Called to be a Prophetic Lay Community

To see with the Eyes of God,

to hear with the Hearing of God,

to feel with the Heart of God,

and finally to speak with the Word of God.
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EDITORIAL FOREWORD

CALLED TO BE A PROPHETIC COMMUNITY

Reflecting back on my spiritual journey in Sodality/CLC, I experience a sense of maturity, not only within myself, but also within this family we know as Christian Life Community®. In 2003, at the conclusion of the World Assembly in Nairobi, we confirmed our call to become a lay apostolic body that shares responsibility for mission in the Church. In 2008 at Fatima, the world community was challenged and called to be a prophetic community. To me, this represents another step in our pursuit to become all that we can be as baptized and confirmed Christians, choosing to live out a vocation in Christian Life Community®.

As youngsters we were often asked, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” To my recollection, I never heard of even one person saying, “I want to be a prophet.” Take a few minutes and think about your own idea of what it is to be a prophet. Is it someone dressed in animal skins and wearing sandals and predicting doom? Is it someone who puts himself/herself at risk for criticism and even abuse because he/she is chosen to proclaim justice and peace to a society that would rather not hear it?

In the late 1950’s, as part of a Candidates’ Program for entrance into the New York Professional Sodality, we were asked to embrace the prophetic stance of Jesus. I have to admit to not achieving that too well. However, a seed was planted and over the next fifty years that seed has matured. I can recognize and try to follow some modern day prophets in our society. I think of Daniel Berrigan, S.J. whose voice and actions have been loud and clear in his efforts against war and for peace. His courage and acceptance of jail time rather than silence or denial is known worldwide. I think of Sister Helen Prejean and many other religious women who having been speaking out against capital punishment. I think of those thousands who travel to Washington, DC annually to make their voices heard in the Pro Life movement. Further examples of the prophetic stance of Jesus in today’s world are: participating in rallies against the war in Iraq; witnessing to justice and peace at the Good Friday Stations of the Cross on Broadway in NYC; being advocates for the homeless and the immigrant; or sponsoring Peace services in the parish.

Prophecy is not dead!. Individuals, ordinary people, continue to be chosen by God to speak out against injustice and for peace and human rights for all. The Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Father Adolfo Nicolás affirmed the need for prophecy in the world today and calls upon us as Christian Life Community® to be prophetic as community. There is strength in numbers. Discerning your community’s prophetic call should be a priority as you meet and prepare for the National Assembly in Washington, DC this summer.

CLC-USA President, Ann Marie Brennan addresses the question of how our national community is called to respond to the needs of our Church by reporting on current initiatives in her article, “In God’s Heart, There Is No Distance.” Guest Ecclesial Assistant, Benjamin Urmston, S.J., writes on his trip to Rome after attending an international conference on Communal Ignatian Discernment. One aspect of the meeting dealt with an Ignatian Apostolic Network. Ben feels CLC has a rightful place in this collaboration.

The editorial team is pleased to include a piece from the Introduction of Joan Chittister’s new book, The Cry of the Prophet: A Call to Fullness of Life. This famous author is, in my opinion, another example of a modern day prophet.

Read Jen Horan’s “Chosen by God: Called by Dong Hành CLC.” In her article, Jen tells of a unique call to make her Permanent Commitment at the Dong Hành Assembly and to become part of the Dong Hành CLC. Ashley Wilson’s “Unfolding Passion in the Game of Life” describes the author’s realization of the importance of community, a place “…to find faith and trust with each other and to learn to use that faith and trust in the world outside.”

The regions were busy this fall sharing and reflecting on their graced histories. This issue of Harvest will feature two regions’ reflections. From the North Central Region, Renee O’Brien shares “Regional Retreat: The Process of Remembering.” From the Metro NY Region,
In God’s Heart, There Is No Distance!

Ann Marie Brennan

Boris Araujo from CLC Guatemala wrote to several CLCers last week via e-mail. CLC Guatemala is seeking to be incorporated into World CLC, and Boris attended the General Assembly in Fatima last summer. He asked for our prayers in solidarity with his national community as they would gather to discern their current reality, the inspiration of the CLC vocation, and next steps. Many of you may recall Boris’ picture in the photo of the USA delegates with Fr. Adolfo Nicolás. I am glad that he joined us as it makes real our solidarity, as brothers and sisters in one world community—even if he is a Boston Red Sox fan! In response to Boris, Ingrid from CLC Taiwan replied, “In God’s heart, there is no distance. So I put you and your concern in my prayer, in our prayer, wish our Lord give you His strength and wisdom, and above all His grace to find His way to go.”

In God’s heart, there is no distance! How beautiful a thought to ponder—and to truly realize! In God’s heart, we are united even though living great distances away from one another, speaking different languages, having different cultures, and having experienced radically different national struggles. Being in Christian Life Community®, we are united in our prayer, in our solidarity with one another, in our Ignatian way of discerning, and in our call to be an Apostolic Body in our world today. This last point leads to the theme of this issue of Harvest, Called to be a Prophetic Lay Community.

Fr. Adolfo Nicolás’ address to CLC in Fatima was a pivotal moment in CLC history as he affirmed that CLC as a world community is decidedly moving in the direction of being a prophetic community. He affirmed with us that this is a direction much needed in our Church, and even in our world today. (If you have not yet done so, I encourage all groups to read Fr. Adolfo’s address as well as Projects 141.) How are we being called to be a prophetic community? What can we, as CLC, offer our Church today? Our world today? How are we being called to respond to the needs of our Church? Our world?

To address these very questions, our national community, CLC-USA, is engaged in the following initiatives:

1. Pittsburgh Leadership Conference

CLCers from around the country will meet again in Pittsburgh March 26-29, 2009. Led by our Diversity and Organization Committee, we are engaged in a several year process convening our national leadership from our diverse cultural and geographical populations. We will share our stories; get to know one another better; build relationships across our diversity; assess our current reality; discuss common themes and issues; and discern God’s presence and call in our current reality. Our focus on this year’s meeting is similar in theme to that of the Fatima Assembly, where “the apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all that they had done and taught.” (Mark 6:30) We hope to develop a greater, shared understanding of our current reality.

2. National Assembly

Our National Assembly takes place July 9-12, 2009 at Trinity University in Washington, D.C. We are really hoping for a broad participation at this Assembly where as a national community we will have the opportunity to follow-up with the themes supported at the World Assembly. Our desire is that every local community be represented!
We hope to address “the challenge of responding as an Apostolic Body facing the signs of the times in this very complex and ever changing world — especially in relation to situations of such widespread exclusion towards the most needy.” (Projects 141)

- We will be listening to delegates from CLC Rwanda who will share the story of their national reality of tragedy and reconciliation as well as how as a national community they discerned a common apostolic project—that of HIV/AIDs. I understand that each group discerns what they will do in relation to this common mission. In some cases, individuals discern specific action depending on their area of expertise, for example, doctors working in clinics. We are still waiting to hear about specific action from CLC Rwanda.

- For our Wall of Apostolic Presence, we are encouraging each local community to prepare a poster showing an apostolic project that they have discerned to support. In this way we hope to raise awareness of what we are all engaged in around the country and offer ways to facilitate networking with one another especially in common areas of interest and work.

- On Friday afternoon, we will disperse to various Immersion Experiences in Washington, DC. Some will visit legislators on particular issues; others will visit some of the many advocacy network offices in the DC area.

- We are very excited about the Open Space process! Time will be allowed for everyone to express interest in a particular topic related to CLC and to join with others in addressing the various aspects of this topic. This approach should allow all to feel that their voices matter, and that they can offer ways to interface and work with the national CLC body. So, begin now to think about topics of importance to you and prepare to participate in Open Space!

- Daily prayer and Eucharist will be available allowing us all to share in the Mystical Body of Christ that we are!

3. WORLD CLC ADVOCACY

In the last couple of years, we have seen an increase in the invitations for CLC-USA participation in advocacy and solidarity on the global level. A few examples of our recent and current involvement include:

- Ignatian Solidarity Network: CLC participation at annual teach-ins.
- Jesuit Social Ministries Office: conversations, solidarity prayer, and advocacy opportunities. (See http://www.jesuit.org/SocialJustice )
- Catholic Social Ministries: annual gathering in Washington, DC.
- World Social Forum (held every two years): CLC prayer and participation.
- United Nations: our two working groups at the UN in Geneva and New York were confirmed in their work by the World CLC body while in Fatima. On February 20, 2009, we observed the first annual World Social Justice Day for which 190 member nation states agreed to participate in some observance of this day!
- Partnership for Global Justice: CLC participation in this network of over 100 religious organizations engaged in global justice issues
- Solidarity Prayer: with our CLC members around the world, as requested, we pray for people in places such as India, Congo, Guatemala, etc.

WHAT? WHO? ME?

Perhaps some of you are thinking, “I already lead a full life and cannot possibly do one more thing; yet, here I am belonging to a community that wants to burden me with yet more and more responsibilities!” …Well, perhaps! But, perhaps not! This concern is best raised up to God in personal prayer and in discernment with our respective lo-
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cal community. With God…and in God’s heart…we are asked to discern how we are to respond specifically to this call to be prophetic and to be a member of a prophetic community. Those with physical disabilities, time limitations and/or other kinds of limitations may not be able to engage in specific action; however, others may be called to such action through prayer, inspiration from the Holy Spirit and support from our local community. Prayer, moral support, and solidarity should not be underestimated. Think of our prayer of solidarity with our world community and with Boris and CLC-Guatemala.

