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After the CLC-USA Assembly 2009, many comments were received regarding two kinds of diversity that were evident there, namely, cultural diversity and the diversity of age, especially the presence of more youth, young adults and families. For many years the majority of participants at our conventions/assemblies were born in the United States and many were approaching ‘senior status’ in society. The changes, most expressed, were a breath of fresh air. This issue of Harvest will focus primarily on youth, young adults and families in Christian Life Community. Some comments will address cultural diversity as ExCo continues to discern structural changes needed to incorporate all into a unified national community. Both President Liem Le’s column and Father Ken Buddendorf’s report on the recent meeting in Pittsburgh will bring us up to date on some of what is in store for CLC-USA in the coming months/years.

Regarding the presence of youth, young adults and families in CLC-USA, it would be good to reflect on some past history to learn that the ‘seniors’ were not always the majority. As far back as the late 50s, 60s and 70s, Sodality and then CLC groups were made up of young adults, many entering professional life. In the New York Region, many of these ‘singles’ married and became couples in our community. These couples and others in Cleveland, Omaha and Detroit, to mention a few, continued their CLC way of life. Although we did not have formal programs for our young families, the children were included in many of our activities. Local events like picnics, Christmas parties and the Holy Week Triduums were family celebrations. Children were included in home Masses when CLC met. My own grown children still remember their immersion experiences at the CLC Assembly in St. Louis. Children’s programs were prepared alongside the adult programs. Unfortunately, even for children who went off to Jesuit colleges, CLC was not available to them. However, many learned from their parents’ example the worth of serving the oppressed and being good stewards — their lives continue in that same spirit and involvement today.

Most of us in CLC have heard of Cura Personalis, the successful formation program for collegians interested in CLC. Jen Horan’s article will inform you about the history of the program beginning at Loyola Marymount University and its subsequent development and progress at other Jesuit institutions.

Our National Ecclesial Assistant, Father Cos, writes of two groups of students and their CLC exposure and experience. Read about the boys at DeSmet High School in St. Louis and how CLC figured into their need for a spirituality that included human relationships — a spirituality that was both personal and communal. Cos then shares a questionnaire given to students who are in CLC at St. Louis University — their answers ‘offer hope.’

In “CLC: My Way of Life” Norma Hernandez, a 2010 graduate of Loyola University, New Orleans shares her personal reflections on the great effect CLC had on her during college and how it helped shape her future plans.

The Metro NY Korean CLC reported on their ongoing mission for sharing Ignatian Spirituality through annual retreats for young adults since 2000. The retreats are held in New Jersey, but the retreatants come from a wide geographic area.
Our Vietnamese members planned and executed a children’s program in the Dong Hành and CLC-USA National Assemblies. Read Sophie Nguyen’s offering, “Called to be God’s Beloved Children” and learn the scope of the children’s involvement at the national assembly. (The recent issue of Progressio has an article on CLC and the family. “Let the children come to me” tells of CLC Malta’s including and incorporating children into the national community’s weekend seminar. It explains the development of the Children Seminar and themes and activities for the children.)

“Responding to the Call: Journeying with Father Tri Dinh, S.J.” by Quyen (Nhi) Ngo presents two views of Father Tri — his involvement as Director of the CLC ministry at Loyola Marymount, Los Angeles and his gift of self to those he served. “As we glimpse into the person who is Father Tri Dinh, S.J., we find God working throughout every aspect of his life, because of his openness in responding to God’s call.”

Although the “Year for Priests” has come to a close, the Harvest editorial team has decided to continue including articles about members of the clergy that have touched the lives of so many of us. In light of this, be sure to read the reflections of Companion CLC in Detroit on the life of Father Nick Rieman, S.J., who expressed, “CLC is the love of my life.”

Our young adult CLCer from Miami, Margarita Theye, shares a special project she has initiated, “Father Kidwell’s Legacy: A Retrospective of His Faithful Contributions (August 11, 1924 – January 13, 2008).” Margarita is seeking input into her project from any or all who knew Father Kidwell and would like to share their memories and photos.

The Harvest team is eager to share with you an article from Progressio (the World CLC publication) that introduces our new World Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant, Father Luke Rodrigues, S.J. Father Luke is from India and had served as its National Ecclesiastical Assistant. To Father Luke, our prayers and words of welcome.

To our outgoing World Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant, Father Alberto Brito, S.J., we express our gratitude and send our love. To those of us who had the pleasure of his presence, we applaud him for his enthusiasm and commitment to CLC/CVX worldwide.

Last, but not least, is a Letter to the Editor from Julie Logan, Well Spring Community, Des Moines, Iowa. The letter is submitted in support of an earlier Letter to the Editor from Carmen Santamaria regarding an Open Space session on overpopulation and artificial birth control.

From the diversity of age and culture in CLC-USA, we hope to grow in unity as a national community. In a recent article in Benetvision’s Ideas in Passing, “Unity is Seeking Out Differences” (5/24/10) Sr. Joan Chittister sheds light and wisdom as we look ahead to structural changes in our way of proceeding…

Unity is more than solidarity and more than uniformity. Unity, ironically, is a commitment to becoming one people who speak in a thousand voices...

The kind of unity that is born out of differences and becomes the glue of a group has four characteristics: it frees, it enables, it supports and it listens.  
...the truly united group knows that every idea, every voice, counts in the process of idea formation.

As the National ExCo prepares for the assembling of the Working Group, each of us must enter into the process, remembering that we are one of the thousand voices.

Dorothy M. Zambito.
First of all, at the Pittsburgh meeting we discerned the new President Elect, Mộng-Hằng Nguyễn from Houston. With that we will miss Ann Marie Brennan being with us on ExCo for the last four years. We owe her more than just gratitude. Hằng has joined our ExCo and will assume the role of president next summer. That was one of the objectives of the assembly. The other was to move forward the process of re-structuring CLC. The last time that we re-organized our community was thirty-seven years ago.

In 1983 Mary Ann Rouse of Omaha was our President. She convened the assembly for a national discernment from which the current structure emerged. It was called “A New Way of Being Together.” Now, on the eve of our recent Leadership Assembly in Pittsburgh on the weekend of June 26, she sent us a message with encouraging and supportive words for what the assembly was to take on. Over 50 of us from across the country gathered in Pittsburgh that weekend to discern and make a concrete step toward “A New Way of Being Together,” if I may borrow the theme of 1983. We worked together and arrived at consensus on a set of twenty-six guiding principles for our new structure. The assembly then entrusted the process to ExCo to form the Working Group of five or six people, to formulate a framework for the new structure based on those guiding principles. This framework will be presented to the NCC at the next Leadership Assembly in June 2011. It is a very daunting and monumental task indeed.

The assembly was definitely a spiritual journey for me. It filled me with many emotions — consternation, fear, frustration on one side; humility, enthusiasm, eagerness on the other. But at the end, I was left with awe about what Love had done. We have come from many different circumstances to this point in time together. At the beginning of the process five years ago, we thought that unity was sameness; and that was what we tried to work toward. But “our body” said “no.” Now we understood what unity in our reality is. Yes, the principles are details for operational purposes, but they have one aim, fusing us all into one “family.” This family’s kinship is not based on blood but on the desire to discern God’s will and live it out, together.

God created the family as a model for humanity. God also gathered us into one community. There are many similarities between a family and a community.

Members in a family are all different — females, males, newborn, youth, adult, old… They are even different psychologically and spiritually. Each remains unique. In fact, a family will take the road toward dysfunction when someone in the family tries to make others into his/her likeness. A family really flourishes when all embrace the differences as gifts to themselves. What is required in a family to be fulfilled is nothing but love. Love fuses everyone in a family into one unit — unity in diversity. Does that look like us? I would say most definitely.

