the same floors, ate the same food, walked the
same paths, crammed into the same trains. I knew their experi-
ences – because I lived them. That common understanding is a
bond between us. I smelled like a sheep by the end of it, but so
did the rest of my group. We were in solidarity with each other.
S.E.E.D. Ministry of CLC-USA and Dong Hanh is a program in service to youth. Young and older adults provide Ignatian spirituality retreats for children ages 6-17. S.E.E.D. leaders are typically college-age young women and men who volunteer to develop and deliver these retreats during the summer.

Bethany Vu

I am what some of the young adults in Dong Hanh CLC refer to as a “Dong Hanh cradle-born.” I have grown up in a CLC family. While I did not give much thought to it during my childhood, I recognize that thanks to Ignatian spirituality and CLC, I am so rooted in Christ as my life companion. When I was a child, I often imagined God as someone up in the clouds watching me mysteriously from afar. I did not see or feel God’s presence in my everyday life. Upon attending my first S.E.E.D. retreat though, I was introduced to a way of living with God that I could access as a child. I could be myself and find God in everything in my young life – the fun I shared with friends, the foods I liked best, and the beautiful world God created for me. I was so deeply touched by the space to encounter God for myself that I consider that S.E.E.D. retreat a turning point in my relationship with God. I left feeling for the first time, that I belonged to the Catholic Church and the Church belonged to me. With each S.E.E.D. retreat, each CLC Regional gathering, each National Assembly that I attended, I gathered more tools to add to the spiritual and emotional arsenal that I would use to face the challenges of young adult life. Nowadays, my life is swamped with things to do, pressures to make progress, and the inner tension that comes from questioning whether the things I do reflect society’s standards of success or God’s dream for me. I often find myself living as if everything depends on my own effort and will. Consequently, all my failures feel like shattering weights that I must carry and my triumphs feel like they are just a drop in the ocean of the work ahead of me. I do not rely on God’s grace because my mental space is so crowded, I sometimes forget to remember God’s presence right beside me. The biggest challenge for my spiritual life right now is not just to make time for God, but to make everything I do a prayer. How do I see God in my student who can’t sit still and never comes to class prepared? How is God calling me to respond to the invitation to use my gifts when tensions in my ministry work seem too complicated to tackle? Do I notice God watching me with loving eyes when I finally get to lie down at the end of a long day?

Thankfully, I have family, friends, and community that constantly remind me of how to find God in all things. I think back to my 11-year-old self at my first S.E.E.D. retreat and try to see my life with the same wonder that I had then. When I see God there throughout my day, I am filled with gratitude for all the graces that I’ve been overlooking and that gratitude fuels me to keep going. When I imagine God now, I feel His hands on my shoulders as He stands behind me, and together we look forward to the adventures that tomorrow brings.
Matthew Nguyen

This was my first year not being a retreatant and actually planning for S.E.E.D. To be honest, I was not sure what to expect for I have always been a recipient of the graces of S.E.E.D. My hopes, I guess, were to be able to pass on what I received at S.E.E.D. throughout the years, and I hoped and expected that I would also receive a different kind of grace from the retreat.

Throughout the retreat I felt a constant presence of God through the people I worked with and who depended on me. In everything I did, I felt needed by not only the retreatants, but also my fellow leaders. In this way, I never felt tired until the end of the day. The retreatants, who I noticed were smiling every time we conducted a game or activity continued to give me that feeling that God had acted through me to bring something important to them.

The graces that I received from this retreat were mostly a sense of peace and gratitude to be a part of something greater than I. The biggest challenge I faced was a lack of sleep. This almost hindered my ability to focus, but grace countered that, in that I never really felt tired throughout the entire retreat.

From this experience I believe that God has invited me and shown me that there is more to my life than what I expected. I’ve come to realize in the past year, God has given me a lot of blessings that I did not appreciate at the time. After the retreat, I realized that maybe what I needed to do was to attempt to give back more than what I received, what little I could. What God wants from me is to grow more selfless and grateful of everything that I have done and been given.

Christopher Tran

To be honest, I was surprised to do S.E.E.D. again this year. I knew I had other commitments that would interfere with the planning process. In fact, my personal life was my priority during that time. I felt it was almost unfair for me to be a leader when I didn’t attend meetings regularly. All I was able to offer were my prayers and thoughts. Therefore, I didn’t have any expectations; rather I was open to see where God would work through the team. I promised to be wholly present during the retreat and be positive for all.

The S.E.E.D. team was really big this year (Southern California) and so I really felt God work through everyone in putting the big and little things together. The love of the parents is always a great sight to see and I see God really present through them because they genuinely value their children’s faith to put them through S.E.E.D. I feel God work through me in my positivity towards the kids and everyone on the retreat. I really make sure the kids have fun, yet still come close to God through that joy.