**MEDITATION OF LOVE, AN APOSTOLIC SERVICE TO THE WORLD**

As we discern our call to be prophetic, it is right that we unite our prayer with the Trinity. This is a meditation of love. The three divine persons mutually love one another and are the One God. In love, our Triune God created us. In love, our Triune God beheld our going astray and sent Christ who could show us the way back to wholeness, to unity. Christ taught “that the fundamental law of human perfection, and consequently of the transformation of the world, is the new commandment of love.” So, “love is the distinguishing mark of Christ’s disciples.” The Church teaches that we find “fulfillment by creating a network of multiple relationships of love, justice and solidarity with other persons…in the world.” *As we meditate on the love of the Trinity for us and our world, we can envision and experience this love in our own hearts and in our personal relationships and then extend this love to others in our world and to all of creation. In God’s heart, there is only love, and we are one. In God’s heart, there is no distance. Meditating and envisioning a world manifesting God’s love becomes a true apostolic service in our world.*

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*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (www.vatican.va/roman_cura/pontifical_councils/justpeace/)

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Mary Ann Cassidy, Deacon Luis Velo and Father Daniel Fitzpatrick, S.J. have collaborated to produce “Graced History: From Sodality to Christian Life Community*. How do these stories compare with those of your region?

Gilles Michaud of CLC Canada relates his tale, “A Pilgrimage to Cahokia Mounds,” as he traveled from the east coast of Canada to Toronto to Indiana to the Cahokia Mounds in Illinois and on to St. Louis for the Ignatian Spirituality Conference. For Gilles, this was a dream come true. Read about his unique ‘green’ retreat/pilgrimage experience.

Take note of the book review by Jack Zuercher, S.J. of the new publication, *My Just One Shall Live by Faith: The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola Designed for Use by Small Communities without the Aid of a Director*, by Dominic Totaro, S.J. (Information about purchasing the book is included.)

Many of the CLC Regions have shared their current activities. Read on to be informed of our larger CLC family.

As I close, I encourage you to be part of our National CLC Assembly, July 9-12, 2009 in Washington, DC. You have heard it before, but I repeat, “The Assembly is only as good as the people who attend.”

* Dorothy M. Zambito
In my 84th year, with a pacemaker and a few more handicaps, I was skittish about traveling from Cincinnati to Rome for an international conference on Communal Ignatian Discernment taking place January 19 to February 4, 2009. After a little discernment of my own, I decided the benefits were worth the risks. My actual experience confirmed my discernment.

While talking to an alumnus of Creighton U. on our large plane to Rome, a woman two seats down said, “Are you a Jesuit? Are you going to the conference at Monte Cucco?” Thus I had a companion who could speak to the taxi driver on the way to the retreat house. Gloria Ruiz from Puerto Rico and I arrived at Monte Cucco, about 9:30 A.M. just as the Conference was beginning. There were 85 participants at the Conference from 30 nations—Asian, African, European, Middle Eastern, North and South American. They were Jesuits, members of religious orders of Sisters, laymen and women of Christian Life Community®, all children of God.

Monday afternoon, January 19th, Very Rev. Fr. General Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., who had been elected leader of the Society of Jesus just one year ago to the day, led us through a discussion of permanent communal discernment. The Spirit is at work in all of us. No one is everywhere, has had all experiences and insights, has read every book, has universal knowledge, knows all cultures. God does not allow Himself to be captured by any one person. We need an interdisciplinary and intercommunity vision of the minimum structures necessary for a world closer to the heart of Christ. If we do not go together, those who have been marginalized and not listened to will sabotage the direction the group will be going. Discernment requires detachment and humility, real dialogue. Authority is part of the process. Communal discernment is not a power game, but strives toward consensus.

Fr. Michael Holman, S.J., Great Britain, spoke on the 35th General Congregation and its Decree 6 on Collaboration. In his allocution to the members of GC 35, Pope Benedict XVI stressed the importance of the Ignatian family mission: “Make the face of the Lord known to so many for whom it remains hidden or unrecognizable.” “The Church needs you and counts on you to reach the geographical and spiritual places where others do not reach or find it difficult to reach.” The common understanding of collaboration is apostolic companionship based on discernment and oriented toward service and social action. GC 35 renews the commitment of GC 34 to apostolic collaboration and to an apostolic collaboration which already has yielded a rich harvest. The Ignatian charism has helped form not just a Jesuit apostolate but a lay collaboration called for by the Vatican Council and identified by GC 34 “as a grace of our day and a hope for the future.” (Decree 6, No. 6) “We Jesuits are humbled and grateful that so many—inspired as we have been by the vocation of Ignatius and the tradition of the Society—have chosen both to work with us and to share our sense of mission and our passion to reach out to the men and women of our broken but lovable world.” (Decree 6, No. 3)

GC 35 was for Fr. Holman an experience of apostolic discernment in common. “How remarkable it was that 220 men, gathered from most nations on the planet, so quickly became friends, trusting one another to engage in intimate conversation. The days began with prayer and ended in liturgy. We also shared during the murmuration or the one to one conversations preceding the election of Fr. Adolfo Nicolás. We were a

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group of men dedicated to following Christ. Aware of our limitations, we discussed, debated, agreed and disagreed, honestly and openly, prayerfully and reflectively, about the meaning of our vocation and mission today. This was the context in which the Spirit of Jesus got to work. These weeks were for me above all a powerful experience of apostolic discernment in common: We listened together to the call of the Lord and asked Jesus that we respond generously, no matter the cost. The Congregation’s ‘way of proceeding’ got to the heart of what collaboration in the Ignatian and Jesuit mode is all about. Wherever we are and whatever we do, if we seek to live and work in this discerning way, we are truly engaged in collaboration not only with one another but with the Spirit of Jesus whose companions we are.

“In Great Britain collaboration has brought increased energy and enthusiasm to our work. Many lay collaborators have come to find in their work not only a job but also a vocation, which energizes and inspires. There is a purpose and meaning in life after all, whereas, they tell me, their previous work had too often become a matter of achieving targets and satisfying the demands of their performance managers. What otherwise might have been a period of marked decline became a period of renewed energy and vitality and even growth. Surely a sign of the Spirit! The priorities of Jesuit mission in Britain today was shaped with input and feedback of the entire Ignatian family. Collaboration is about a mission that brings people to life and the fullness of life. As GC 35 said, ‘We labor together in seeking a more just world’.”

An Ignatian Apostolic Network is connected with many apostolic organizations and institutions that are inspired by the Ignatian charism. A network shares successful practices, resources, training and formation. The Ignatian family is inspired by Ignatian spirituality and the decrees of the Jesuit General Congregations. This is especially true of the Christian Life Community®.

We need to sustain women and men in their works of collaboration. A focus of groups in collaboration needs to be on decision making, on prioritizing and on doing it all in a discerning way. We need to be contemplatives in action, women and men capable of listening to the call of Jesus in the midst of the many demands of life and then responding generously.

On Wed. Jan. 21st, we enjoyed an audience with Pope Benedict XVI in Paul VI Hall in the Vatican. The Holy Spirit inspired me to reflect that the Vatican, the Cardinals, the Bishops have a voice, but where are the ears? I propose for discernment of CLC the following proposition: In the Spirit we will work together to make the churches and the human family more sharing and participative. Dialogue is a two-way street.

Spiritual conversation is a basic element in Ignatian Communal Apostolic Discernment. Spiritual conversation should take place in an attitude of familiarity, simplicity, openness, trust and intimacy. Spiritual conversation is not a discussion or debate. Spiritual conversation is “spiritual” not just because the process involves spiritual topics, but because it invites us to discover in all the realities of life the working of the Holy Spirit.

We heard Fr. Lisbert d’Souza, S.J., on “Ignatian Spirituality for the Corporate Person.” (See on line an excellent resource: www. ISECP.org.) A presupposition of the Spiritual Exercises is: A Christian will put a good interpretation on what another says or writes. If one cannot interpret a statement favorably, one should ask how the other means it. This is important for spiritual conversation. Essential for communal discernment is not to come to a decision through a disordered affection such as a drive for riches and power, arrogance, sensuality, excessive fear and individualism, worship of violence.

Have we been spiritually free to be kind, loving toward others, studious, prayerful, joyous? Do we choose the magis, the greater good, the universal good, frontiers that are urgent and important, frontiers others are neglecting? What are the sinful social structures? Our dark graced story?

Reflecting on the books we have read, the experiences we have had, the insights we have enjoyed, what new graced structures and sub-structures do we and others from many different nations and experiences envision for a more peaceful and just world, a world closer to the heart of Christ?

As Father, Son, and Holy Spirit look down on our world, with the war system, concentration of corporate power and wealth, violations of basic human rights, violence, false gross consciences, but also moments of peace, joy, cooperation, sharing — Father, Son, Holy Spirit decide to send us to discover and savor the hidden life of the Lord as ‘a quality of presence’ in our daily relationships and ministry. We decide to share the overflowing love of Father, Son, Holy Spirit for us with all whom we touch — even our enemies. We want to evaluate the world and its structures through the eyes of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

“Ignatian Spirituality for the Corporate Person.”
www. ISECP.org)
Prophecy is not a Luxury

Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB

What this world needs most right now is a new generation of prophets. The problem is that we have lost all respect for them. In fact, we may not even recognize them when we see them.

Yet, it was precisely for times such as ours that God sent the prophets. It is surely time for this generation to rediscover them.

We aren’t, after all, the only people who have gone through such social disorientation, such moral confusion. We aren’t the only people in history who have put down our ideals in favor of our desires. We aren’t the only people in the world who have wanted more comfort than challenge, more money than community, more power than equality.

The word “prophet” rings with a hard edge these days, a memory of denunciation that comes with a shudder and the urge to take a step backwards. We shrink from the very idea of the prophetic dimension of religion or, at best, relegate the idea of it to times past when God bent stiff necks with mighty swords. We shrink from the very thought of raising our voices above the crowd. We want a religion that chants but never howls, that prays but never brings the foolish standards of the Gospel to the issues of the time.

What a shame. All we prove in our sterile dash to be “polite” and “civil” and “reasonable” about faith is how little we know of prophets and prophecy these days. How little we understand the role of gospel critique in a world where people expect to talk religion but not to do it, who will define religion but do not want to steer by it, who will argue religion but do not want to apply it to the here and now, to the this and that, to modern life as well as to ancient myth. Prophecy we assume for times of mystical allegory but not for moments of major upheaval in our own worlds, great and small, public and personal.

