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Next Issue: The Embrace of the Impoverished and Excluded

Cover: Participants at the Mt. Manresa, N.Y. Guides Course March 31 - April 2, 2011
Formation – a Priority of CLC-USA

For over 50 years, as a Sodalist and CLCer, formation has been a regular component of my spiritual and secular life. In the pre-Vatican II days, there was a need for lay women and men to become adults in their faith in the Catholic Church. Many were already proficient in their professional lives. There was an urgency for them to play “catch-up” in areas of theology and spirituality. Jesuits with a vision encouraged such growth. Lay people were beginning to feel competent, free and called to speak up in matters of Church and world.

The New York Professional Sodality (NYPS) was one place where formation was a high priority. Under the constant challenge of Father Francis K. Drolet, S.J., members of NYPS were encouraged and assisted to grow personally, spiritually and professionally, so as to be prepared to assist in the mission of the Church and the world. We were instructed about the Sodality movement (especially its worldwide identity), the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the importance of personal and communal prayer, the importance of thinking with the mind of the Church and discerning the signs of the times (to mention a few). We prayed over our call (vocation) to Sodality/CLC, and we learned how important our daily examen was to living out this call. Early on, we had experiences of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and understood them to be the specific source of Sodality/CLC Spirituality. What is presently referred to as the Three Pillars of CLC, we called Sodality/CLC’s three Charisms – Spirituality, Community and Service (Apostolate or Mission).

Our initial formation (in N.Y. we called it our Candidate’s Program), generally lasted two years. This preceded our Temporary and Permanent Act of Consecration (now called Temporary and Permanent Commitment). This time of initial formation included much of what was cited in the preceding paragraph. Ongoing formation included the study of church documents, current spiritual and theological texts and attendance at Sodality/CLC conventions and assemblies. For example, in-depth studies were made of the documents of Vatican II.

One facet of Community was experienced as members of like professions joined together to discern how best to be effective, apostolic leaders as teachers, health care professionals or business people. Some of DSSE (Discerning, Sending, Supporting and Evaluating) happened without the DSSE designation. Another aspect of Community dealt with Faith Sharing – learning how to and then experiencing it. A third part included opportunities to interact with each other socially, including family members who were not part of the group.

Our participation in Service was beginning to show in new opportunities as ministers in the parish. Some professionals were initiating changes in the workplace. All were invited to participate in social causes, e.g. the boycott of grapes and lettuce, the peace movement and the welcome of Cubans during the Cuban crisis of the 60’s.

As the Christian Life Community continues to grow and expand its vision as a prophetic apostolic community, so, too, must our formation keep pace with the developments of the twenty-first century. As ‘women and men for others’ in this fast-paced and changing world, we should be eager and excited to be formed anew each day.

Our World CLC documents, The CLC Charism and The Process of Growth in CLC, are invaluable resources that, when used in conjunction with the General Principles and General Norms and programs like JustFaith, can lead to well formed CLCers and authentic CLC groups.

Within This Issue

In the President’s Corner, Liem Le stresses that formation is for all the members not only the leaders in CLC. He also points out the importance of the gift of desire in formation in all its stages. In “Musings” Father Cos writes of the power of prophetic words to inspire people to dream, to hope and to unify with one another. At recent CLC events, Cos experienced the use of symbolic language (tags) to empower others to act. Eileen Burke-Sullivan presents historical information and development of formation in Christian Life Community – USA in “CLC Formation Overview.” She stresses the formation of guides to ensure growth within the CLC way of life, the place of community in formation and the vocation that CLC is. In “Discernment of Vocation,” Eileen describes the contents...
of the upcoming Guides Course for those preparing to lead CLC members and their small groups beyond temporary commitment to the stage of discerning vocation and on to making a permanent commitment. (CLC-USA Guides Course, September 29 - October 2, 2011, Omaha, Nebraska.) Marie Schimelfening, in “Graced History of Formation,” presents a history of formation in this country from Sodality to present day CLC. Included is her role in many of the developments that took place in those 50+ years.

In “Our Way of Life,” Sophie Nguyen tells of the months long communal discernment undertaken to assist her in the decision to serve the CLC-USA as a member of the National Formation Team. Also included is Sophie’s inspirational story, “My Personal Transformation While in the Ignatian Spiritual Formation Program.” Included for your information are two brief articles written about the SEED retreats (Search, Embark, Experience, Develop). This differs from any of the above, because it was developed as a formation and spirituality program for youngsters and their families.