Some challenges I faced were my self-doubts about my ability to make an impact on the kids. Whether it was through my leading, my talk, or the activities I was in charge of, there was always an initial doubt in myself. In keeping at prayer and trusting God, I was able to just let go, let God, and have fun. Soon and surely, I saw light in the kids’ faces and their joy which connected them to God. The graces of community, joy, peace and love were so present that I could not deny God’s working during the retreat. As if to affirm this, we were also blessed with a midday rainbow!

God invites me to grow deeper in trust of Him and His ways. Despite my self-doubts and feelings of low self-worth, God still works through me. When I let God work through me, I begin to feel peace and realize that His ways are beautiful.

What remains with me now is my phone lock screen LOL. It is a picture of a happy face drawn on my hand by one of the Seedlings. It reminds me every day of the joy I received from this ministry. I am reminded of the tender love of God in my life through the Seedlings and the DH community.
• The Spirit is patiently teaching us that we are to keep learning how to practice together a communal kind of discernment. We refer to it as DSSE: a recurring dynamic of “discerning, sending, supporting and evaluating.” This enables the Holy Spirit to guide us along our pilgrim way to a fuller integration and growth in spirituality, mission and community.

• The last World Assembly in 2013 was deliberately held in Lebanon, a very dangerous place. Its members from sixty-some nations, were graced to identify in a sharper and more concrete fashion four areas of greater good or foundational prophetic action amid manifold crises around the world. They are: poverty and globalization, families, youth and ecology or care of our fragile earth.

Are you surprised to discover that the various branches on our 2016 World CLC Day tree have gained their names because of the creative labors of Assembly delegates and the Holy Spirit? Pretty exciting, isn’t it, to note that this is where we are as Pittsburgh-CLC in terms of personal growth and apostolic involvements? We are fruitful indeed, and under the nourishing, warming light of the Holy Spirit, promise-filled with expectation of future growth and direction.

3. An Invitation to the Jubilee Year of Divine Mercy

I hope this history is not overwhelming. I present it with the supposition that much of it is already known to you, but more as separate facts. The task that now awaits us as a cluster is to connect the dots, if you will, and let the larger and exiting picture emerge. This can be an energizing time of spiritual consolation for CLC-Pittsburgh if we work together to integrate this general history into our own. A marvelous at-hand means for doing so is to immerse ourselves more fully in celebrating the Jubilee Year of Divine Mercy to which Pope Francis introduced us on December 8, 2015. In doing so he highlighted even more centrally the prior emphasis on Divine Mercy by Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

Rather than offering selected pieces of my own limited choosing on this wide-ranging theme, I propose that over several small group meetings you devote some time to explaining Divine Mercy together. We’ll find that Pope Francis himself is constantly doing so as we follow him on social media, “The Pope” and other apps, diocesan and secular newspapers, and a host of books, articles and commentaries. We should find such a prayerful shared search quite congenial. This Jesuit Pope speaks an Ignatian language. Such terms are already rich in meaning for us. And a deepening appreciation of a “Jubilee Year” in ancient Israel’s efforts to commit themselves to their ever present and faithful “I am” should prove helpful in connecting within us loving prayer and compassionate action. Pope Francis calls Jesus “the face of the Father’s mercy” he emphasizes that in his inaugural proclamation at the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4), his whole public life and mission as “a year of Jubilee.” Indeed he shows himself to be a person completely dedicated to the well-being of his fellow-travelers, especially the most hurting and damaged among them in totally generous, almost reckless, Jubilee fashion.

These sorts of considerations could posture us more aptly for our own ongoing dialogue with the merciful Father, and His “meek and humble of heart” Son. May the graced result be a growth of their own Holy Spirit within us as maturing members of CLC-Pittsburgh.
This past July I was blessed to go to World Youth Day in Krakow, and I must say that it was nothing short of phenomenal. One of the best aspects was getting to know Catholics from all around the world and hearing their testimonies of faith and life. Probably the most powerful testimonies that were shared came from Catholics living in either poverty or war-stricken countries such as Nigeria, Syria and Iraq. This experience was culturally and spiritually enriching. At times these conversations were a form of an examination of conscience, since you met people that risked their lives on a daily basis by being followers of Christ. It really caused me to re-examine my relationship with Christ and reflect on whether I would be faithful to Christ in situations as those Catholics.