We like to separate the prophets of the church from the people of the church. We like to separate ourselves from the demands of greatness. But the prophetic dimensions of the church, Scripture demonstrates in its greatest prophetic figures of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, and Ezekiel, are simple souls just like us: ordinary citizens, compassionate lovers, justice-seeking and persistent idealists who move with courage into places that everyone else takes for granted, and speak God’s word in the midst of human chaos loudly, clearly, courageously, whatever the levy it imposes on their own lives. Prophecy, in other words, is not a luxury; it is an essential dimension of the Christian life. We will not be forgiven our disdain of holy risk in the name of weakness.

(From the Introduction to The Cry of the Prophet: A Call to Fullness of Life by Joan Chittister. Printed with permission: www.benetvision.org.)

Questions for Discussion

1. Joan Chittister mentions some of the prophets — biblical greats — who acted with courage when they were chosen to “raise their voices above the crowd.” Choose a prophet, biblical or modern day, who inspires you to become a prophetic voice in our time.

2. Sister Joan says that “prophecy …is not a luxury; it is an essential dimension of the Christian life.” Is this statement a reality in your life. Why? Why not?
Chosen By God, Called by Dong Hành CLC

Jen Horan, Dong Hành CLC, Tay Nam

When I seek results and success and quantitative justifications for my efforts, it is easy to lose site of the true reason for my actions. When I focus on assessing effectiveness, it is easy to lose focus on God. In these last few months my own prayer has been filled with contemplation on why and how I have been called to this ministry in CLC. A year and a half ago, Anh Liem and I spoke for the first time about the possibility of my Permanent Commitment in CLC being made through Dong Hành, and since then I have prayed frequently on what about CLC has grabbed hold of me so fiercely.

This December, after six years in CLC, I made my Permanent Commitment at the Dong Hành Assembly. The God of surprises offered me one final experience of grace in my preparation for this commitment. The candidates for commitment met for a period of prayer with Father Julian Elizande, and he invited each one of us to pray about our desire to commit to Dong Hành CLC as simply a “yes” to God’s invitation to love him. This thirty-minute time of prayer with Cha Than and the other candidates served as a reminder to me that we are not asked to produce results, but rather to be CHOSEN by God. I experienced an awareness that night of having been called. I did not choose God, but God chose me to be a part of the Dong Hành CLC community in the United States. God has called and invited me to be a blonde girl in an áo dài speaking prayers in a language whose words I do not always understand, but in a spirit that transcends languages and continents and generations.

I reflected on the first time I experienced a completely Vietnamese Mass. It confirmed in me the sense that the words of the Mass and the “result” of having gained something insightful from a dynamite homily were less important than my simply choosing to be with God who has already chosen to be with me. In the last six years of my relationship with Dong Hành, these Masses in Vietnamese have become even more sacred to me because they are opportunities for me to listen more deeply to how God is communicating with me. I am less tempted to analyze and assess and strategize implementation of the theme of the Mass in my life. These Vietnamese Masses became moments where I was so aware of being a part of a community of thanksgiving in God’s love that I am often moved to tears of joy and reminded of the most core elements of my faith.

In Dong Hành, I was invited to come without any expectations of perfection, which for me was revolutionary. No one expected me to know every word; no one expected me to know every answer to every question; no one even expected me to know how to eat the food that was placed before me. I was welcomed like a child, a child who knew nothing except how loved I was and how much joy being in this community brought me. As time passed, I began sharing resources and assisting with retreats more frequently with the Dong Hành CLC community. My relationships with the members began to grow and I began to feel less like a visitor, and more like a part of this community. There became little doubt in my mind that I was called not just to CLC, but specifically to Dong Hành CLC. It did not make sense. There was no formula for such a relationship. All I knew was that I was so immersed in God’s love when I was in this environment that I had no choice but to embrace it. During one of the meals at the Assembly, a few Dong Hành members were asking me if I felt at home with Dong Hành. Another member spoke up and said, “Jen does not have to FEEL at home… she is at home… she is one of us.” This person captured the words of my heart. When I look around at Dong Hành gatherings, I see first that we are Dong Hành and only second that I do not look like any of the other members.
So then I ask myself... how is God inviting me in this moment to live this reality and to share this experience with others? While I was at the Dong Hành Assembly, I was reminded of the first time I attended a retreat at the De Paul Center. I led my first Kairos retreat for my high school eight years ago at the center. Some of my closest friends were retreatants assigned to my group on this first really significant prayer experience for us in high school. The retreat did not sit well with a particular retreatant whom I had known since our First Communion classes. She did not get a lot out of the talks and sharings on the retreat. I had been so sure that she would enjoy the experience.

After that initial disappointment, I realized that God was inviting me to something deeper, and that God was teaching me through this experience as well. I could not save her. And she did not need me to save her. God would speak to her in the way that would be helpful to her. This retreat might be one part of that... but perhaps it did not need to be the “life changing” experience that we hyped it up to be. I was filled with a sense of humility. I felt a shift in myself as I changed my energies from trying to make a positive retreat experience for each of my classmates, to focusing on praying for each of them by name, inviting God to speak to them in my talks and facilitating in whatever way God wanted to use me. And I let it go. I stopped focusing on what I wanted and started focusing on God.

I have led nine Kairos retreats since then and countless other small group based retreats. I have led several CLC youth and young adult groups and I relish in those moments where my members remind me that I do not know anything, that I am not an expert, and that God (not I) has the answers. I pray to be humbled each day so that I do not forget and think that I am responsible for successes or for increasing numbers in CLC or increasing the amount of time other people spend in prayer. That is not what God invites me to... God invites me simply to respond to his love for me, today and hopefully for many days in the future. I am so blessed to do that through CLC.

At the Dong Hành Assembly, we engaged in two key experiences that confirmed this movement in my own life. The first was the discernment of new leadership for Dong Hành CLC, a process unlike any I had ever encountered. Nominations had taken place prior to the Assembly, but when we arrived there were no campaign speeches about what each candidate would DO for CLC. Instead, candidates and their spouse were given opportunities to share with the community their own prayer and discernment about receiving a nomination. They shared their fears, their gratitude, and their joys. At the end of the Assembly, each small group was asked to cast ballots for the candidates that their local community had discerned would be best for the positions. The entire process was incredibly prayerful and when the final discernment of leadership was complete, there was a sense that the prayers and the conversation of each one of us had gone into that decision that was ultimately made. I was also filled with a sense of indifference, in that I trusted that whichever candidates assumed leadership roles would have the support of all the others, and that each one would be guided by God in unique ways. This discernment of leadership was much more about the process than about the results. Who is to say that if we had held a simple majority vote the same results would not have occurred... maybe they would have... maybe they would not have. What I do know is that in this communal discernment process, there was a sense of support and an experience of our missioning these leaders together from our communities.

The second process was that of Open Space used at the World Assembly last summer, which invites all the participants to meet in small brainstorming groups with others who have shared interests or concerns in CLC. Again, this process was less focused on results, and more focused on people’s desires being heard by others. In the coming months the leadership will look at the summaries of these conversations and discern

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Questions for Discussion

1. In the last few years CLC-USA has grown in its intercultural reality. Jen Horan’s story is a unique experience of that growth, personally and communally. Describe the intercultural involvement of your community with other CLC communities.

2. Jen describes the discernment of new leadership for Dong Hành CLC. Examine your region’s methods of choosing leaders. How does it compare with the communal discernment process of Dong Hành?

The function of the prophet is not to destroy. The function of the prophet is to expose whatever cancers fester beneath the surface so that what is loved can be saved while there is yet time.

I have never been a fan of games. Board games, group sports — anything that involved the possibility of failure in front of a group — I have always avoided if humanly possible. I think the idea of opening myself up and allowing people to see any of my weaknesses is frightening to me. It has only been in the last few years, my post collegiate years, that I have learned to let go of that fear and allow a small community of people to be witness to my weakness.

Despite my fear of letting new people see the “real me,” I was a member of CLC during my time at Loyola Marymount University. Surprisingly, I enjoyed every minute of it. In college, CLC allowed me to get to know myself, to become reacquainted with a person that had long ago closed herself off, too afraid to face the possibility of having people hurt her the way she had been hurt in the past. That group allowed me to grow, to become receptive to the simple idea of being open to my peers. When I was asked to join an Alumni group after graduation, I jumped at the chance to be a part of such an amazing organization again. In our two years together my alumni group has granted me the opportunity to use that openness to see God in myself, within the members of my group and among the larger young adult CLC community.

Recently, I was invited to participate in a three day Young Adult CLC Retreat where our theme for the weekend was “Unfolding Passion,” focusing specifically on how we as a CLC community can experience a deepening of God’s passion with the help of each other. One way we experienced this passion was through eight hours of silence on the second day of the retreat. In all honesty, at the beginning of the silence, I was a little confused. I had been on retreats before, but never anything that felt quite so extreme (being somewhat of a chatty, sociable person, I found this task particularly arduous). In the first moments I found myself questioning the activity as a whole. How were we to become a close community in God if we were unable to actually communicate? But in removing the ability to speak with each other, I found that our small and intimate group was in fact able to share in an experience that was greater than what we may have learned from eight hours of talking. By all participating in the silence we found a way of being alone, together. I realized in these silent moments that no matter how alone we feel in the physical world, we are always together with God. In knowing that He is always with us, His passion can unfold through us and into the community as a whole, thus we never stand alone.

We are, as young adults in the Catholic community, able to share in God’s unfolding love with each other on a daily basis, including the moments when we are called to do so without the comfort of our words. By participating in CLC groups as young adults, we are able to carry out this message with others who face all of the same issues and concerns at this momentous time in our lives. Through group prayer, service and active listening we help each other grow and learn in our faith at a time in our lives when it is easy to get lost in everything but our spirituality. This young adult retreat allowed us, as a CLC and Southern California Community, to find faith and trust with each other and to learn to use that faith and trust in the world outside. It was a three-day experience that gave us skills to help us continually grow for a lifetime.