The recent Guides Course at Mt. Manresa in Staten Island is introduced by Jen Horan in “Encountering God: Guides Formation for the Welcoming and Preparations Stages.” Articles pertaining to that course include: Nancy Head’s “Creating Spaces of Welcome” and Gini Grommes’ “What the Guides Training at Mt. Manresa, NY Meant to Me.”

“Formation: Called More Deeply into Relationship with God and CLC” is written by Ellen Delaney. It tells of her unique CLC group, of ongoing formation in the Metro NY CLC Region and of the recent Guides Course in Staten Island. She shares with us her personal call at this time. E. Kristina Kim provides extensive information in “Formation in the Korean CLC.” She also includes summary reports of the ongoing formation efforts and materials in the five Korean CLC regions. Other regional reports included recent events in the Missouri, South Florida, New Orleans and the Rieman Great Lakes Regions.

Ellen Hogarty shares her powerful and enlightening experience in “Faith Sharing Retreat at the Lord’s Ranch.”

This very full issue of Harvest should find all of us thinking about the gift of formation in CLC-USA. If it is not the “priority of priorities,” it would seem to be on the way toward that designation. Each of us is called to be more, and such growth will happen as we respond with an open mind and a generous heart.

In God’s Peace,
Dorothy Zambito

The North Central Region said, “Jack, wait for us.” to their dear friend, community member, and Ecclesial Assistant since 1997, Fr. Jack Zuercher, S.J. on the occasion of his wake and memorial Mass on May 17. (He had donated his body to Creighton University for the education of young doctors-to-be.) Fr. Zuercher died on May 7 after several months of diminishing health and nearly seven weeks in hospice care. In her eulogy, Sr. Suzanne Zuercher, OSB quoted herself from childhood days, often running after her older-by-7-years brother, calling “Jack, wait for me.”

Fr. Z, or simply “Z” as he was most often called, ministered at Creighton since the mid-70s when he first arrived for a term as Jesuit Community Rector. Z soon joined the QM CLC and found the promotion of CLC to be a loved ministry, one that he did full-time after his retirement from Creighton University. He travelled the front and back roads of the seven-state region, assisting start-up and existing communities. In 1991, he received the CLC Development Award at the CLC-USA National Assembly.

His Jesuit brothers have asked for donations to Christian Life Community in his honor.

The next Harvest issue will include tributes to this astoundingly faithful lover and supporter of CLC and its members.

CLC Loses a Dear Friend

Jack Zuercher, S.J., 1924-2011

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The focus of this issue is formation. It is an often spoken and written word whenever we get together. Pick up any CLC document and I am sure that we will find some references to it. Father General Nicolás visited Rome and Cardinal Rylko, Prefect of the Congregation for the Laity, highlighted and stressed formation in CLC. Father General addressed the World Assembly in Fatima three years ago and he said that formation must be “the priority of the priorities.” We gathered in Pittsburgh four years ago to start the process of re-structuring and the assembly unanimously agreed that formation is the priority of priorities. Nevertheless we as a community still struggle mightily with the why, what and how of formation.

I would like to share with you some humble pondering of mine. I had a chance to talk to Father Jim Borbely, our new National EA, and I asked him what the very crux of formation for a CLC community is. “The capacity to discern communally” was his answer. What do you think about this seemingly simple answer? Are you surprised because you had expected a much more complex answer? I think any kind of formation to be truly effective has to impact every member of our community, not just the leadership. The capacity to discern communally involves everybody. I would like to admit at the outset that I am not seasoned in this endeavor, but I have observed a few things that bear some validity.

First, I came to the conclusion that every CLCer knows of the need for formation, but no one really wants to “be taught.” Maybe the motto “everyone is a leader” renders each one of us to seek our own path. Formation for a community like CLC is quite complex because of the reality of diverse spiritual experiences. It is not a classroom in which there is an expected common level knowledge and experience on the subject; that does not exist in a community. In a classroom, an expected destination is set and everyone is trained and tested to get there; that is not the case in our community. If we apply the classroom model to CLC formation, one would wonder about its effectiveness because formation needs to allow people to start right where they are in their own normal and apostolic experiences. The classroom model would not work because it is God who sets the destination for their formation, after all. To be effective, our formation must empower our people where they are and encourage their own initiatives to move forward.