Another beautiful feature of World Youth Day is that it brings people of different walks of life together. People who are passionate about their faith come together with people who are either doubting their beliefs or searching for meaning in life. Thus, World Youth Day creates a great forum for the exchange of witness, testimony and opinions. The youth that participate in the events of World Youth Day have the opportunity to learn from one another about Christ, the Church and faith. The words pilgrims hear from the catechetical sessions, priests, bishops, the Pope, and the witness of authentic Catholics make World Youth Day a prime place to encounter Christ. There is a multitude of activities (workshops, conferences and religious events) taking place all the time. There is also a vocation center available in order to help pilgrims explore the different religious orders, movements and communities within the Church. One has access to the Holy Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, bringing us even closer to Christ.

Of particular note, World Youth Day took place in the city of Krakow, also known as the City of Divine Mercy or City of Saints. It was hair-raising to think that one was actually in the city where great saints such as St. Faustina and St. John Paul II lived and worked, as apostles of God’s Divine Mercy. Krakow is home to the Basilica of Divine Mercy as well as the final resting place of St. Faustina. Among the saints and witnesses to the faith who lived in Krakow were St. Brother Albert, St. John Cantius, St. Hyacinth and Jesuit Servant of God Fr. Peter Skarga. Overall, Krakow was home to twelve saints or servants of God at different times in history, which makes it a blessed city. This enriched the World Youth Day experience even more, and one had the opportunity to go and visit the places associated with these saints.

Lastly, it was exceptionally faith-enriching to see Pope Francis and to listen to his teachings during the main events. One of the most powerful things Pope Francis said during this World Youth Day was, “Dear young people, we didn’t come into this world to ‘vegetate,’ to take it easy, to make our lives a comfortable sofa to fall asleep on. No, we came for another reason: to leave a mark. It is very sad to pass through life without leaving a mark. But when we opt for ease and convenience, confusing happiness with consumption, then we end up paying a high price indeed: we lose our freedom.” This is a crucial statement for our times since young people face many threats that greatly impede their spiritual lives and relationship with Christ. Most importantly, among them is the ideology which preaches that indolence, materialism, narcissism and technology will fulfill our lives. The Pope’s words were aimed against this type of ideology. His words both taught and inspired us to roll up our sleeves and put the Gospel to work in our personal lives and communities. Pope Francis clarified that we have to strive for the more or magis and as St. Ignatius would have stated, do all for the greater glory of God.
The Young Adults Community at Ignatian Spirituality Center of Miami, Florida, better known as Nachitos, was created as an initiative of young adults who fell in love with God through the Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life. After completing the Spiritual Exercises, we decided to continue supporting each other in our mission to put into practice everything that we learned. We were supported by our spiritual counselors on this decision. This has given us the opportunity to bring our faith to a higher level and to stick to our roots of the Ignatian way of seeing the world.

Our name comes from the Hispanic nickname of Ignatius, Nachito. We, as Nachitos, are devoted to follow in Saint Ignatius’ footsteps, to seek and to find God in all things. Our community is composed of professional young adults from different backgrounds who are exposed to different realities. We have embraced our diversity as an opportunity to grow and to learn from each other. It has helped us to understand the different needs that coexist in our community and our society, and to find ways of leaving a footprint of God wherever we go. As Pope Francis said during his recent visit to Poland for World Youth Day, we are called to show the world “how to live in diversity, in dialogue, and to experience multiculturalism not as a threat but as an opportunity. You are an opportunity for the future.”

Youth is the future of the world. We believe in a world and a Catholic Church led by today’s young adults who are committed to their beliefs which are consistent with the truth they profess.

Given that the media is filled with immorality and that a lack of values is governing our young people, some can argue about where our society is going. However, there is hope and we have experienced that the good is stronger than the evil. It is possible not only to dream about it but also to build a better tomorrow. Therefore, we have participated as pilgrims and volunteers in different activities, joining forces with other people who share our same beliefs and mission.

In November 2015, a group of us had the opportunity to take a road trip to Pennsylvania to join with Pope Francis and millions of people from all over the world, during his visit to the United States for the Family Synod. We believe that a better world can be built starting in our homes.

We also had the opportunity to join an organization called Habitat for Humanity that builds houses for underprivileged families. We were encouraged by one of our community members to volunteer, for a day, building a house. We signed up without having any construction experience, but this was not a limitation. It was a blessed day! We got out of our comfort zone and discovered some hidden talents. It was very meaningful for us to get in contact with the families benefiting from this organization’s efforts and to contribute not only to build a house but a future home.

Another activity that we have been implementing is movie night. We get together as a group and watch religious and non-religious films followed by a colloquium. We share our thoughts on what it shows about our society, what message it gives us, how we can integrate Ignatian spirituality to it, and how we can apply it to our lives. The movie nights are very common among young people. We visit a group in our Archdiocese of Miami that has been organizing this activity as a way of reaching people with different beliefs, and providing a setting for dialogue and evangelization.