And at the end of the retreat, after all was said and done, we ended up playing a game. Each participant was given a small piece of a picture. Without showing our picture to anyone else in the group, we were asked to put the pieces together in order to make a whole. Without even fighting it, I realized that I was actually having fun. The game was not showing my weaknesses, but instead was highlighting my strengths and my ability to lead. It taught me that in a group, everyone brings something to the table and often-times our faith is a link that binds one small piece into the greater whole. I learned that to really participate in the game of life, you simply cannot play it alone.

Ashley Wilson works as a Scheduling Coordinator at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California. She completed her undergraduate degree in Screenwriting at LMU in 2006 and is currently working on a M.A. in English with an emphasis in Creative Writing from the same institution. Ashley joined CLC as an undergraduate in 2003 and has remained involved.
Graced History:
from Sodality to Christian Life Community® —
Metro NY CLC

Mary Ann Cassidy, Luis Velo, and Father Daniel Fitzpatrick, S.J.

“The apostles gathered around Jesus and told him what they had done and taught” (Mark 6:30). Commissioned by Diversity & Organization (D & O), the diverse communities of Metro New York CLC retold our stories, and recalled the gift of CLC in our lives. This humble narrative reflects primarily the grace of God in our lives and the generosity of dedicated Jesuits and early leaders.

The roots of CLC in the Metropolitan NY area are found in the New York Professional Sodality. In 1948 Pius XII’s document ‘Bis Saeculare’ aimed at renewing Sodality by stressing a return to the spirit of the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola. The new vigor of the Sodality movement was further spirited by the documents coming from Vatican II, especially those on the laity. The new birth called for from Pope Pius XII and the Council, brought us the General Principles and a new name, Christian Life Community®. The first CLC community was the Loyola community (formerly the New York Professional Sodality). Under the direction of Francis K. Drolet, S.J. and Joan Woods, the Loyola community was made up of professional men and women who met on Friday evenings and who wanted deeper prayer and support for their missions in their professions. With the marriages, and the children born to those couples, the Loyola community hosted joyful family Triduum retreats at Walden, N.Y. and summer picnics at St. Ignatius Retreat House (Inisfada). As families grew, some members moved into the surrounding suburbs of New York City. Loyola’s membership provided the leadership for several new communities. The excellent formation of Loyola’s members nurtured the new communities in the New York area and provided national leadership.

In 1969, the first community to spin off the Loyola community was Locust Valley CLC, under the leadership of Dorothy and Ray Zambito. That community still meets and is the present editorial staff for Harvest magazine. In 1983 Fr. Dan Fitzpatrick was appointed Province Promoter of CLC. In the next five years four new communities were begun: Manresa CLC in Staten Island at the impetus of Kitty Crow, Catherine Mitchell and Mary Alloca; North Jersey thanks to Ellen Durkin, Lillian Caldarise and Marianne Cummins; Westchester CLC, began with Pat McCarthy, Irene and Roy Messina, Pat and Don Hayes, assisted by Joan Woods and Fr. Dan Fitzpatrick. Attempts were made to begin a CLC community in Morristown, but the seeds sown didn’t root.

The Filipino CLC community, ‘San Lorenzo’, traces its beginnings to the Jesuits in the Ateneo de Manila (high school and college) who formed them. Coming to the New York area, several wanted a community where they could journey together. A Filipino priest, Fr. Balino led Centee Centenera, Jose Lim, and Hermie Santos to Fr. Dan to be their spiritual guide. The San Lorenzo CLC community was officially formed in 1988. The spirit was moving, and the desire for a deeper spirituality and support of a faith community brought new members.

Breaking off from the Westchester community, Pat and Ann Marie Brennan, and Sylvia Morales began a community at St. Margaret’s Church in Rivervale, N.Y. A CLC community emerged from St. Peter’s College through the desire of Rob Santos (1992). This community eventually joined with the community at St. Margaret’s and became...
the Faber community in 2000 with the help of Brendan Newcomb and Father Dan Fitzpatrick. In 1993, the Korean Jesuits, while studying in the U.S., introduced Ignatian spirituality to some in the Korean community through silent retreats, lectures and the Spiritual Exercises. The first Korean CLC was begun through the efforts of Fr. Benedict Kim, S.J., with the support of Father Dan Fitzpatrick. By 1996 there were three Korean CLC communities in the metropolitan area under the leadership of Joseph Kim, Gregory Lee, and Katherine Khang. It was Fr. Kim’s vision that the leadership for CLC is with the laity. Fr. Kim trained many to give the Exercises, formed them in their now Permanent Commitment, and challenged them to be responsible for forming new members. By 2008 the NY Metro CLC had 17 Korean CLC communities. The formation of these communities and their numbers increase through the zeal and commitment of their members to offering the 19th Annotation and participating in an 8 day directed retreat.

With the growth of CLC, there appeared a need to communicate regularly with each community and to help fund the expenses of CLC. The Metro Council was begun in 1986. Today the council has representation from each community. The council advises the EA and serves as communication link to each community. The council plans days of prayer twice a year, a Day of Mission in East Harlem and an annual Epiphany party. The structure of the Metro Council has certainly aided the growth and cohesiveness of CLC in the Metropolitan area.

In 1998 a parish CLC emerged at St. Catharine’s Glen Rock, NJ. Some of the members, already in a sharing group, were recruited by Ann Marie and Pat Brennan. Their community, like Locust Valley, is similar in that its members live in close proximity to each other, and in the one parish.

Fordham Prep Faculty found the CLC way of life desirable in their mission to train and educate young men for others. Under the guidance of the scholastics and Fr. Dan the first Fordham Prep Faculty CLC began in 1997. Presently, Fr. Ray Sweitzer, S.J. is the guide for two CLC communities of Fordham Prep’s faculty. Those involved add a distinctive spiritual depth in their classrooms and on campus.

Presently, CLC is also thriving with the undergraduates at Fordham College. Randy Jerome, the Campus Minister, has about 10 groups of young people in the student CLC. These undergraduate CLC communities provide nourishment and communal support of their faith. The CLC community is grateful for the undergraduates’ help on Metro’s Day of Mission at the Little Sisters of the Assumption Health Center, East Harlem.

The communal reflections on our graced history point to the centrality of the Spiritual Exercises in initial and ongoing formation, the importance of regular Eucharist, the use of the examen, and the Ignatian model of discerning. “...The love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us...” (Romans 5:5). That love has been experienced through the sixty years of presence of full and part-time Ecclesial Assistants: Rev. Francis K. Drolet, S.J. (deceased), Father Daniel J. Fitzpatrick, S.J., Father Benedict Kim, S.J., and Father Raymond M. Sweitzer, S.J. to CLC. Their direction has enabled this formation. They have trained others to be guides for the N.Y. Metro communities. The publication of a regional newsletter twice a year, the creation and updating of a web-site for Metro NY CLC, and the links to Jesuit resources nationally also have aided the spiritual enrichment of our communities.

Beyond our community life, members of CLC have contributed to the vitality of their parishes; and to a variety of ministries and leadership roles beyond their parishes. The New York Region has provided UN NGO representation and has organized a UN orientation and tour for college students. The New York Region hosted the National Assembly in 1999 and over the years has provided the national leadership for CLC. Our region joins with Pax Christi during the Way of the Cross on 42nd St. on Good Friday — a collaboration with Pax Christi and other peace and justice seeking groups. Members have participated in advocacy for many social justice issues, locally and nationally.

We recognize that the vibrant and faith-filled community life has supported us as we engage in our mission in the family and beyond. CLC has called forth our gifts and increased our confidence in the presence of the Spirit in building the Kingdom of God. However, we are aware of the need for growth as our present membership ages and retires. For people for whom English is a second language, formation material in other languages is vital in helping them to participate in CLC. Some communities also recognize the need to encourage and strengthen the practice of Discern, Send, Support, and Evaluate (DSSE). Those who use it regularly feel greater support for their missions. There is great need to develop cohesive leadership and guides. Finally there is a need to integrate social justice more fully into our gatherings.

This narrative does not reflect the joy, laughter, singing, home Eucharistic celebrations, meals shared, and heartfelt reminiscing. However; it is a conscious attempt to recognize the sacred moments of this reflection on our graced history and to express our gratitude for the gift of CLC in our lives.
Regional Retreat:
The Process of Remembering

Renee O’Brien

Some of us traveled through wind and rain to our annual regional retreat at the North American Martyrs Retreat Center in Cedar Falls, IA, October 24-26, 2008. The weather was mild throughout our “retreating”, and we were warmly welcomed by Sr. Jeanine and staff and the beautiful environment! It was good to see “old” CLC friends again! Our packets for the retreat included Fr. Nicolás’ talk to the CLC World Assembly, Fatima, August 17, 2008, and articles from America magazine by William Barry and Margaret Silf — much food for thought and reflection.

Our Friday evening prayer, led by Eileen Burke-Sullivan and Lois Campbell, our retreat leaders, invited us to ask for the grace to remember key moments of our own CLC experience, both good and bad. They asked us to imagine Jesus meeting us on the “way”, our speaking and then listening to him. After quiet prayer and reflection, Eileen and Lois asked us to gather in clusters: Milwaukee, Sun Prairie (WI), Omaha, Minneapolis, and Ames (IA), to remember the important events, both positive and negative, of our histories. We were all too tired to finish that evening, so we closed with an Awareness Examen and blessed sleep!

Saturday morning, refreshed with delicious breakfast and prayer, we were energized to move back into our cluster stories. We did enjoy the process of “remembering”! When all were finished, we reported on the key events in each cluster from our sheets posted on the walls, filled with names, events, and dates by decades. Lois and Eileen added to the mix with the history/story of World and National CLC. We questioned, subtracted and added to each other’s reports!

After lunch and rest we reconvened to look at the meaning these stories held for us. A handout led us through silent reflection with Scripture and prayer, focusing on both our feelings and thoughts. After quiet prayer we gathered in small groups for sharing, then moved back to the large group to report on what we heard from each other. This included: the importance of faith sharing to create intimacy and openness, and a way to know God’s love and connect us with the world; the frustration and tension in being connected to the larger CLC entity — region, national, world; and the process of communal discernment in helping us to make decisions.

After Saturday evening dinner and Eucharist, we enjoyed an evening of funny stories, skits, jokes, poetry and singing. It was a delight!