Then there is the issue of the reality of resources. Forming guides has been our focus in the last four years and a lot of effort from the National Formation Team and expenses have been invested. We have close to 2000 members with a very large number of young adults, close to 5000, coming out of colleges with Cura Personalis experiences. You can see the number of guides that are needed to have an impact. We have moved cautiously and rightly so, in gathering people for guides courses. But I wonder if we would think outside of the box a bit on this. How about an analogy? There are some similarities between CLC formation and studying mathematics. First, the spectrum is wide and deep, and the possibilities are infinite. In math, we start with counting from one to ten, then simple arithmetic, then algebra, then calculus, then higher math with equations only a few Einstein-like mathematicians would understand. The very top has very few. What would happen if we want only the few Einstein-like mathematicians to teach math to everyone, from two year olds to people in graduate studies. You can picture the result. We have tried a model in which we gathered only...
the people with most experiences in spirituality and community development – the very few Einstein-like. Maybe we would want to form as many guides as possible at different levels; it is not so much the experience that we seek but rather the desire to grow – spiritually, communally and apostolically – and to help others grow.

Last, formation must be found and desired by each one in our community. This desire would make one seek out others to learn from, to share and collaborate with for whatever would bring about the best of the CLC charism. This desire is not something that one can teach or impose. It is a gift deep in our heart and mind. Our formation must help us discover this wonderful gift of desire at every stage of growth so that formation will eventually become on-going and self-initiated.

The responsibility for formation after all rests with each one of us. It is the individual who wants to see with God’s Eyes, to listen with God’s Ears, to feel with God’s Heart and to speak with God’s Word. Do we have this gift of desire? I am sure that we all agree. It is ironic that we do not want to be taught, but we then wait for others to teach us from their experiences. Do you think that it is time that we take the initiative to realize this gift living in us? Formation fundamentally is a personal responsibility, for everyone, not just an experienced few.

May God liberate us from the reservation, hesitation and the self-doubt to embrace what God is already doing in us and for us.

Have a great and safe summer.

Liem Le
Musings from the Ecclesial Assistant

Robert (Cos) Costello, S.J.

These words cobbled together musings about formation for a prophetic community; Fr. Adolfo Nicolás’ Fatima address provided the stimulus. First, asking what the bible says about prophets’ behavior, he selected four metaphors for CLC. The presentation was concrete and inspiring as he focused on what prophets did. He asked if their deeds could help us understand formation of an apostolic community. Yes, they do. He also asked can CLC “afford” being prophetic? Did he mean risk?

Basically, the prophets’ actions bridged human and supernatural worlds; they were moral dreamers announcing unwanted changes for the powerful, a better life for the majority. They claimed a divine call compelled them (“Thus says the Lord”) to utter biting words condemning repression or to express poetic imaginings of a new life. It seems simple, but some words excited the oppressed to dream. Words became world-shattering for exiled Jews. Today’s Arab Spring also testifies that imagination is dangerous. For example, Isaiah (43:19) used a “dialect” of confident expectation of newness, “I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not see it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” But in Ecclesiastes (1:9-10) there is a lament “…there is nothing new under the sun…” Both prophets criticized rigid structures, using known symbols.

The words of prophets urgently needed a hearing, because their oracles conjured up a longed-for future that did not simply replay the present. Their emotive words critiqued unfair structures by rejecting that God wants the present to endure. Using such inspired language took nerve because of solid resistance to anything new. Numerous oracles remain songs of hope today. Our formation documents, over decades, are important and some of the best material we have. I have, however, a suggestion about their motivational potential.

Fr. General bluntly said formation is CLC’s “priority of priorities.” Why? If CLC claims to share responsibility for the Church’s mission, then formation must measure up to that boast. He commented that prophetic leadership is evolving. At one time in the past, CLC had visionary individuals whose formation was a charismatic personality. That is disappearing as clerics and religious diminish and prophetic inspiration comes from lay writers and organizations, for example, Margaret Silf, Network and JustFaith.

The Spirit’s “gentle murmurings” led Nicolás to remember metaphors describing prophets’ behavior: they see, hear, feel and speak as God. Reducing a spiritual-historical reality to such words was inspiring and provided me with a hint about prophetic energy. Years of formation bring groups to a point where members share, in Dave Fleming’s words, “prayers from the heart.” These spiritual movements are not emotional or intellectual insights; they are wholehearted desires to respond to God “from the heart.” Fleming called them an “inner orientation, the core of our being…” They motivate and unify. (cf. What Is Ignatian Spirituality?)