Love is the essence of a family.

Is love the essence of our new “New Way of Being Together?” When I was informed back in January, 2008 of being nominated for the presidency of CLC-USA, surprise was not the only thing in my mind. I was aware of the process of re-structuring, and “What can I possibly do?” was the prevalent question in my long discernment. I struggled with that because I had no answer to this seemingly impossible task. To really re-organize meant to start anew. One night, pondering on the “doing” while watching TV with my young son, the answer was revealed in my heart: I don’t need you to do anything. I need you to love them. It was an awesome answer. After two years, the Pittsburgh Assembly affirmed for me that was also the right answer, not just an awesome answer — for all of us.

Continued on page 7
June 24-27 at Gilmary Retreat Center in Pittsburgh, 55 CLC leaders from around the USA, Jesuit and lay, met to look at and discern a new way of being together.

The process began with a liturgy on Thursday, where Fr. Ken Buddendorff celebrated the feast of John the Baptist by calling to mind the graces God has shown CLC since our early history in the USA, better to prepare to follow Jesus in the coming years. The grace we sought from the beginning: “May our love increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value.” (Philippians 1:9-10)

On Friday we considered the principles to guide us in reorganizing ourselves and stressed the need for structures to support our cultural diversity, all aimed at uniting us more effectively as one national community in mission. It was agreed that the ultimate national governing body of CLC will have to be truly and fully a representation of the diversity and richness of the national body, perhaps an adaptation of the model for the CLC World Assembly. In addition, in order to participate in the decision-making and voting processes of CLC-USA, we will need clear guidelines for “what constitutes a CLC local community” in CLC-USA, “what constitutes a region” in CLC-USA and clear guidelines for the processes by which these components of the national body are formally established.

Our reflection on Saturday centered on a “Working Group” to do this reorganization. The mandate for this group is to draft fundamentals for the leadership meetings in the summer of 2011 and 2012. It was felt that this “Working Group” ought to be 5-6 people, well qualified for this important task. ExCo will seek input on names. The adoption process would be reviewed by World ExCo, and final adoption will be done by the NCC.

Our next step was to consider “Apostolic Action Proposals.” Ms. Carol Gonzales defined justice as “love lived out.” She described a mission in Africa, which has become the focus of both CLC and the Society of Jesus. A second proposal was presented by Mr. Mac Johnson who outlined a wedding between CLC and JustFaith. JustFaith is a 30-week justice-formation process to help participants expand their understanding and commitment to social ministry. JustFaith is focused on discipleship — engagement in the life of Jesus — and the call to be about God’s dream for justice and compassion in a world scarred by the domestic and global crisis called poverty. JustFaith grads are committed to ongoing formation, to action for and with those who are poor, to prayer, and to the creation of small faith communities. This discovery of and commitment to community is one of the most exciting by-products of the JustFaith journey. JustFaith Ministries Inc. in Louisville KY provides an expanding range of programs and added sessions, and encourages grads to form small communities. Christian Life Community is a natural outcome for many JustFaith grads.

At the Saturday Eucharist of Thanksgiving, Fr. Bob Costello, our National Ecclesial Assistant, commissioned our new President-Elect, Mồng-Hàng Nguyễn, to her new office.

In our final session on Sunday morning, Mr. Ed Plocha from the Jesuit staff of the Maryland Province led us in a consideration of three important matters: financial responsibility, the Executive Director, and the relocation of the CLC-USA National Office.
Ed showed us how financial responsibility is better termed “Shared Stewardship” and is described by Ignatius as how we relate to God, each other and creation. Stewardship has to be part of the formation process.

Ed defined the Executive Director as the chief administrator, program coordinator and fund raiser for the organization.

Ed reported that Fr. Waters, a Maryland Province Jesuit, has offered a location in Baltimore where the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) and Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC) now are, to be the new CLC-USA office. Some felt that before the decision is made, a study of the move from St. Louis should precede.

In conclusion, the group was very grateful to those who led our group sharing: Liem Le, our President; Fr. Jim Borbeley, Facilitator; Ann Marie Brennan and Lois Campbell, Past Presidents; and Fr. Bob Costello, our National Ecclesial Assistant. The general feeling of the group was that we have done well in beginning this needed process of restructuring CLC-USA.

**Donations are being solicited to support the important work of the “Working Group” for reorganization. Please send donations to our Treasurer, Clarence Markham, III, c/o NCLC, 3601 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108. Please clearly indicate that the funds are for the “Working Group.”**

It was agreed that the ultimate national governing body of CLC will have to be truly and fully a representation of the diversity and richness of the national body.

Love indeed unites us in our diversity. A new era is awaiting our arrival, together. Shall we?

May God continue to bless us abundantly with love and graces.
Cura Personalis and University CLC:

Our Capacity to See and Care as Jesus Does

Jen Horan

My first introduction to Christian Life Community (CLC) came in much the same way as it has for thousand of other college students- through a personal invitation. For me, the invitation came from my sister. For others it has come from an upper-class student, a dorm advisor, an orientation leader, a campus minister, or a Jesuit. Like all good clubs and organizations on a college campus, you can make posters and fliers and announcements over loudspeakers. However, none of these means really invite people into CLC. If you ask most students in a college or university CLC program, they will probably share with you a story about a conversation. This conversation may have come about in many different ways or in a variety of settings but the first introduction or awareness of CLC almost always comes back to a personal encounter with someone who had himself or herself been affected by an experience with CLC.

Christian Life Community is a worldwide movement of lay men and women grounded in the Spiritual Exercises and has a deeply rooted shared history with the Society of Jesus. CLC is a continuation of the Sodalities of Our Lady, which began as early as 1563 at the Roman College with Jesuit teacher Jean Leunis. Since 1587, the Jesuits have had a specific ecclesial relationship with the Sodalities and now CLC. This relationship, granted by the papacy, entitled them to found and support groups both within and outside the structures of Jesuit schools. Much like the history of the Society, the history of CLC has been varied and filled with both joys and challenges. In the United States, there has been a renewed focus on CLC in the Jesuit college setting. In many ways it is a return to the foundations of CLC which encouraged young students to live a life that was centered in God as they studied, lived away from home, and began to determine the course their lives would take.

Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles has been particularly successful not only in building up its own CLC program, but also in sharing its experience with other universities who would like to develop CLC on their campuses. In 2005, LMU hosted the first Cura Personalis: CLC National University Leadership Formation. This event was a corporate response from the CLC@LMU community to the rest of the Jesuit colleges and universities. In the previous year, a smaller regional event had been held at LMU. The program at LMU had grown from 150 students to over 300 students within one year, and we suffered a severe shortage of trained leaders to accommodate the requests for additional groups. Nearly every day more students would come to Campus Ministry seeking groups. And so nearly every day, Fr. Tri Dinh and I would have to take their information and promise we would get back to them soon. In order to get back to them we would need to find another older student or staff member, train that person, and then gather enough requests to form a new group.