Sunday morning we gathered in the lovely chapel for our closing reflection, a prayerful focus on the key events we named and heard, especially those that evoked significant energy, both of consolation and desolation, and an attempt to look at “next steps” in response to the graces of our history. After silent prayer, we shared. Some of what I heard: we celebrate the generosity of the resources of this region — new communities, leadership, connection with national, and Jack Zuercher, S.J. We see a rise and decline in the history line of our region. We pray to see grace in the tension, especially in relation to national CLC. We see faith sharing as foundational for our relationships and community. We asked if there could be a listening process that we could engage in with our “disengaged” communities. We also see the Exercises and discernment as foundational.

As we concluded, we blessed and thanked each other for the time and engagement in the process. Personally, I experienced many graces in our remembering and sharing, and trust with hope for our future!

“Our (Dick and I) local CLC beginnings “found” us, being invited to explore CLC by Maryanne and Tim Rouse over 30 years ago. We have been especially graced through our CLC years (QM and Siloam communities) with faith sharing, discernment on important issues, and Ignatian Spirituality (the Spiritual Exercises). As we grew through this time together, our missions of marketplace, church, peace and justice, and National and Regional CLC continued to be called forth by our communities.”

Renee and her husband, Dick, have been active CLC members for 35 years, with Siloam and QM communities in Omaha, NE. She was National President 1987-88, and she and Dick were Co-conveners for the North Central Region, 1999-2001. Renee and Dick have 4 adult children and 8 lovely grandchildren. She is a spiritual and retreat director and has facilitated a LIMEX class for the past 4 years.
A Pilgrimage to Cahokia Mounds

Gilles Michaud

I was asked to write an article on my experience at the Meditative Retreat that took place at the Cahokia Mounds in Collinsville, Illinois on July 22-24, 2008. With the aid of my spiritual journal, I began what could be considered an “Examen Prayer.” While reviewing what I had written, my reflections centered primarily on the following three questions. What did this all mean to me? What is God saying to me through the event? What am I to say in the sharing of my story regarding the Cahokia retreat?

John English, S.J. writes in his book, Spiritual Intimacy and Community, on the importance of telling our story from the perspective of memory (anamnesis — Greek word). He goes on to say, “The act of remembering, re-telling the story, is a much more dynamic experience in both Jewish and Christian life than the rather shallow notion of memory, as popularly understood, might suggest. The Hebrew Testament witnesses to the creative power of the word in Israel’s religion (cf. Dt 6: 20-25). Christians not only keep alive the past by re-telling the story of the Paschal Mystery, the Passover of Jesus, but they are themselves enlivened as they make the Passover with him, as the body of which he is the head.” (cf. Lk 24: 25- 32)

My passover was enlivened by two events that I have come to believe are closely related to each other and build upon each other: the Cahokia retreat and the Ignatian Spirituality Conference at St. Louis University on July 24-27. The conference itself followed the retreat days and it focused on the graces of the third week of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, the Ignatian Passion and the Challenge of the Cross in the 21st Century. I will attempt to explain in greater detail why I feel that these two events have a strong message for us today.

Coming to St Louis to attend the conference had always been one of my dreams but, because of the distance and cost of traveling from the east coast of Canada to St. Louis, it had always been impossible. It was only through a generous offer from my dear friends, Elaine and Peter Regan-Nightingale, that I could finally say, “I am going!” Conscious of my carbon footprint and taking the time required to get to my destination, I left Prince Edward Island by train on July 19 arriving in Toronto the following day. We left Toronto on July 21 and drove to Indiana. After driving all day, it was a pleasant surprise to suddenly come upon a large majestic church and several other buildings housing a monastery that were built in 1854 among the hills of southern Indiana. The Retreat/Guest house, part of the Arch Abbey of Saint Meinrad, would be where we would stay overnight. The guest house at Saint Meinrad offered us a quiet place to rest before the next leg of our journey. It also allowed us to participate in the liturgical rituals with the monastic community. It was interesting for me to realize, once again, how we are all called, in a variety of very unique ways, in our search for God.

The following day, we left the Arch Abbey and drove to our destination — Collinsville, Illinois. After settling into our rooms at the Holiday Inn in Collinsville, we began the first phase of what I have come to call a pilgrimage. A pilgrimage is not usually a familiar term used in North America, but it would seem to me that it expresses very well my spiritual experience. While in Rome, Italy, working at the CLC World Secretariat, I noticed that in Europe, many people of all ages were accustomed to making pilgrimages. They would travel to popular sites where, over time, people built a Cathedral and/or other structures or large monuments to identify a sacred historical event.

Continued on page 18

Gilles Michaud's home is Prince Edward Island, situated along the Atlantic coast of Canada.

He and Leah began their marriage journey in 1960. As they travelled the continent because of his career in the Canadian Air Force, the family added two girls and one boy. At present they also have four grandchildren and one more arriving soon.

His journey into CLC began in 1977. He and Leah have been part of the CLC Ixthus group since that time. They both have served the Community in several leadership capacities over those years including a five-year mandate at the World CLC Secretariat in Rome Italy.

On their return to Canada they settled into a quiet rural area of PEI called Millvale. Their newly built solar heated home surrounded with beautiful trees is a great joy. They continue to meet with their CLC group and also both serve the National Community as Formators.
I have come to believe that our attention can be drawn to our sacred sites in more natural and simple ways while still continuing to be a source of inspiration for that rich historical moment. I really feel that it would not deter us from continuing to honor and value the sacred event. For many of us, the appreciation of the sacred dimension of a site and its interconnectedness to nature requires a change in perspective. One needs to see beyond the physical structures in order to become aware of the compassion and gifts of the Creator. The religions of both the East and West would concur that nature can be seen as a metaphor of the spiritual lives of others in our graced history. Chet Rayno, a science and nature author writes, “All my life has been a re-learning to pray, a letting go of the magical incantation, petition, and vain repetition instead of watching attentively for the light that burns at the center of every star, every cell, every living creature, and every human heart.”

The Cahokia Mounds in Collinsville, Illinois, chosen as the venue for our three day retreat, is protected as a historical site in its natural state by the State of Illinois. The Cahokia settlement respects the life and culture of the Woodland First Nation. Around A.D. 700 these people settled and began developing as a highly structured community with a complex social and political system that grew to approximately 20,000 persons. We are told that the population began to decline and in the late 1400’s Cahokia and its people were essentially abandoned. What happened to the Cahokia people remains an unanswered question, but depletion of resources may have been a factor, as wood, game, and soil fertility declined.

During our time at the Cahokia Retreat, the interpretive centre with its many displays gave us the opportunity to contemplate the life of the Mississippian people, their habitat, and their culture. In addition to this, the “Green Team” consisting of Pat Carter, Lois and Kuruvila Zacharia, Maria Grimminger, and Ron and Janet Nimer guided us in the daily activities of the program in deepening our awareness of the sacredness of this natural shrine, the Cahokia Mounds. In a sense, the Mounds became for us a cathedral. The team members facilitated our prayer times and reflections with some visual presentations and images on the ecology and the history of our planet earth.

During my walks throughout the Cahokia grounds, I came to appreciate the sacred dimension of nature. It was a time to recognize that nature involved all of us, that we were somehow and mysteriously connected to it and part of it. The birds, the wild flowers, the water flowing in the stream, the breeze blowing through the large elm trees, and the large Cahokia Mounds, all spoke to us as we became aware of the fact that the same energy alive in them is alive in us. At different times during our retreat, we would share, in a group, our individual sacred stories inspired and awakened by a new sense of being part of the community of life. The second round of our spiritual conversation offered us even deeper insights and revelations of God’s life among us. The Buddha said, “If you wish to know the divine, feel the wind on your face and the warm sun on your hand.”

For some us, the next phase of the pilgrimage was soon to begin as we made our way (a few miles down the road) to the Ignatian Spirituality Conference at St. Louis University. The four day Conference program was to be animated by the key note speakers: David Fleming, S.J., Marie Schwan, CSJ, and the sister and brother team of Eileen Burke-Sullivan and Kevin Burke, S.J. Liturgical celebrations, music, and liturgical dance help us to enter fully and affectively in accepting our call in “the gift of the cross offered to us by God, the savior of the world.” The daily program also included
several workshops exposing us to a realistic look into the “Ignatian Passion of Today.” Indeed, it was a sobering reality of a wounded world where we are invited to encounter the suffering Christ and a challenge to respond by joining with him in his passion, death, and resurrection in the 21st century.

In his book, *Secularity and the Gospel*, Ronald Rolheiser, O.F.M. seems to address the challenges of today, “…reading the signs of the times asks that we see the finger of God…A triumphantal Church is being pruned, and all our objections to the contrary, we are in fact being ever more marginalized and humbled inside the culture. There are many ways to read this, but we chose to read it biblically: God’s finger is in this, and that finger, experienced in a present ecclesial kenosis, is directing us to let go of certain triumphal forms of power so as to take our place again among the poor and humble.” I would also add to this insight that we humbly take our place once again among a suffering planet earth.

In his book, *The Great Work*, Thomas Berry believes that we are standing at a defining time in history and our challenge is … “The response that we give must have a supreme creative power, for the Cenozoic Era in the story of the earth is fading as the sun sets in the western sky. Our hope for the future is for a new dawn, an Ecozoic Era, when humans will be present to the earth in a mutually enhancing manner.”

As I reflect more and more on these “signs of the times” and my pilgrimage to the Cahokia Mounds followed by the Ignatian Spirituality Conference, I see the similarities to what I/we are faced with today and what was facing the Woodland First Nation in AD 1300. I ask myself, “Was it a lack of response that eventually caused the disappearance of the Cahokia culture of that era?” Thomas Berry goes on to say, “…the natural world demands a response that rises from the wild unconscious depths of the human soul, a response that artists seek to provide in color, music, and movement.”

Questions for Reflection:

1. Do I and/or my CLC group visit wilderness sites, farms, or woodlands to see some of the natural processes of birth and death that surrounds us?
2. What social or ecological initiatives could I or my CLC group become part of in my area?
3. What steps could I/we take to learn about the remarkable character of life on our planet earth?