We are looking forward to developing new projects involving other young adults and serving our community in the Ignatian way, meaning hands on and driven by spiritual discernment and prayer. What CLC has shown us is that we are called to be active leaders in our community, sharing God’s message with everyone, especially by our actions, putting the Holy Gospel into practice. The fact of being a community rooted in Ignatian spirituality helps us to continue on this journey, and to understand that our faith only grows when being in communion, fraternity and prayer.
I am a Christian. I have been to all the church services, argued with every atheist I have met, and collected all of the T-shirts. I definitely see myself as a holy person. Do not worry. I am being facetious.

No, I am afraid I fall short of being a decent human being, much less a holy person. If I told people I am the best Christian, it simply would not be true. Being a Christian is more than saying one is a Christian. There are a few things that people need to do to before they can count themselves as Christians. First of all, one needs to believe in Jesus Christ. If people were to ask me, “What do I need to do then?” I would lend them a Bible, and tell them to turn to Matthew 7:12: “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” This verse is great, as it forces one to reflect and be compassionate at the same time. I will tell you what I would want from anyone: love and mercy. We all sin and fall short, thus we all crave and need love and mercy.

Our God is a God of mercy. The Psalmist recognized this: “But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” (Psalm 86:15) If you are unconvinced of this claim, consider what God has done. He saw us wallowing in sin on Earth, being beaten by Satan, and knew the world was in need of redemption. He did not strip us of free will to solve this problem. He did not send legions of angels to punish any wrongdoers. Instead, he sent down His only Son, Jesus, to descend into hell, destroy hell and sin, only to rise again on the third day, saving us. The Bible proclaims: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) We are the body of Christ, and we must reflect this love and mercy in our actions.

Being merciful is a virtue that all of us can possess. Old or young, rich or poor, we can all give and receive mercy. This is how: Forgive, and then move on. “Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.” (Romans 12:10) Perhaps one of the most underestimated ways is to simply give other people the benefit of the doubt. Be trusting and allow yourself to love. Every person who is loving, compassionate and trusting is someone who freely hands out mercy. It might not be the most practical way to live, but it is the most freeing way to do so.

True mercy can only be given through actions. Human beings were not saved by Jesus saying something; we were saved by His doing something. The only way to be a pious Christian is to believe in Jesus Christ, and then demonstrate this faith through action. We could all be holy people, saints, if we were to go out into the world and act with the mercy and love that Jesus showed us. Saint Francis understood this when he said, “Preach the Gospel at all times and if necessary use words.” And only when we have been merciful, when we have been loving, can we truly count ourselves among the holy and pious Christians.
I am Antonio Javier Santamaria, a member of *Alitas de Cristo* in Miami, Florida. *Alitas de Cristo* means Little Wings of Christ in Spanish. Our parents’ community is called *Alas de Cristo*, Wings of Christ.

There are thirteen kids in the group from ages 3 to 10. The younger ones (ages 3-5) play and sometimes also learn and pray. They are supervised by Marcia Iglesias and Rosi Maza, two members of the CLC South Florida Regional groups. They are very helpful, loving, and show us a good example of community and serving with love. They help with the kids so that our parents can meet and so that we can have our meetings, too. In our community our families get together and they talk about Christ. While our parents are meeting in their *Alas de Cristo* CLC, the children are learning about Christ, our Catholic faith and the saints. Each month, the adults rotate and plan and present the kids’ meeting.

The group meets twice a month on Sunday mornings at different members’ houses and we share in a meal together before or after the meeting. We get to share our faith and have fun with people who share our beliefs and values. We talk about many interesting topics. We recently discussed all of the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy in honor of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. We are also learning about the virtues and will learn more about the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

This is what some members say about our group:

- **Madeleine López**, who is in second grade: “In *Alitas*, we play, pray and learn about faith and the saints, Jesus and his disciples.”

- **Mónica Santamaria**, a fifth grader: “I like that we get to learn about the Savior who gave His life for us.”

- Fourth-grader **Andrés Rodríguez**: “I look forward to meetings because I am learning about God and have learned to pray before activities.”

These are just a few of the reasons my friends (or cousins, as I call them) enjoy *Alitas de Cristo*. As for me, the community helps me at Mass to understand the readings better by understanding what happened at the time of Christ. I have also learned that God is everywhere and you can find hope in unexpected places – even in the bad things.

Antonio Javier (A.J.) Santamaria is eight years old and in the third grade at Sunset Elementary School in Miami, FL. He enjoys serving as a lector at his parish, Church of the Little Flower, and is proud to have made his First Holy Communion this past May. He loves Jesus. He enjoys building Legos, drawing and reading.
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Calendar

NCC Meeting
Miami Florida
**October 13-16, 2016**

North Central Region Retreat
**October 14-16, 2016**
American Martyrs House
Cedar Falls, Iowa

Next Issue

**Jubilee of Mercy**