Several CLC@LMU leaders began to develop an “experience” for those students who were thinking of leading CLC groups. As we began to shape this experience, we knew that it would need to include a mini retreat, some opportunities for sharing and discussion, and some practical workshops on active listening and group facilitation. We really struggled with what to call this “experience” and so we began using a working title that we thought captured the spirit that we wanted to convey throughout the entire four day retreat and workshop. That phrase has stuck with us and continues to be the title of the workshop to this day. Cura Personalis.
Cura Personalis is well known in Jesuit education and ministry. This is a sense of caring for a person in their entirety and caring for them as Jesus does. In this context, we wanted to teach what it meant to lead other students in a CLC group simply by offering the students an opportunity to reflect on how being in CLC had transformed them during their first year at LMU. We planned every aspect of the course, from the way we invited the participants months ahead of time to the way we prepared them to depart at the conclusion of the workshops, with this idea of caring for them as a whole person in mind, so that they would feel empowered to reach out and care for others. For us it was not just a matter of teaching the participants skills for leading groups. It was providing them with an experience that would fuel their passion for service in their own school and community and sustain them as they embarked on the uncertain path ahead.

The first year of our program, when it was just a regional event, we had about thirty students from Loyola Marymount University and thirty from the local Dong Hành Vietnamese community. Later that same summer, some of the participants from LMU and from the Vietnamese CLC participated in the National Assembly in Miami, where the Dong Hành community was officially joined with the CLC-USA body. We were confirmed that the experience we had shared was so valuable that we were compelled to share this grace with other young adults in the USA. In the summer of 2005, with a program at LMU that now neared 500 students with 60 student leaders and 40 staff guides we began working with the CLC-USA Executive Council and sent invitations to every Jesuit university and to each of the regional Jesuit Ecclesial Assistants. In the summer of 2005 the program had nearly 100 participants. We extended the program an extra day, and had opportunities prepared for the Campus Ministers. In the last seven years, this experience has grown into a nationwide program with a presenting team from several Jesuit universities as well as leaders in CLC-USA.

In Decree 2 of General Congregation 35, the Jesuits reflected on how the vision of La Storta has shaped the identity of the Society of Jesus. Decree 2 specifically refers to the way in which Jesuits are called, “… in companionship with the Lord, who calls, in companionship with others who share this call.” Although we did not identify it in this way specifically, there is something of a similarity to what we experienced as individuals and as a body. We had each experienced a personal encounter with God that we had been compelled to share with others who might also be transformed by an experience with CLC.

We have received an amazing gift in this experience of CLC on a college campus. Students from the engineering department, sororities, athletics, Asian Pacific Student Services, and justice ministries all come together to share deeply about their relationships with God and with themselves. On many campuses, CLC is able to meet the needs of an incredibly diverse student population. This has been attributed to the small group format that is supported by the larger structure and supplemented by formation, social and mission events open to students from all of the small groups. Large group events give students opportunities to connect with an even wider range of individuals who share a desire for spirituality and mission. In a program with some 50 student groups, there are real opportunities for collaboration and sharing of what has worked or not worked.

In the last five years, this annual formation program has continued to grow in depth but we have intentionally limited the number of participants in order to maintain an environment that welcomes deeper sharing and real bonding amongst the participants. However, the quality of the program has continued to improve. Each year new Campus Ministers, national CLC leaders, and

1 GC 35, D. 2, nn. 3.
students are invited to be a part of the planning team. In this way, even the planning of the event itself is an opportunity for formation of members and leaders.

In recent years, we have taken a more intentional focus on mission and justice within the context of personal prayer and CLC. Two years ago Loyola University New Orleans hosted the gathering. Students and Campus Ministers were able to engage in hands-on service in the New Orleans community as an integrated part of their formation in CLC. Last year was an “immersion year” when college CLC members and leaders were immersed in the CLC-USA community at the National Assembly in Washington DC. They also experienced political lobbying and the justice works of the Jesuit Conference alongside other CLC members from the national community. This year we return to sunny Southern California with a specialized program for Campus Ministers to work with their own student teams to form a program that meets the specific needs of their local community.

The underlying pedagogy shared at Cura Personalis acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual school and city. One program could not replicate exactly what another program is doing, but we can learn from each other and adapt. Cura Personalis is an opportunity for colleges who do have a CLC program to come together for common formation and to share and vision together how their programs have grown and where there is still room for growth. It is also an opportunity to invite schools that do not have programs to come and hear from the students and staff themselves of CLC schools so that they too can begin to envision the ways in which CLC might be helpful in their college community. In our gathering together, we are able to experience more fully God’s graces for us as a CLC community.

Some schools choose to use their residence hall ministries, some their justice or retreat ministries, and others their first year student outreaches as ways of inviting students into CLC. Each school has its own strengths and weaknesses, and each school has a unique structure and organization with university ministries. The idea is to offer participants real experience of CLC and its charism, and invite them to discern if and how CLC could be helpful on their campus. Then, as much as possible, we try to support one another in that endeavor through the sharing of resources and ideas, and ongoing networking after the conclusion of the conference. This experience is a beginning and an opportunity for us to reach out to others who may be searching for the very things that we have already found. When we find ourselves ignited by the power of this movement, we cannot help but tell others about it.

As it says in Matthew 5:15 “… nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.” As Young Adult CLC in the United States, we have found this light, this gem in university ministry on Jesuit campuses. We want to place it on a lamp stand for all to see it. But, even in our national conferences and meetings, this means of sharing continues to be through conversation. We hold fast to the knowledge that the very essence of who we are in university CLC is based in this sense of Cura Personalis. If we forget those personal conversations with someone who might find life in CLC, or forget to value the student leaders and Campus Ministers for exactly who and where they are, then we have lost sight of who we are authentically as CLC.

Please pray for our Cura Personalis program. For more information, please visit the Western Region website www.clcusawest.org or email Jen Horan at jhoran@clcusawest.org. Let us know how we can help YOU share CLC with young adults in your area!
Saint Louis University Student Comments

Robert (Cos) Costello, S.J.

There is truly a silent spring afoot on university campuses, a deep interest in finding greater meaning in life, in quieting down and finding peace. As we know, books are written on this spiritual movement, pointing out a generation that is seeking … What?

I had the pleasure of an hour with four young people who have been in CLC for varying lengths of time. One is a Jesuit scholastic, one is about to graduate and continue her education in mathematics, the other two are freshmen. Except for the scholastic, they are, or will be, CLC coordinators, responsible for keeping the twenty or so groups functioning. That means extra meetings and encouraging the small group leaders. Each is full of life and brimming with goodness. They spared an hour of their limited time before going off to a class function to come for a quick supper and discussion. Listen to snippets of the conversations; they offer hope.

Q. What has been your experience of CLC at Saint Louis University (SLU)?

The meetings enable me to meet people with a serious interest in their faith, scripture, even in my faith. Knowing them is an outlet for conversations that I enjoy and that keep God’s presence in my life. I am with the same group and don’t have to start our sharing over. That leads to solidarity and a sense of belonging to a group of good friends living faith life together.

I really did not know how to share and found silence difficult at first. Now we can just be together and I think we grow as a group. We listen.

My group is made up of students from very different backgrounds and interests. We have nursing students, business majors, and science students - so the discussions are more powerful for that. There is a flavor to them because of the differences.

I was struck by communal faith. I became a Catholic at fourteen, so much of the experience I am having in the faith is brand new. Others in the group seem to enjoy the way I react to things that they have known all their lives. The experience of others in the group who were Catholics from birth helps me to be aware of my new faith.

Q. Do you think your group talks about prayer or actually prays during meetings?

I am an upperclassman and there is an intimacy with God that appears. We can reflect on experiences that are clearly gifts. And when there is silence, first it was feared; now we enjoy being with one another and silent. We just let it happen because it is an opportunity to be with God.

Q. If you wished to say something to CLC members who will read this, what would that be?

I want people, older people who hear a lot about university student life, to know that this is important to us. We don’t mess up everything. We, too, see God in everyday life and are trying to become knowledgeable about that.