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**MY JUST ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH —**

**THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA DESIGNED FOR USE BY SMALL COMMUNITIES WITHOUT THE AID OF A DIRECTOR, BY FR. DOMINIC TOTARO, S.J.**

My experience as an Ecclesial Assistant for CLC for several years has led me to persons hungering for The Spiritual Exercises but unable to find anyone in their vicinity who is formed in guiding others on this journey. Of course, the two major ways of experiencing this way of Ignatius are in a month-long retreat or retreat in daily life with a personal guide (sometimes done over the telephone). But many persons cannot take advantage of these options. Is the formula in this booklet better than precluding any experience of the Exercises? I think it is good and can be safely used by mature persons with a desire for the Ignatian Way.

Fr. Totaro, a long-time companion in the CLC way of life, formerly residing in the eastern USA, has been ministering in Africa for many years. He has guided persons in the Exercises frequently, but he apparently has found groups of people who long for this experience without the opportunity of regular, outside guidance. Fr. Dom has compiled this little “How to” booklet (82 pages) based on the original writings of Ignatius, also borrowing from current commentaries in English. For instance, the introduction includes a reformulation of the advice Ignatius himself gives as well as a description of different kinds of prayer.

Each week is then outlined by the following headlines: Grace — Passages (from Scripture or the Exercises) — Questions — Action-Response — Business (for this is meant to be used in a small group of 6-15 persons) — Evaluation — Aids to Discernment. Although the intent is meant for individual daily prayer, there is instruction on the faith sharing to be used in weekly meetings.

There are some unique and delightful nuggets in this book, e.g., “Members of a community who are illiterate will still be able to participate.” (Have you ever heard that before?) “My image to explain repetition is a mango tree in season. People who pass such a mango tree will pluck one to eat and enjoy. On the next day, people will pluck another...And why do people go back to the mango tree rather than the orange tree or the cashew tree? Because that’s where the fruit is.” And, “Jesus is a good Nigerian. He visits you a second time, and...”

Note that the persons using this book need not be a CLC community; it is open to any group. However, at the end of the booklet Fr. Dom has an introduction and invitation to becoming a CLC community. One concern I have is that an individual lacking psychological health might suffer from this experience, without the care and caution of a qualified Guide. Presumably, the group itself or an occasional contact (maybe by telephone?) with an individual could properly advise such a retreatant.

This book offers a slow and welcoming road to forming a Christian Life Community® by introducing the small group to the core of Ignatian spirituality. The consequence and continuation of this grace can be rooted and expanded in CLC, even if you are illiterate and/or cannot connect with a Director experienced in guiding another in the Exercises. I have had no personal experience in using this handbook, but I think it is one more creative way to spread the Good News of the Gospel — and CLC. Anything worth doing is worth doing creatively!

**Fr. Jack Zuercher, S.J.,**
Ecclesial Assistant, North Central Region
The Holy Spirit indeed works in a most mysterious way. I oftentimes remind myself of a writing of Archbishop Oscar Romero, in which he reminded us that it is good sometimes to take a long look back to see how the Holy Spirit had led us. 1

We started the planning for the National Assembly last July in St. Louis during the annual NCC Meeting, mainly designing a framework for logistics. But our loving God might be already at work on the essence long before that.

THE D&O JOURNEY

D&O is short for Diversity and Organization. The committee was formed following the Miami Assembly in response to the growing multi-cultural reality of our national community and a future reality of the Society’s provincial restructuring. It was charged with studying and proposing a new structure for CLC-USA. It has representation from the various cultural reality of our community, mainly the cultural diversity that is defined mainly by the prominent languages spoken — English, Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese. Shortly after, it added the representation for youth and young adults (Y/YA).

We thought that the committee would have some clear picture of a concrete structure in 3 years. Two years into the process, the committee gradually came to a new realization. A new structure must not be for the sole purpose of management effectiveness. The primary purpose of a new structure must be one that would effectively facilitate and empower communities to grow more fully in the CLC Charism. However, that natural growth is closely related to and associated with the native cultures that are being lived out right now in our community. That realization made a paradigm shift in vision and process; a new structure for us must be one emerging from our lived nature of Ignatian spirituality, communal connectedness and apostolic actions. The committee realized that its function will no longer be to draw up a structure but to facilitate a process so that the community itself will draw and make real that supporting structure. The committee realized it is most important to usher the community into this paradigm so that the community can participate in the process from the grassroots level for only grassroots participation would allow such structure to emerge.

The Pittsburgh Conference last year was the first step to bring the community into the process by inviting communities to reflect and share with other communities the graced histories of the regions and the cultural groups.

THE FIRST PITTSBURGH CONFERENCE: The discernment on our graced histories

“It looks like a sheet of music.” That was an observation of one participant at the First Pittsburgh Conference upon seeing all the history timelines of all the regions and cultural groups and the Youth and Young Adults neatly stacked together. “It was beautiful,” she continued.

The conference at first was meant to be a workshop to follow the Leadership Workshop in Rome that Lois and Mong-Hang attended in November of 2007. It had 2 parts. The first was a reflection on the graced histories of the regions and the cultural groups — that includes YAYA. The second part was workshops dedicated to two leadership modules on communal discernment and conflict resolution. Many were looking forward to learning new things on leadership, but it was the reflection and sharing on the graced histories that opened us up as a community to a new consolation and a glimpse of new vision. Listening to the sharing, we came to see clearer how God has gathered and nourished each region and cultural group through all those years in their uniqueness of proceeding and circumstances; each story is a sign of God’s presence and love. We saw clearer the graced history of CLC-USA as an apostolic body — each local community is like a stream pouring its water — life and energy — into a larger river heading out to the vast ocean, which is our world. We were invited to contemplate, even only briefly, the potential vitality of CLC-USA when all its communal and personal components would converge into one single body that is apostolic in nature. Our diversity is actually a gift, not a problem to be resolved. Could our diversity actually be our best strength? Where is the Holy Spirit leading us as a community with this new realization?

THE WORLD ASSEMBLY’S FATIMA EXPERIENCE

Right after the Pittsburgh Conference some of us gathered in St. Louis in July for our annual NCC meeting. Two main tasks: prepare for the World Assembly in Fatima and kick off the preparation for the National Assembly 2009. We spent a great deal of time discerning and discussing a

1 Minister to the Future, Archbishop Oscar Romero.
The two symbols that we brought to Fatima embodied the celebration of our diversity but called to be one body in our uniqueness: the wreath of different color threads woven together but remaining distinct; the circles of quotes of Ignatian Spirituality in different languages embracing the radiating Christ in the center. The Fatima Assembly was a confirmation on the gift of diversity. We witnessed over 60 countries with many languages and cultures gathered to celebrate the sense of being called to be one apostolic body around Christ. All communities have their unique way of responding and journeying to into this one apostolic body, but all also share the same “DNA” of sorts. The beauty and the graceful harmony are in the differences made possible by sharing the same core and embracing one another as they are.

At Fatima, we also received a message both an invitation to become and a challenge from Father General Adolfo Nicolás. That is to deepen our sense of God through Ignatian Spirituality and CLC Charism: to see with the Eyes of God, to hear with the Hearing of God, to feel with the Heart of God, and finally to speak with the Word of God. It is a challenge and an invitation of becoming a prophetic lay community for the Church and for our world. That challenge places formation of our members to be the priority of priorities, very much in line with the voices raised unanimously in the summer of 2004 in our Miami Assembly.

### Calendar of Events

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| **Leadership Conference II**  
Pittsburgh, PA  
March 26-29, 2009 |  |  |
| **Ignatian PeaceAction: Peace and Creation**  
CLC-USA Day of Observance  
April 22 which is also Earth Day.  
CLC members and groups are encouraged to make the “St. Francis Pledge to Protect Creation and the Poor.” For more information go to: www.jesuit.org/SocialJustice/WarandViolence/IPA/default.aspx |  |  |
| **Conference on Ignatian Spirituality**  
sponsored by the Jesuit Collaborative at Fordham University, Bronx, NY:  
www.jesuit-collaborative.org  
June 19-21, 2009 |  |  |
| **National CLC-USA Assembly**  
Trinity Washington University  
Washington, DC  
July 9-12, 2009, 2009 |  |  |
| **Cura Personalis CLC-USA**  
for college/university students and campus ministers  
Trinity Washington University,  
Washington, DC  
July 7-12, 2009 |  |  |
| **CLC-USA National Coordinating Council Annual Meeting**  
3 PM Sunday, July 12th — 1 PM Wednesday, July 15th |  |  |
Called to Be a Prophetic Community

Thursday, July 9 at 4 pm* — Sunday, July 12 at 1 pm

Trinity Washington University
125 Michigan Avenue, NE
Washington, DC  20017

* Optional morning and afternoon workshops on Thursday beginning at 9:30 am on topics such as Communal Discernment, JustFaith, DSSE, Cura Personalis, Advocacy Workshop by the Jesuit Social Ministries office. Official welcome at 4:00 pm.

Cost for adults is $325 for registration, room and board

Featured events will include:

• **Speakers from CLC-Rwanda** who will speak on their national reality and their discernment of apostolic mission on HIV/AIDS.

• **Immersion Experiences** to various advocacy agencies in downtown Washington, DC

• **Multicultural Prayer and Liturgies each day**

• **Reflections from World CLC Assembly**

• **Open Space Process** (See: www.openspaceworld.org/cgi/wiki.cgi?AboutOpenSpace)
  This process will take place all day on Saturday and will allow EVERYONE to have the opportunity to discuss their passions, concerns and vision for CLC.

• **Wall of Apostolic Presence of CLC-USA**
  Posters showing apostolic work from each local community
  We ask each local community to prepare in advance a poster (17” x 22”) showing an apostolic work of or a project supported by their members.
  Purpose: to inform, to inspire, and to encourage networking with each other regarding the many apostolates that CLC-USA communities are pursuing.