Often such experiences are articulated in symbolic language I call tags; they are, of course, received, not programmed. When a tag emerges, it empowers hearers with desires to do something, like engaging in a prophetic critique of an injustice that is a cry of God in the heart. For example, a tag brought prophetic energy to the Washington Assembly (Mark 6:30), “The disciples gathered around Jesus, and told him all they had
done and taught.” Or, the 2009 *Cura Personalis* undergraduate workshop put a tag from the Suscipe on blue t-shirts: “to You I return it.” This phrase placed them in the heart of Ignatius’ conversion. These words are from the heart and make present the prophetic actions of seeing, hearing, feeling and acting in the Lord. They can be risky because they may alienate divided people.

Hence, the 1981 *Survey*, our *Formation Schema* and *The Process of Growth in CLC* conceptualize formation while evoking little energy. Symbolic tags, though momentary or situational, unify support for prophetic action and make visible the mystery of their source in the heart! The practical questions remain. How do we form influential prophetic communities? How do we see and hear as Christ, bringing him to relieve burdens of the disadvantaged? Certainly we have developed intelligent conceptual understandings of formation. How?

First, we already have plans of what we are attempting. I submit formation leaders humbly expect to recognize prophetic tags so we risk critiquing unjust structures in a fractious world. Tags move us by gentle murmurings that can’t be self-produced; they accompany the flow of grace calling CLC to hear, see, feel and act with Christ. These gifts come faithfully in our discernments. As with the long history of prophetic imagination in the bible, so we can dare to imagine a tomorrow that looks nothing like today. Isaiah said (40:28-29), “Do you not know or have you not heard? The LORD is the eternal God, creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint nor grow weary, and his knowledge is beyond scrutiny. He gives strength to the fainting; for the weak he makes vigor abound…”

There is a distinct mellowness surrounding tags that does not grouse about formation’s pace or process. Common prophetic imagery has continued over decades in the intentions of World Assemblies since Augsburg. To be the eyes and ears of Christ is not self-appropriated; it is responding to holy desires that at times can be in tags. We recognize in our poverty: I see what You, my Christ, sees. You in me and I in you.
Formation in Christian Life Community is correctly understood to be a long process. Not only does it take time for a person to come to know a local community and come to trust the members; there is a process of personal development in the spiritual, ecclesial, missionary and communitarian dimensions of Christian Life Community. Soon after Vatican II, when the international leadership of the Sodality and of the Jesuits reviewed the transformation to the new vision of CLC, it was evident that serious work would have to go into helping members of the Sodality transition into the Ignatian principles and practices that expressed the charism of the Sodality as it was founded in the 16th Century and was being restored by the Church.

Implementing formation into Ignatian lay community meant that all of the membership would need to be challenged to experience and be touched by the graces that flow from the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius. When generously undertaken, such experience leads to understanding the apostolic/missionary and communal character of the spirituality that flows from the Exercises.

In the United States Catholic Church following the Council there was a thirst for small, intimate community experience to offset the privatized experience of faith often nurtured in large parishes that was much more ordinary in the 50’s and 60’s. Small communities of faith sharing established deep friendships, but made it difficult to accept newer members, or to insist that members undertake the Exercises. A resistance to structures and rules that had seemed burdensome before the Council and the emphasis on “freedom in the Spirit” led many members to look askance at participation in CLC beyond a local group. Many small groups resisted (and sometimes continue to resist) being drawn into a notion of community that was regional, national or worldwide in scope. There have been communities throughout this country and the other national CLC bodies whose members did undertake the Exercises, did learn to discern corporately and have become outward looking in their way of living.

It was toward such groups that the World ExCo turned, nearly thirty-five years ago, to develop a description of a process of formation that enabled generous adults to be formed into in a Christian way of life that is reflective in this era, of the charisms that God originally gave the Church in the Sodality/Marian Congregation tradition. Two documents emerged from the decades of consulting with communities around the world: Charism and The Process of Growth in CLC: Guidelines for Formation (PGGF). The first is a fairly well developed understanding of CLC that emerges from our Lay and Ignatian reality. The second is a practical description of the process of development that Charism describes. One key to formation that became clear and evident early in the consultations was the role of a guide. Early on most guides were Jesuits, familiar with the Exercises and the disciplines of prayer and discernment that emerged from that spiritual practice.
Much like a spiritual director to a person, the guide works with a group to guide the members toward a deeper life in Christ according to the vision and values of CLC. As the availability of Jesuits declined, however, guides have been increasingly drawn from the lay membership of CLC. Such a role presupposes a deep commitment to the Ignatian way of life and to the larger set of relationships that are described in the General Principles of CLC, as well as skills in formation leadership, discernment and guidance of others.