When I was younger I went to Mass one Sunday and there was an old lady, maybe in her nineties, next to me. After Mass she hugged me and said she wished her grand-
son would go to Mass. We are proud to embrace the CLC way of life and confident that God is with others.

Now, after being in CLC, I have looked in more places for God. I see God in people who just say hello or who are nice to someone else.

Q. Has CLC at SLU enabled you to realize this is an international organization?

I met some students from CLC at Loyola Chicago, so I know a little bit about this.

I experienced that broader reality when I attended *Cura Personalis* in New Orleans.

Knowing we are only a part of the larger CLC seems like a quiet flame that keeps people alive. Not many outside of us know what CLC is about. That’s OK. It is like a silent force that is a community.

After four years here, CLC is something I want for my life.

*An End of the Year CLC Party on the Quadrangle Lawn at SLU*

Steve Fowler (center) was the CLC Promoter at SLU.
These notes are about a group of boys at DeSmet High School in St. Louis. This story begins in 2008 when a half dozen sixteen year olds started coming together weekly to continue a previous retreat experience. Efforts to corral them into organized meetings, much less reflecting on the General Principles, were unsuccessful. Nor did they respond to meeting plans like those from Belen High. Too much structure put them off. In truth they were moving toward a pre-CLC status, though they said “we are CLC.” Month after month, however, they showed up with various prayer formats they designed until finally they embraced Mark Link’s book *Challenge 2000*. The boys wanted to share their lives and be supportive of others at school and beyond. The three hallmarks of CLC were there.

How did this group start? They completed a *Kairos* experience in 2008. I understand this retreat experience began years ago in the Chicago area, influenced by the Cursillo movement. The principles of Ignatian Spirituality are recognizable in *Kairos*’ structure. For example, we find emphasis on recognizing God’s loving presence all over their lives, of Christ’s forgiveness of their faults, hearing the call of Christ to work for his poor and to serve him with generosity.

We announced back in 2008 that interested students should come for a brief meeting on CLC as a way to continue the faith development begun in previous *Kairos* retreats. A few showed up and the fun began. Working with boys at this age demands a high tolerance for ambiguity! Their attendance and participation fluctuated quite a bit at first, but that is not the whole story. Six emerged as a core group that for two years shared their struggles and hopes with anyone there. They sought out new members and were partially successful as the number swelled to ten. That did not last. The core was faithful in prayer, shared details of their lives in family, friends and school. They talked about making a choice of a university, dating, break-ups, relationships of all kinds. They fashioned their own meeting plans, chose a leader for the next meeting, brought donuts and orange juice. They were growing together and finding an identity.

The core group began to prepare for graduation, although they did not mention it often. It seemed to be in the air. Just months before graduation they decided “CLC” was going to lead the year’s last retreat, “our *Kairos,*” and so they went to Dr. Michael Callahan, director of the retreats, for approval. This request amounts to a great deal of extra time and work on top of their already heavy investment in student activities and need to study. This was their last contribution to their school. They got the approval and began. They had to work together to create a thirty page handout, a booklet full of poetry, wild music lyrics, quotes they liked, pop art and descriptions of videos and Power-Point they showed. The booklet contained all the sound and imagery of a teenager’s life.

The retreat, the sixty-fourth given at DeSmet, was an exhausting experience for all and followed the detailed guidelines shaped over years. A faculty member kicked off the presentations sharing his life’s history, followed by suggestions to better know self, to be aware of God as a personal friend, the call to leadership and obstacles to growth. All the presentations to the group of students in retreat were followed by the leaders taking five or six to private discussion and sharing.

Why did this group of boys who identified themselves as “CLC” while avoiding learning much about it, succeed? The core group obviously held it together because they needed a spirituality that was not individualistic. They needed human relationships where they could explore relation with God without being ridiculed. They seemed to thirst for talking about God in their lives, likely because at their age they find God more readily in others, not in private prayer which is so difficult in their frantic world of noise.
and connections. These students are constantly bombarded with text messages, music, games, decisions, competition, girls and the toxic aspects of the Internet. They discover God in other’s gifts and struggles. They sought a relationship with God that is personal, that moreover is communal. In the wonderful lively check-in portion of the “CLC” meetings they heard where God was in other’s experiences of the past and realized, at least for the present, they wanted this when they became college freshmen.

A Retreat at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, November 2009

Over 70 students from Rockhurst University attended a CLC Retreat in November of 2009. Fr. Bob Costello, S.J. and Bill Kriege, a layman and CLC Promoter at Rockhurst, gave the presentations. The retreat included a drum circle blessing, writing letters to individuals in the group describing how they had been graces to each other, and a Mexican meal supplied by an alum of Rockhurst who owns a Mexican restaurant.
CLC: My Way of Life

Norma Hernandez,

Loyola University New Orleans, Class of 2010

In less than a month, I will be walking across stage receiving my Bachelor of Criminal Justice with a minor in Forensic Science. My post-graduate plans are set. I will be attending graduate school in the fall for my master’s degree, and things keep getting better. God has set up a plan for me. He has guided me to where I am. It is up to me now to follow through with His plan. Thanks in a large part to my involvement with CLC at Loyola New Orleans, that’s what I believe now; three years ago, though, I wouldn’t have been so trusting. Then again, three years ago, I wouldn’t have thought that CLC could mean so much to how I live my daily life.

Sophomore year of college was looking up for me. It was a year in which there was opportunity for improvement. Freshmen year had been a hard transition as I realized that my major really wasn’t for me. As a commuter student, I was only involved with one retreat group on campus, and spent most of my time between school, work, and home. My goal for sophomore year was to be more involved in the campus community and to find a place where I could share my talents and gifts. The chance came when a friend invited me to join CLC. Not really knowing why, I signed up without hesitation.

Even though I had been involved in a retreat on campus, it was pretty out-of-character for me to join CLC. It is important to understand my background when it comes to religion, faith and Christianity. I came out of high school not invested or interested in knowing God, much less building a relationship with Him. I had always thought that religious groups and faith-sharing groups were close-minded people only looking to condemn me, and had no interest in believing or caring about the God they talked about. To be fair, my opinion was based on stereotypes I had heard from others or seen on television, and I realize now that I was also being close-minded. In any case, my opinion had started to change during my freshmen year when I went on my very first retreat and realized God wasn’t as scary as I grew up believing, but rather a friend and companion I could count on. I acknowledged that, but still wasn’t ready to start building a relationship with Him. Sophomore year was when it all changed.

Now, let’s go back to sophomore year. The chaplain in charge of CLC contacted me a week after signing up to inform me that my group would meet Tuesdays at 5:00 P.M., and that she would be my facilitator. After responding that the time worked out for me and I would be there, my doubts started to settle in. My mind began to wander with questions and insecurities: What did I get myself into? I’m not comfortable talking about faith. How could I contribute in a discussion about faith when I had just been re-introduced to God? My mind continued to wander in doubt and in uncertainty. Despite my doubts, I went to the meeting on Tuesday evening. It was the best decision I ever made. The first year was eye-opening for me. The Ignatian Spirituality and methods of prayer we used helped me see that I didn’t have to be a theologian to feel God’s presence, and it became easy to incorporate God into my life. Using the tools of CLC, I gradually eased into a relationship with God as I began to recognize God in slow and subtle ways. He didn’t push, but was patient and allowed me to set the pace. He waited so long for me; He was willing to wait as long as possible just so I could be back in His arms of support, love, and comfort.