• **College, High School, and Children’s Programs**

To register or to find more information, go to our website at:  www.clc-usa.org

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**To prepare for this assembly:**

1. Each region should identify and bring a symbol that represents the graces and challenges received since the last assembly.

2. Everyone should bring a couple topics for Open Space.

3. Each local community should make a poster for the Wall of Apostolic Presence as described above.
KCLC

New York Region

We celebrated the Liturgy of Commitment on September 21 at Fordham University. During this celebration, 19 members (17 from KCLC) made their Act of First Commitment, and 24 members made their Act of Permanent Commitment as members of the Christian Life Community®. They have been preparing since last year and have completed all the requirements for the Commitment. The Liturgy was celebrated with Fr. Daniel J. Fitzpatrick, S.J., Fr. Daniel Sang-Bong Suh, S.J., Fr. John Suh, S.J., and Deacon Ignatius Yoon. Our new Korean National CLC President, Young Sook Clare Maing, was sworn in during the Liturgy as well. This day was an occasion for great joy and celebration, and about 100 members and families attended this special liturgy.

Our community will miss Gregory and Theresa Lee of the La Storta CLC, who have moved to Florida after the loss of their son, Paul. We thank Gregory for his service as the President and the Lay Assistant of NY KCLC. We wish them well in their new life in Florida!

Metro NY KCLC held its first Community talent show on October 25th at the FGS Korean Community Center in New Jersey. It was a fun and exciting gathering for all of us as we shared and showcased each other’s talents. The first prize award went to the Fire Fly Community. It was such a successful and joyous event for all the participants that we decided to make this an annual event.

We had a special gathering with Fr. Choi, S.J., from Korea on December 13th at Esther Park’s home in NJ. 45 KCLC members got together to meet and celebrate the Mass with Fr. Choi. We thank Fr. Choi for this special visit to our community.

Our community had to say a very sad goodbye to our Siloam Community member, Angela Kyung Hee Im. Angela’s funeral mass was on December 27 at the Bayside Korean Catholic Church in N.Y. We will miss Angela. May God be with Angela and her family.

Lastly, Metro NY KCLC is preparing a one-day retreat on April 19 at Mt. Manresa Retreat House in Staten Island. Eunae Christina Kim will be our guest speaker for this retreat.

Mid Atlantic Region

On January 17, we had our New Year’s party at one of our member’s house. Fr. Benedict Jung, S.J., celebrated the opening Mass. Dinner and the annual talent show followed. Nine communities performed in the show. Some of the communities sang, some danced and others acted. We all had a great time.

On February 7, an educational meeting for Team Coordinators, the Formation Team and Service Team members was held. Fr. Benedict Jung, S.J., celebrated Mass and lectured on “How to serve and love each other in Christian life.” MAR KCLC Chair Teresa Kim explained the guidelines for the CLC members and Team Coordinators.

The new extended Formation Team was formed and the first meeting was held on January 29, 2009. The members include Thomas Cho, Veronica Kang, Maria Oh, Cecilia Rhee, Theresa Lee and Angela Shim. The roles and responsibilities of the team were discussed in the meeting. These include reviewing all the formation materials, revising them if necessary, and playing an active role in the monthly planning for the committed members. The meeting will be held on the 4th Saturday of the month and all the committed members are encouraged to participate. The annual events and educational, spiritual courses along with the annual retreat were also reviewed in the meeting. The Formation Team will work closely with the National KCLC Region. Angela Shim has been elected as our new Chairperson for 2010 - 2011.

Upcoming Events

- On April 18, we are scheduled to have a one-day spring retreat.
- From May 29 to 31, we are scheduled to have a silent retreat.
- From August 8 to 16, we are scheduled to have our annual silent retreat.

Atlanta

The Atlanta KCLC had its Commitment Ceremony on October 4, 2008. 4 members made their first Temporary Commitment, 18 members made their Renewal Commitment.

The Atlanta KCLC held a one-day retreat in the Fall of 2008 at the monastery in Conyers. The theme of the retreat was “Play with God”. Fr. Joon-Ho Chae, S.J., former Korean Superior General of the Society of Jesus, gave the daily lectures.

Fr. Isidore Jeong-Ho An, S.J., KCLC Ecclesial Assistant visited L.A. He directed the KCLC silent retreat from Jan. 30 - Feb. 3.

Our annual retreat was held from Feb. 4 - Feb. 8, 2009 at the St. Ignatius Retreat House. The theme of the retreat was “Dancing with Jesus.” Fr. Joon-Ho Chae, S.J., gave the daily lectures. This retreat gave us the time and insight to reflect upon the peace and love that is in our hearts. It pulled us away from the stress that we deal with everyday and brought us tranquility. With this newly discovered feeling, we are able to spread our inner warmth to the people in our lives.
Western Region

We are very thankful to our Lord Almighty that the Holy Spirit guides us in enhancing our spiritual formation in living with our Christian community. During the past six months, our region conducted two silent retreats. One retreat was for the preparation of the Permanent Commitment and the other retreat was for beginners. The August 2008 retreat was held at Mater Dolorosa Retreat House in Pasadena, CA and was led by Fr. Jong-Koo Park, S.J. National KCLC of Christian life. The other retreat was for beginners. The August 2008 retreat was held on January 30, 2009 and was led by Fr. Jung-Ho An, S.J. National KCLC of Christian life. The other retreat was about “Walking with Jesus.” 27 people participated in this retreat and it lasted for 5 days. Fr. An spoke about contemplation, meditation and sharing of spiritual experiences. Participants were touched by this retreat and discovered that they became closer to Jesus through meditation and contemplation.

Prior to the second retreat, the newly elected president invited all CLC beginners and members to an assembly in order to share their experiences as they live as CLC. This assembly enabled the attendees to prepare their minds for their commitments. The result was amazing, as everyone examined their conscience and discovered how their lives have changed with the transformation of their old selves to a new Christian living community.

Four Korean CLC members attended the Discernment Conference held at Loyola Marymount University. This conference was sponsored by the Western Region and included English, Spanish, Young Adult, Vietnamese and Korean participants. We learned the importance of discernment in strengthening our Christian living. A Mass followed afterwards and was celebrated by Fr. Christopher Nguyen, E.A. for the Western Region. Included in the ceremony were 8 new Permanent Commitments, 8 Temporary Commitments and 9 renewing members who recommitted.

The KCLC held a fund raising campaign at St. Agnes Catholic Church in Los Angeles, CA. Members generously donated usable clothing and household goods and held a swap-meet style sale. Some of the money was donated to the Jesuits for their mission in Cambodia. The best part of this is that we experienced unity and warm cooperation as one family.

Some socials were held in order to enhance our relationships with each other — CLC in community. Our former president of KCLC organized a get-together at the Hollywood Bowl. Each group was assigned to bring different foods and everybody had a wonderful time. For the New Year’s celebration, we were honored by the presence of Fr. Jung Yeon Hwang, S.J., who celebrated the Mass, and the participation of Fr. Young Chan Lee, S.J. from St. Agnes Catholic Church. We had games, contests, and fun spending more time together.

Missouri Region

As we go into mode preparing for World CLC Day here in the Missouri Region and specifically in St. Louis, I am struck by the call to be a prophetic community. This year the Missouri Region will be able to celebrate World CLC Day in a bigger way thanks to a grant from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in St. Louis. Ann Padberg wrote the grant and we are most grateful to her for her efforts in this regard. We will hold World CLC Day at St. Matthew’s Jesuit Parish located on the north side of St. Louis for the second year in a row. The day will consist of Liturgy with Fr. Mark McKenzie S.J., pastor, an on site work project with the parishioners, round table discussion with a wisdom group, lunch and time for fellowship. The day will end with a presentation by Pat Carter and the examen.

Our assignment has been to study Project 141, the General Congregation 35 document of the Jesuits and the Fatima experience of the World Assembly last summer. I am edified by the information coming from Discipleship CLC. Judy Szot reports that the members went away together for a day of prayer and pondering this winter. As a result, their meetings have included reflections on Fatima, several Harvest articles and Project 141. They also took time to look at the involvement of CLC as a Nongovernmental Organization at the UN (NGO).

In the same vein, Sacred Circle has studied the prophetic call in the light of the scriptures and compared how this fits in with the CLC model. Linda Leib gave this thumbnail sketch of their discussion. “The prophet, by his spiritual life, intimacy with God and sensitivity to God’s people, begins to act and breathe from inside God. He hears the ‘cry of the poor’ so strongly and is filled with mercy and compassion towards God’s people. The prophet is counter-cultural and works outside of the ways of the secular world. It is precisely because of his closeness to God that he begins to be able to tell what is going to happen.”

Cos (Fr. Robert Costello, S.J.) and Jen Horan went to Rome to participate in a session on Communal Discernment which was conducted in a retreat like manner. They are planning a presentation on their experience at the National Assembly in July. Cos is the new National Ecclesial Assistant to CLC and Jen is the Administrative Assistant.

We all are looking ahead to summer and the National Assembly in Washington, DC. We hope to have good representation from our Region. We are joining in to be of assistance to bring several CLC members from Rwanda to the U.S. to speak at the Assembly. Sr. Mary Ann Wachtel has spearheaded fund raising and donation opportunities in our region to help defray the financial costs of the travel for the CLC members coming from Africa. Many thanks to Sr. Mary Ann for her work in this special endeavor.

We have several members heading to Pittsburgh in March to attend Part II of the Diversity and Organization
Committee Conference. Peggy Edwards from our region is co-chair of the committee. The past months have been filled with bringing together the document with the timeline and graced history of the Missouri Region.

All in all, we are busy and engaged in the work of CLC. We wish everyone a spirit filled WCLC Day, and we hope to see you in July at the National Assembly.

**NEW ENGLAND REGION**

Ann Marie Brennan came to the New England area to share her experience at Fatima. She gave us all a wonderful presentation. We appreciate very much Ann Marie’s time and energy to drive all the way from New York. Members enjoyed the slide show and the chance to ask questions. This was also an opportunity for the Dong Hahn CLC and the New England CLC to get together. As usual, kids filled the room with excitement and joy. Paul Kenney, S.J., and Mark Mossa, S.J. celebrated Mass. Having dinner together was part of the program too.