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Norma Hernandez is a graduating senior from Loyola University New Orleans, majoring in Criminal Justice. She has been active in CLC for the past three years along with many other campus ministry activities. She plans on pursuing a Master of Arts in Criminal Justice with a specialization in Victimology at Seattle University.
My facilitator was great at challenging us and allowing us to explore where we were and where life was leading us. She was patient and loving and supportive of our struggles and joys throughout life. She motivated us both to identify and relish times of consolation, and to recognize the times of desolation in our lives so as to move forward from them. My facilitator’s motivation to support and care for us led me to the decision to apply to be a facilitator the following year. I appreciated St. Ignatius’ teachings on God, Christ, and life. His spirituality had helped me build my relationship with God. Because I was grateful for the grace of a loving relationship with God, I wanted to give back to the CLC community by being a facilitator. My facilitator was giving so much of herself to allow us to enter into our own faith journey; she set an example of how I could give back what God had so graciously bestowed upon me. Just as my facilitator had done for me, I wanted to be patient and offer support to my group members and provide opportunities for them to discover their journey in life, giving them tools to be discerning individuals. I’ve spent the last two years as a facilitator, and have been blessed to have group members who are open and honest about their journeys, struggles and beliefs. God has been present in these groups and each member has been a wonderful example of how God moves in people’s daily lives. The members of my CLC have motivated me to continue to facilitate and continue to foster a spiritual life centered on deepening my relationship with God and others. I am amazed and inspired by how my members live their lives, constantly discerning where and who they are and what their personal vocation might be. Currently, I’ve received the added blessing of being able to watch one of my members go through the process of discerning to be a facilitator.

Is CLC a way of life? It is for me. In sophomore and junior year, it was how I decided to continue with CLC and be a facilitator. Now, as a graduating senior, CLC has helped me decide to continue with post-grad opportunities, and trust where my life is going and the ways I am being led. Decisions are made by discerning where the Spirit is leading me as I reflect on my day and events in my past. As I do this, I see and feel God a little more clearly each day. Because of CLC, I now have the tools to guide me whenever I’m in desolation and the grace to appreciate the moments of consolation, and I try to respond to these movements the best I can. I try to make everything I do now for the glory of God and I plan to continue trying for the rest of my life. With CLC, wherever the future leads me, I know I have God by my side, a community that supports me, and a faith that allows me to be open to whatever may come.

Metro NY KCLC Young Adults Retreat News:

The Metro NY Korean CLC has been providing the retreat programs for young adults since 2000 as one of our mission activities in sharing Ignatian Spirituality with young adults. We are very proud to say last summer we held our eighth annual young adults Ignatian silent retreat at St. Mary’s Abbey, Morristown, NJ, from August 13-16 2009. Twenty-seven young adult retreatants participated, and they represented a diverse geography including New York, New Jersey, Georgia, Maryland, and Illinois. Unfortunately, several registrants were put on a waiting list due to limited availability of rooms at the retreat house.

There are several retreatants who have been coming every year, and it’s been very gratifying to see the interest grow stronger each year. Last year’s service team consisted of four Korean CLCers and Fr. Xavier Hwang, S.J., a Jesuit priest from Korea who is currently studying at Berkeley University. Last year’s theme was “Faith, Hope and Love”, and it provided the retreatants with opportunities to find and to meet God through the Spiritual Exercises using the scriptures. Except for the daily individual direction sessions, the retreatants spent time in solitude and in silence as each participant prayed over the scriptures each day. During daily Mass, the retreatants had opportunities to give thanks and celebrate the fruits and graces of each day as a community.

The Metro NY KCLC is once again encouraging all young adults in our community to participate in this year’s silent retreat which will take place at St. Paul’s Abbey, Newton, NJ.
“...unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 18:3-4).

In the beginning were desires…

… desire to take care of children while their parents attend workshops
… desire to integrate children into national and regional CLC assemblies
… desire to encourage children to live lives to the fullest while playing, reflecting, doing arts and crafts
… desire to simplify Ignatian Spirituality to child level
… desire to help children taste the sweetness of prayers and encounter God in simple ways
… desire to foster the Catholic faith in children’s everyday life
… desire to introduce children to the CLC way of life early on…

Out of those desires, a children’s program focusing on Ignatian themes was first developed for the 2008 Dong Hành National Assembly in Southern California. The themes included: God’s creation, I am special in God’s eyes, The Call of the King, and Bear Fruit. During Christmas week of 2008, the couple, Duc Le and Thy Nguyen from Boston, MA with the help of other Dong Hành members put together a simple children’s program which consisted of games, songs with movements, arts and crafts, and reflection activities. The program was well received by the children and their parents.

After the Dong Hành National Assembly, President Liem Le expressed the desire for having a children’s program at the 2009 CLC USA National Assembly. Around May 2009 Mong Hang Nguyen (Houston, TX), Kim Anh Vu (Phoenix, AZ) and I (Sophie Nguyen) had several telephone conversations to work on the daily themes for the children’s program. With joyful hearts, we agreed to expand the structure of the existing program to cover the four weeks of the Spiritual Exercises.

We were convinced that children were capable of doing the Spiritual Exercises while having fun at the same time. We named the four sessions according to the four weeks of the Exercises: 1) God creates the world out of love, 2) God creates me and He loves me the way I am, 3) God chooses me and calls me to follow Him, 4) I labor with God and bear fruits.

We gave the program the title “Called to be God’s Beloved Children” to parallel the central theme of the CLC-USA National Assembly “Called to Be a Prophetic Community.”

With great enthusiasm, Christine Chau Hoan Tran and Thy Nguyen (both from Boston, MA) and I worked out the daily details for two months. We filled out the four sessions with ice breaking and team bonding games, a hiking trip, reflecting activities, arts and crafts projects, a movie, and a skit called “St. Alice” for the “CLC USA by Night” entertainment program.

Prior to the National Assembly, we contacted the children’s parents to conduct ‘teleconference-training-sessions’ so that parents could journey with their children and help out at the same time.

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On July 10, 2009, about sixteen children aged 6 through 13 arrived at the CLC-USA National Assembly, not knowing that they were to embark on an Ignatian Spiritual Exercise trip. During the hiking trip around Trinity University, the children formed groups of five and were asked to play the roles of God the Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, an angel and a human being. The Triune God, the angel and the human discussed what to create, why to create it, and where to let it live. Together the divine-human team co-created the world. The children were also given plastic bags to collect what they had created. Using the collected materials (sand, rocks, leaves, grass, flowers, etc.), the children made “creation posters”, shared their experience of discovering God’s creation, and offered the fruit of their labor (the posters) during Mass.

With colorful clay in their hands, the children were asked to go back to that very moment when God created them. They were reflecting on the thoughts, the dreams, the feelings that God had for them while He was forming them. Like the potter whose efforts were to make master pieces of art, the children were asked to use the clay to build themselves, expressing the dreams that God had for them.

One of the highlights of the “CLC USA by Night” entertainment program was the beautiful and lively performance of the children. On stage, they relived the life of St. Alice. The children’s enthusiasm and joyful play surprised the audience.

The daily sending and blessing of the children to their program prior to the daily workshops and the reunion of children and parents at Mass gave a promising picture of a community built on hope, love, and integration.

Reflecting on my journey with the children’s program, the joys and the friendships that I have experienced as a result of this journey, fill me with gratitude. I know that I am ‘called to be prophetic’ especially ‘called to be God’s beloved child.’

Sophie Nguyen (in center between Joanne Do and Rev. Tri Dinh, S.J.) has been a member of Dong Hành, CLC since 2004. She is currently serving as Vice President and a member of the Formation Team of Dong Hành, CLC, Southwest Region. Sophie is in the process of completing the last year of a 3-year Ignatian Spiritual Formation Program at Loyola Institute for Spirituality in Orange, CA. She lives with her husband and daughter in Huntington Beach, CA.
Responding to the Call:

Journeying with Father Tri Dinh, S.J.

Quyen (Nhi) Ngo

“Oh taanks,” says Father Tri – a common way that he signs his email responses. Beneath this spirit of humble, joyful simplicity lies a life of service that can be described as anything but “common.” You’ll find someone who is deeply rooted in his vocation – having just celebrated 10 years as a Jesuit priest – and is continually convicted of His love for God, and God’s unconditional love for him. Meeting Father Tri may seem like meeting anyone else at first though – he is fun-loving, likes to poke fun, and just finds joy everywhere. There is no sense of intimidation or being “too holy” as society may view religious figures today. Father Tri seems to “get” people right away – in his ability to connect and build relationships, he is able to bring larger ideas of faith and religion to a much more personal level.

It is from this foundation that his gifts truly shine light to others, as they journey to discover their own sense of light and calling in life. Elena Mireles, a young adult who, as a student, formerly worked with Father Tri in campus ministry at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, describes her service with him as a time filled with life and grace:

“Fr. Tri’s first assignment after his ordination in the summer of 2000 was Loyola Marymount University where he worked in Campus Ministry as director of the CLC program. Upon his arrival, only ten groups existed. Within three years, his Cura Personalis — care of the whole person — approach to formation and ministry quickly expanded the program to fifty groups. This dynamic growth sparked the attention of other universities and young adult communities and in turn spurred the initiation of the Cura Personalis Conference in 2004. In its initial phases, the conference helped empower several Jesuit universities to begin their own CLC programs that continue today. This accomplishment serves to be a noteworthy grace in the history of CLC and the implications it has held for continued attention to young adult formation. Fr. Tri formally left LMU in 2007. However, he continually affirms the significant ways in which his ministry there has been formational for him in his early years of priesthood and beyond.”

Within the Vietnamese Catholic community, Father Tri served as the Vice-Ecclesial Assistant within Dong Hành, a part of the international Christian Life Community organization. Dong Hành’s ministry is to help each person discover and live out his or her personal vocation. Father Tri embodies this vision in every aspect of his life and service. While this community serves all age ranges, his gifts have been particularly life-giving to young adults. Through retreats, talks, gatherings, social outings, informal conversations, and more, he is able to meet them at their level. Furthermore, as a Vietnamese-born yet much Americanized priest, he effectively grasps the cultural struggles they (and also their parents) face living in the United States – the so-called “generation gap.” Yet, he remains deeply rooted in the Vietnamese culture and shows a deep respect for his heritage – which in turn draws others to do the same.

Father Tri also understands the intricate complexities that young adults face in today’s society – the influences that pull at, around, and within them – and through the

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lens of faith, is able to sort through and bring clarity to otherwise confusing situations. Being a young adult myself, God through Father Tri has helped me tremendously as I continue to seek and live out my own personal calling. I have known him since I was about 10, but did not truly get to know him until recent years through retreats, young adult ministry projects and general gatherings. These recent years I have been asking the big questions: “What’s my purpose in life? What does God have planned for me?” His simple yet very significant statements continue to remain in me during my journey. For instance, as I was teetering at exploring different paths in life, he asked, “Do you know what comes after deep fear?” His response – “Deep peace.” That was all I needed to hear to know what I needed to do next. He knows that deep down, there is much confusion, fear, doubt, frustration, concern, yet always encourages and challenges others to live to their full potential – never with pressure, condescension or guilt. Rather, he is always concerned about how he can help others to grow.

Father Tri has often stated that when we take a step further in discovering and living out our personal vocations, we encourage and help others to do the same. His next position will involve young adults throughout the Western and Northwest regions of the U.S., as Regional Ecclesial Assistant for CLC. This next step will continue to deepen his journey and affect even more people along the way. Many, if not all who have had the opportunity to walk with him can probably attest to how God, through Father Tri, has profoundly influenced their lives. Through mediums such as his blog, “Glimpses of Grace” (www.tdinhjsj.com), we are also able to experience and share in his journey – to connect with him as well. As we glimpse into the person who is Father Tri Dinh, S.J., we find God working throughout every aspect of his life, because of his openness in responding to God’s call. May we be inspired to do the same in our own lives and, journeying together, more fully experience God’s dream for each of us.

Quyen Ngo grew up in Southern California in a family of Vietnamese immigrants, and has been a member of Dong Hành-CLC since 2004. She is currently a member of the Banh Mi (Vietnamese for “bread”) CLC, Dong Hành-CLC’s Youth and Young Adult National and Regional Ministry teams, and serves as a youth leader of the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Society (Thieu Nhi Thanh The) in her parish community. She graduated from UCLA and currently is a marketing professional in Los Angeles. Her interests include traveling, design, photography, writing, and outdoor adventure.

The CLC-USA Community offers it blessings and prayers to the family of Kitty Gray, our former CLC-USA Treasurer and currently our Assistant Treasurer, on the deaths of both of her parents within a few months of each other. Her father, John, died in March and her mother, Theresa, in June. In Kitty’s words, “Dad was still a practicing attorney and City Attorney for the City of Woodson Terrace until the end, and Mom the consummate performer and competitive card player beat me in Spades the night before she took her final downward turn.”

May God’s consoling presence be with this large, loving Irish Catholic family during this time of loss.
Memories of Father Nick Rieman, S.J.

“CLC is the love of my life.” This comment was heard many times, in many places and with great gusto by Father Nick Rieman, S.J. Those who heard him express this comment knew that he meant it and was very serious about Christian Life Community.

Following are the memories of Father Nick by members of the Companions CLC in Detroit. He founded this community in the early 1980’s and was its guide until he died in 1991.

Memories of Father Nick by Alice and Russ Cullen

One of the first things we remember about Fr. Nick was that “he was a plain, simple, humble and very pious man.” We recall a plane trip with Fr. Nick and all he took was a briefcase for his clothes as well as his papers. That is simplicity. He definitely reinforced the spirituality that Christian Life Community offers. We were members of Sodality for many years with good formation. It was not difficult for us to continue as Christian Life Community.

We remember Father Nick introducing CLC at St. Mary’s parish in Detroit. In those early days of beginning this CLC, Father Nick brought in others to meet with us to share their experiences. Maria and Frank Grimminger from CLC in Shelby Township came to many of our meetings.

There is one more memory we have of Father Nick. We attended an early Mass on Christmas Eve morning in 1991 which was celebrated by Fr. Nick. His homily centered on, “The Lord appearing in the world as a plain and simple man, and how human ways are not God’s ways.” But what most impressed us afterwards, was that for a recessional hymn, Fr. Nick chose “Soon and very soon, I’m going to see the Lord…” That was the night that Fr. Nick died. We will never forget that homily and the hymn. What a wonderful priest he was! We know he is always with us.

Memories of Father Nick by Jim Dunbeck

I met Fr. Nick Rieman in 1987 when the Jesuits came to St. Mary’s of Redford Parish. Fr. Nick invited parishioners to attend a meeting planned to inform them of a program they wished to start at St. Mary’s for enhanced personal spiritual development. The program was Christian Life Community.

At that time I was actively seeking methods of growing in my spirituality and wanted to hear what their program offered. There were many others seeking to enhance their spirituality. The informational meetings were well attended with Father Nick as Spiritual Guide and leader. That is how our current Companions CLC began.