Luc and Mathilde, who joined our local CLC from January to October, went back to France. They both rejoined their local CLC communities in Paris. We wish the best to both of them, as they welcome their baby in January 2009. We cannot wait to receive news from them about their new family addition.

After a long discernment with her family, effective February 1, Clarivel Marin De Dragas is stepping down from her leadership positions as Regional Representative to NCC, Regional Coordinator (New England) and Chair of the CLC-USA Communications Team. We thank her very much for all her efforts and wish her and her family much joy.

**NEW YORK REGION**

In anticipation of the Feast of the Nativity, over 50 Metro New York members gathered at Fordham University December 7th for an Advent day of prayer and reflection. The program was led by Fr. Charles Moutenot, S.J., the Director of Spiritual Programs at Loyola Retreat House in Morristown, NJ. On January 3, we again gathered at Fordham for our annual Feast of the Epiphany party. The evening began with the Celebration of Holy Mass followed by dinner, dancing and a raffle.

Leadership training continues to be a key priority this year. On January 31, nineteen members representing each of the Metro communities gathered for a training seminar on key points from the Guides and Coordinators Course with a strong focus on the Spiritual Exercises. Several members will also be attending the National CLC leadership conference, which is being held in Pittsburgh in March.

On March 22, we will again gather at Fordham for our annual Lenten day of prayer. The theme for the day will be praying and reflecting with St. Paul the Apostle. Guiding us will be Msgr. Thomas Wisniewski, a noted St. Paul scholar and Pastor of St. Catharine’s Church in Glen Rock, NJ.

**NORTH CENTRAL REGION**

Ecclesial Assistant, Fr. Jack Zuercher, S.J. announced the North Central Region has completed the formation of an executive council according to the new by-laws of the Region. The by-laws are modeled after those of other regions of the United States.

The new council will meet by teleconference soon. The members of the council are Fr. Zuercher; the three cluster promoters; Linda Hayek, Debra Leik, Jeanne Sieger; Regional Representative to National CLC, Renee O’Brien; Mary-anne Rouse, Co-chair; and members J. Berry, Amy Hoover, Mary Kuhlman, and Michael McCann.

Father Zuercher announced that Lorraine Conway, a member of Noah’s Ark, has been hired to be a part time assistant in his office. He also encouraged members to attend cluster and regional events and to consider attending the National CLC Assembly in Washington, D.C. in July.

Father Don Doll, S.J., an internationally recognized photographer-videographer on the Creighton University Journalism/Mass Communication faculty presented a video of the Jesuit Relief Service at the Omaha Cluster Advent Reflection afternoon. He focused on the suffering of the people in Africa, including Chad and Rwanda. The CLC participants were sobered by the faces of the oppressed. There was great empathy with the suffering they had endured, even though it was unimaginable to us who live in safety and comfort. The group expressed feelings of helplessness and a desire to learn more. Several committed to explore the possibility of bringing Immaculate Ilibagize to speak here. She describes her remarkable survival amid the genocide in Rwanda and how she discovered a powerful relationship with God in her book, *Left to Tell*.

The Regional Budget/Financial Report for 2008 was printed in the Newsletter, courtesy of Bob Smith, Regional Treasurer. Our Cluster Lenten Reflection afternoon will be Saturday, February 28, 2009.

On February 8, Ken Keefer, with his wife Mary, a member of the Oasis Community, received the St. Ignatius Award from the Deglman Center for Ignatian Spirituality at Creighton University. The Award cites those in the university community who have followed Jesuit values in the workplace and in their personal lives. Ken is an Associate Professor of Pharmacy and Vice-Chair of the Department of Pharmacy Sciences.

**NORTHWEST REGION**

*Oregon Coast:* The Newport communities had an Advent retreat December 7. Fr David Robinson, S. J. from Nestucca led the retreat portion of the afternoon. We began with a potluck and finished with a commitment ceremony.
Virginia Fisher made her Permanent Commitment and Amy Williams made a Temporary Commitment. We had a good turnout, with all four communities represented.

**CLC Challenge:** We have planned our retreat for March 12-16 with Fr. Armand Nigro, S. J. and Fr. Vince Beuzer, S. J. Anyone is welcome. This is a women’s retreat at Holy Spirit Center. We have been using audiotoses of the Leadership Conference (in Pittsburgh last year) for our group meetings and this is going well.

**Anam Cara:** Two meetings ago, we spent the time in discernment, a subject we had previously decided was an important one. We were to discern about recommitment to Anam Cara, and about our willingness to add new members to our close-knit group. Jenny held our process by asking us a question, “What does Anam Cara mean to you?” We shared the graces we had received as members of Anam Cara along with some very interesting and revealing concerns. We each committed to continue as members with a general agreement on our willingness to invite/accept new members.

**The new St. Pat’s CLC group** has met five times. Three Anam Cara members have been sharing support of the new community. There are five members and the possibility of two more joining.

**Siyaya Group:** Siyaya (Poulso) continues to be a community of eight regular members. We completed Joyce Rupp’s *The Cup of Our Life* this fall, and began to pray with Margaret Silf’s *Inner Compass: An Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality* this January. Interspersed between books, members of our community have prayerfully created seasonal rituals for advent and winter. Contemplating our Graced History at the NW CLC Region’s request turned out to be a very gratifying exercise, as we all reflected and marveled at the way in which we as a community began, have grown spiritually, and stayed together over the past eight or so years. Several of us are looking forward to attending the upcoming NW Catholic Women’s Convocation this coming spring.

**Portland Communities:** The Portland communities took a winter break (bad weather, holidays, etc.) and are just beginning to meet again after the first of the year. Prior to the holidays the younger community met with Marilyn Kirvin, their original guide.

**St. Rita Community:** We are ten members and meet every three weeks. We are studying and praying silence and relationships. All are very pleased with the sessions and finding their lives more fulfilled and blessed.

**Spiritwalkers:** We’re continuing to read and pray with the Margaret Silf book, *Wayfaring* — very good.

**Introduction to CLC Evening:** We are planning an “Introduction to CLC Evening” with the Ignatian Spirituality Center on May 21, 2009 at St. Joseph Parish. Watch for more details and please invite people who are interested in CLC to attend.

**Please Remember CLC In your Will.**
Father David Fitch, S.J., died peacefully Friday, January 30, at Sacred Heart Jesuit Center, Los Gatos, California, after a long decline. He was 88 years old. Born in San Diego, California, on January 19, 1921, David entered the Society of Jesus at Sacred Heart Novitiate in Los Gatos, California, on August 14, 1941. He pronounced final vows on August 15, 1958, at Loyola High School in Los Angeles, California.

One of the special graces we CLCers received from reflecting on our graced histories in Christian Life Community® was recalling the presence of dear Jesuits who served us along the way. Father David Fitch, S.J. was such a person. He is remembered for his fidelity to the Society of Jesus, but also to Christian Life Community®, ministering to many CLCers through the years.

Following are some memories of Fr. Fitch and his loving presence to our CLC family.

Father David Fitch was the West Coast Ecclesial Assistant for Christian Life Communities from 1970 until the late nineties.

Father established CLC groups at Presentation, Saint Ignatius and Immaculate Conception High Schools, Saint Cecilia parish, San Francisco Newman Center and at Santa Clara University.

Under Father Fitch’s tutelage Sarah Espejo and Sheila O’Connor led the Philippians as they transitioned from the Newman Center. Then in the late 80’s and early 90’s the Soul Friends and Sojourners began in Sacramento, followed by CLC groups in Holy Family Parish and Los Gatos.

Father Dave was a gentle giant, and always a truly good priest. He carried in his black suitcase everything needed for the celebration of Mass. He was always ready to provide for us at our gatherings. We all owe so much of our Ignatian Spirituality and our perseverance in CLC to his efforts.

Strict adherence to the General Principles of CLC, the need for a yearly Ignatian retreat and Faith Experience weekends Father always managed to provide for the Western Region communities. He was slow to learn about the social justice teachings of the Church. When he was persuaded of their existence and worth, however, he became a strong supporter.

This little man with a big heart was a generous provider. He introduced Cluster Meetings and Conference Calls to our Western Region. He will be greatly missed. In his memory we hope to carry on the great work he started and which he loved so much.

Sr. Roberta Connolly, PBVM

I remember Dave as a welcoming face whenever CLC was meeting in California. He showed his gentle and humble concern for the well-being of all. His commitment to CLC was evident from the long years of service to the local and national community.

Dorothy Zambito, Locust Valley CLC — NY

While words cannot begin to describe what he has done for all of us. I have tried to highlight in this tribute some of his many qualities:

- Dedicated, Articulate, Virtuous, Intelligent, Discerning.
- Faithful to his priestly vocation, Ignatian through and through, Thoughtful, Confessor, Humble.
- S is for silence that was required in his directed Ignatian retreats. J is for a job well done.

Intercede for us, Father Fitch. You are in a new home — you are in a better place — rest in peace.

Sheila L. O’Connor, CLC Philippians, San Francisco, CA

Father Fitch was a great teacher. He taught me about St. Ignatius and how to use free time on a retreat. In the bible stories, he would say, “What did you learn?” During retreats no talking was allowed so that we could listen and hear God’s voice. He was very kind to me and gave me a ride to the retreat in Los Gatos. Father paid out of his own funds for retreats. Father Fitch was able to bring people together, and because of him, I was able to make many friends. He came to San Francisco to give faith-sharing weekends at Presentation Convent. Father Fitch was a very likable person. He loved his work and was a big part of my life.

Ralph Rivas, CLC Philippians, San Francisco, CA

“Dear Dave, I know you hear me as you sit comfortably in the Lord’s presence. Do you recall when we first met in CA? You had just been appointed Assistant of the California Region, and you wanted a first hand picture of CLC in action. In answer to my question of your available block of time, you said you could get away for as much as two months, I said, ‘Dave, get in your car and visit CLC in Omaha, St. Louis, Detroit, Cleveland, New York City, and Washington, DC.’ You did!!”

Fred Leone