Fr. Nick brought to each meeting his spiritual knowledge, attitude and leadership. We were given sheets each week for use at the next week’s meeting. Each had a Bible reading, a quote from the Spiritual Exercises and a list of discussion questions. They usually filled each meeting with lively and thoughtful discussion. I found them to be mind and spirit expanding. Nick had the ability to inspire one to spirituality.
In those early sessions introducing us to the *Spiritual Exercises* and Christian Life Community, I recall Fr. Nick emphasizing the “Daily Examen of Consciousness.” It’s still an integral part of my daily prayer life.

As time went on it was very natural that Nick became not only a guide and mentor but also a friend. When I was recuperating from a triple bypass heart operation in 1989, he stopped by my house to visit. During the course of our conversation, I learned that he liked the author Rex Stout and his Nero Wolfe stories.

I remember visiting him one time. His room was very starkly furnished, but there was one artifact in the room: on a nightstand there was a bowl filled halfway with water and containing only a few polished, decorative pebbles — reminiscent of Japanese Tokonoma. It was a very calming, peaceful display.

**Memories of Father Nick by Joe Maurer**

One of his guiding principles was to think globally and to act locally. Another principle was to be very organized. He had files on many of the activities in which he was involved. He had file folders organized so that anyone could easily know what he had done. CLC was his main interest in life.

He was very emotionally supportive of me when I was going through difficult times. He included me in some of his travels with CLC to Cleveland, Ohio and even to Scranton, PA where he was a team member for a CLC Coordinator’s course. He was a good mentor and spiritual director.

**Memories of Father Nick; A Truly Holy Man by Dorothy and Paul Sullivan**

When the Jesuits came to St. Mary of Redford in Detroit, Father Nick put a notice in the parish paper regarding a program aimed at developing a deeper relationship with Christ. We were looking for something of this nature and we signed up. He was humble and he liked people. He seemed quiet, but he liked to see people having a good time. Several times he came out to our place at the lake with our group and seemed to look forward to it each year.

A particular story about him comes to mind. The Jesuits were staying in a house on St. Mary’s Street in the city of Detroit. Apparently neighbors had their yard all decorated for a wedding. Unfortunately their minister was a no show. One of the party knew about the priests staying nearby, came to the house and found Nick home. After explaining the situation the person asked Father to come and be the minister. Nick, being the type of person he was said something like, “Give me five minutes to change.” He officiated and we are not sure if he stayed for the party or not.

He travelled quite a bit, but he travelled very lightly with barely a change of clothes. He believed that if you received or bought a new item of clothing you gave the old piece away.

Although he was only with us for a short time he was truly an inspiration. He gave us a good foundation in Ignatian Spirituality, and we are sure he was looking down on us with a smile when we made the *Spiritual Exercises*. He continues to smile on us when we gather for our CLC meetings. He is a person we will not forget. We often remember him on his birthday, the feast of St. Nicholas, December 6.

**Memories of Father Nick by Marie Schimelfening**

I met Father Nick at a meeting of the Detroit Sodality Federation in the early 1960’s. He was the first Jesuit I ever met. In 1971 he was assigned to Rome as the World CLC Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant. While visiting him in Rome I remember how eager he was to take a group of us to the Roman College where the first Sodality was formed. He enjoyed the seven years he was there and gave so much to our World Movement. I had the privilege of being guided by him in a ten day directed retreat at an International CLC Formation Program at a retreat house outside of Rome in 1978.

In 1982 we had our first Guides Course in the United States in St. Louis. Shortly after that course a National Formation Team was formed and Nick was a part of our team. His simplicity is what always struck us. When we began he placed his brief case on his lap and took out a folder and his slippers. He was ready to work.

Nick really enjoyed the outdoors. Several times we met where we could go walking in an area where a stream would be near by. Nick would walk on the rocks and before we knew it he would be moving the rocks around to change the way the stream flowed. For me there was something majestic about what and how he did it.

While in St. Louis at our CLC Center where I served as Executive Director, I remember Nick coming in for many of our formation meetings. He would make sure that in between some of our meetings, he would ask me to have a visit with him. So we would go into one of the sitting rooms in our house and he would say to me, “Marie, how are you and how is it going?” I will never forget how important and comforting those words were to me.
Father William Kidwell’s Legacy

A Retrospective of his Faithful Contributions
(August 11, 1924 – January 13, 2008)

Margarita Theye

January 13, 2010 was the Second Anniversary of the passing of Fr. William Kidwell, S.J.

This is my personal petition to each one of you who has had the blessing of knowing Fr. Kidwell. I ask for your participation in a project that I would like to begin that would encompass all that our late Fr. Kidwell has shared with us. I thank you in advance for your participation. I’ve been inspired lately to compile information on Fr. Kidwell that would include anecdotes/stories of everyone’s experiences with him. What has inspired you as a witness and as a beneficiary of his presence in your life? Here are some suggestions that might help refresh your memories of our dearest Father Kidwell:

- Which of his accomplishments, vocation, and/or missions have inspired your life?
- What has his mission in Pro-Life has meant to you and others?
- What have you taken from his actions as an example in your own life?
- What did he once say to you at a time of crisis or joy that has resonated with you throughout the years?
- What were the ever faithful, driven, or particular aspects of his personality that you liked best? What were the clever statements or sayings that you remember most?
- State his accomplishments and how his humble, yet powerful actions, started or made better any organization.
- How has his presence in your life helped you along the right path in your personal Catholic Faith?
- What friendships have you made through his groups and/or acquaintance with others?
- How has he paved the way for the youth in Miami to participate in Pro-Life ministries and pilgrimages such as the “March for Life” or “Life Chain” as well as other service groups in our community to assist the handicapped or less fortunate?
- What were his contributions to the Miami Youth, Young Adult & Adult Christian Life Community (CLC)?
- How has his work as Chaplain in the hospitals made an impact on the sick as well as the hospital staff? Did Father officiate at any of your Sacraments; Wedding, Baptisms, etc?
- How has the struggle with his health throughout so many years shown an example of his character, prevailing spirit and faith?
What do you remember of the Holy Mass on the celebration of his 50th Jubilee as a priest? Can you assist me in assembling a timeline of his years in Miami and or his previous work elsewhere?

The above mentioned are only suggestions. You are not restricted to these alone. Include anything you would like to write about Fr. Kidwell’s effect on your life, personal or in general along with any photos you might want to include. This will be a wonderful collection of the life works of an amazing Jesuit, who has left us a great legacy on which to reflect. If you would like to participate, please send me your entries via this email: fr.kidwells-legacy@hotmail.com along with your full name, the date, mailing address and telephone number to make each entry traceable and legitimate. If you prefer to send your entries via postal mail, please write legibly. You can request my mailing address by replying to this email address. Remember to feel free to include any particular photos via email or postal mail; they will be attached to your personal file. I’ll add it all together for safe keeping. I will NOT share your entries or your contact information with anyone other than perhaps Fr. Kidwell’s sister Kathleen, and/or his family living in Alabama. Perhaps someday your compiled entries may be sent to the Vatican as part of a petition for Beatification. This will be an open project for some time so please feel free to add any additional entries as time passes or as you remember more of what you would like to include. If you have any questions or suggestions you may contact me at 786-399-6903.

Thank you and God bless,

Margarita Theye.

P.S. I have written and spoken to Kathleen Faulkner (Fr. Kidwell’s sister), and she has given her approval and blessing for this project. She is very enthusiastic and grateful to anyone who is able to participate in this endeavor.

Margarita Theye has been in CLC since 1991, first in a high school Youth Group and then on to Prince of Peace Young Adult CLC which was led by Father Kidwell. She has a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a major in painting and sculpture. Her thesis and artwork centered on the Human Rights of the Unborn. In 2003 she was invited by the Archdiocese of Miami to exhibit a one woman show facilitated by Fr. Kidwell at the Pro-Life Convention in Fort Lauderdale. Her exhibit, “Pro-Life through a Visual Perspective,” attracted many visitors including Archbishop Favalora. Margarita has participated in many pro-life activities. She was a trained volunteer counselor for the Emergency Pregnancy Service for the Archdiocese.

Preparing for the March for Life pilgrimage meeting in 2006. Margarita wears the ‘Kidwell’s Kommandos Fighting For Life’ t-shirt created by another student in the year 2000.
The story of my life can best be summed up in a single sentence “The Father is very fond of me”.

This is the expression that conveys the key experience of my life; the experience of God’s unconditional love.

This love has been manifested in the innumerable blessings received over the years. My parents were loving and generous people who showed me the joy that comes from giving. My two brothers (both of them diocesan priests today) are a source of constant strength and encouragement.

The extended family, neighbours and friends have all been ongoing reflections of that love which the Father has lavished upon me.

My vocation to the priesthood and to the Jesuit way of life has been a further source of blessing. It has opened me up to a wider world, helped me encounter the riches of the Ignatian tradition and given direction to my life.

The years of formation and the subsequent years of apostolic service (in education and in CLC) have deepened my experience that God delights in me. I no longer wait anxiously for good things to come my way. I expect these things to happen naturally. After all, if my Father is the King of Kings, then that makes me a Prince, doesn’t it?

The experience of such unrestrained love has instilled in me a deep sense of gratitude leading to a desire to respond with generosity. Like Ignatius at the end of the First Week, I find myself asking “What should I do for Christ?” I have great ideas, grand visions of what can and should be done for the Lord. Unfortunately, these efforts almost always fall short of producing the expected fruits. My personal limitations and weaknesses stare me in the face. Over the years I have grown in awareness of being made in the image and likeness of God. I have also grown in awareness of how my frail and sinful nature can propel me along paths that take me away from my Saviour.

This awareness brings with it the invitation to surrender. There are of course some special moments of surrender such as entering the Society of Jesus in 1986, ordination to the Priesthood in 1997 and Profession of Final Vows in 2006. The process of surrender however is one that has to be lived out at all times. There are several occasions in daily life when I would like to take my life in a certain direction or shape an apostolic work in a particular manner. I seek control of the situation and want it to reach a predetermined outcome. Not all of these impulses arise from selfish motives. My desire is to serve others and to bring greater glory to God. But like the second class of persons, I would like the Lord to come to what I desire rather than me going to where He is. The openness and surrender which is so typical of the third class of persons is not easy to arrive at. Yet, past experience shows that all things are possible when I surrender my life to the power of His amazing grace. The freedom that such surrender brings can only be understood by those who have experienced it.

Jesus describes his own mission as that of empowering us with life in all its fullness. This fullness of life has come to me from the superabundance of gifts freely bestowed from above. My life mission now is to carry forward this mission of Jesus and bring others to their own experiences of fullness. What a joy to receive this fullness of life from the Lord! What a privilege to be an instrument of this life-giving mission!
One important way of carrying out this mission is through spiritual and pastoral ministries. My keen desire is to lead others to deepen their own personal relationship with the Lord. I feel called to communicate the fullness of life by putting people in contact with the Author of Life. A second dimension of this same mission is to foster better relationships within the human family. In the midst of the brokenness and deprivation we see all around, it is meaningless to merely talk about the fullness of life. It is necessary to create opportunities so that all may enjoy this gift that God brings us. The challenge before me is to be an instrument of His life-giving presence by being an agent of reconciliation. In recent years, this mission has expanded to include all of God’s creation. Through creation we can catch some glimpse of the immensity and depth of the Divine Presence. To interact with nature and work for her conservation has now become a passion for me; a passion which I ardently try to pass on to others.

My dear friends in CLC, through the above sharing I have tried to express some of the inner movements and desires that make me the person I am. It is a joy and a grace to walk along with you on your journey as an Apostolic Body, together drawing nourishment from our common Ignatian tradition. I have been touched by the personal example of so many of you — your devotion to Christ, your loyalty to the Church and your commitment to Mission. Thank you for your presence in my life! Thank you for the inspiration and hope you bring to me!

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I am writing to thank publicly Carmen Santamaria for her strong and heartfelt letter to the editor in our most recent issue of Harvest which was dedicated to highlighting events of the National CLC Assembly in Washington, DC in July 2009. She expressed her hurt with the Open Space topic on overpopulation and artificial contraception and called upon CLC leaders to ensure that discussion topics are appropriate and conform to our Church’s teachings. As an attendee of this particular forum, I feel called to speak about what actually took place in that room.

The DC conference was my first experience with a National Assembly. Open Space was a mystery to me. When I scanned the list of discussion offerings, I was horrified to find a topic which questioned the Catholic hierarchy’s opposition to artificial contraception. I decided to attend this discussion with the hope of raising a voice that would remind my brothers and sisters in the CLC community that God’s gift of sexuality is intended to help us understand His love for us. And, that God created us female and male, to complement each other’s gifts, and to more fully comprehend the various facets of God. That the marital union doesn’t end with the couple, because it makes them cooperators with God for giving life to a new human person.

Uncertain that I would find the right words or even be able to speak courageously, I made a phone call to a friend who studies and teaches John Paul’s Theology of the Body and asked for prayer. Then I walked into the meeting with heart pounding.

We were a small group. Two sessions were held on this topic, and the journal notes indicate a total of 15 people attending one or the other of the sessions. I attended the first session. Most of the words on page 41 of the Open Space Journal are the comments of one person. There were at least four of us (men and women) who questioned the assumption that overpopulation is a fact and who stood strongly against the concept that artificial contraception is an answer to the perceived problem. We stated that contraception diminishes human dignity and breaks down families. We rejected one participant’s suggestion that Natural Family Planning is a “monastic charism” and that it adds an unnecessary complication in marriage.

It should also be noted that none of the four of us knew each other previously; we were each from different regions of the U.S.

Before closing, I feel called to further reiterate the position that artificial contraception dehumanizes the gift of sexuality. In fact, artificial contraception is partially responsible for our current toxic moral environment. The holy sexual union has become recreation. Teens believe that sexual activity is part of their rite of passage into adulthood. The marital embrace has become an end in itself. Men are enabled to forget about their role as the Christ-head of the family. And women allow it. By loosing sight of one of our God-given roles, that of nurturer, we allow ourselves to be used as objects. In section 11 of the document, “The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education within the Family,” the Pontifical Council for the Family states: “But when the sense and meaning of gift is lacking in sexuality, a civilization of things and not of persons’ takes over, a civilization in which persons are used in the same way as things are used. In the context of a civilization of use, woman can become an object for man, children a hindrance to parents....”

In her letter to the editor, Carmen Santamaria stated, “Responsible parenting means that the couple discerns what is right for their family, but there is not justification for artificial contraception when God created a method—NFP—which is equally as effective at postponing children if that is what a family discerns.”

She also reminded us that “St. Ignatius lived with obedience throughout his life and we, as a lay group living out the spirituality inspired by his writings, should do the same.” Amen, sister!

For more information on Catholic family teaching, please visit:
http://www.vatican.va/index.htm
http://www.tobinstitute.org

For more information on Natural Family Planning, please visit:
http://ccli.org/nfp/contraception/NFPvsContraception.php
http://www.marquette.edu/nursing/NFP/index.shtml
http://www.physiciansforlife.org/content/view/193/36
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