The world community has challenged national communities to make formation of guides a top priority, and some years ago the national leadership of CLC-USA made that commitment by establishing the National Formation Team (NFT) and directing its membership to undertake the formation of guides and community coordinators so that new communities could be established and formed in the CLC way of life from the very beginning.

The formation of guides into the world community’s understanding of the process of formation has been the top priority of the NFT since its inception. Such a task clearly required the multi-cultural approach that our new membership represents. The process of developing workshops based on the STAGES of Formation that both Charism and PGGF describe has been critical. To date workshops have been prepared helping guides understand a model of stages overview (Omaha) and then a deeper formation for guides establishing new groups (welcoming stage) and working with groups in the second stage or the period of “Laying the Foundations for Vocation.” A workshop forming guides for more mature groups, those in the third stage or period of “Discernment for Vocation” is currently planned for late September of 2011, and if all goes well, a workshop on the fourth stage, Discernment for Mission will be prepared for sometime in 2012 or early 2013.

Formation into CLC is addressed to persons, but it takes place in the context of community – both the small local community and the larger national and world experiences of community. Four stages of development, somewhat parallel in grace to the four “weeks” of the Spiritual Exercises are described for persons in community.

- Each STAGE encompasses ASPECTS of growth including growth in one’s relationship to Jesus, one’s life and service in the Church, one’s attraction to the Ignatian model of growth, one’s own personal maturation or psychological development toward freedom, and one’s appreciation for companionship and guidance.

- Along with the various aspects of growth found in each stage there are DIMENSIONS OF THE CLC VOCATION that are stressed in each stage of growth. These dimensions include: the Ignatian formation in prayer and discernment, growth in community commitment both local and world, and the apostolic dimension of the Christian vocation lived and discerned through an Ignatian lens.

- Finally each STAGE encompasses four PHASES of growth in the overarching stage: These phases are experienced as an awakened DESIRE, that leads one to SEARCH, make a DISCOVERY in grace and then be CONFIRMED both in one’s desire and the discovery that grace has led the candidate through.

The process of formation is understood to take a substantial amount of time. Jesuits usually form men for an Ignatian life in the Society of Jesus over ten or more years – often as many as 13 or 15 years. For lay men and women, who can rarely take time just to be formed in this way of life, the process may take a dozen or more years. It is
Discernment of Vocation:
Guide’s Formation in leading the third Stage of Formation into CLC

Dr. Eileen Burke-Sullivan

From September 29 – October 2, 2011, The National Formation Team will provide a weekend of formation for guides who are preparing to lead CLC members and their small communities in the deeper formation stage beyond temporary commitment. The third stage, characterized by The Process of Growth in CLC: Guidelines for Formation (PGGF) as the stage of discernment of vocation, lies between the temporary commitment that comes at the end of the second stage, and a permanent commitment to the CLC way of life and community. This stage is understood to take some significant time – often as much as four or five years. During this stage the CLC member who has made temporary commitment is bringing to bear his formation in discernment toward asking whether Christ is calling him to this way of life permanently.

It is important to note that the person may not be called to remain in a particular small group for the rest of her life, but rather that she will remain faithful to the world community and to the smaller communities that mediate world community wherever she is called to live. CLC is always lived in community, but the member may be called to establish new small communities, to even establish CLC in a completely new place. Nonetheless the formation takes place within community, so the life and growth of the small communities are important.

Guides, therefore, are called to help the members of small communities discern their calls in life, particularly into CLC. The communities are called to live the CLC way of life ever more deeply, and to challenge one another toward the maturity of permanent commitment.

The aspects of intimacy with Jesus Christ characterized by the Second Week of the Exercises, adult faith development in the ecclesial community (including responsible knowledge of Christian doctrine and practice), maturation in prayer and the skills of Ignatian discernment, human adult maturity especially characterized by responsible growth into interior freedom all are aspects of growth of this stage that must be not desirable for a member or a whole community to get “stuck” in a particular stage, however, but that is a very real risk without competent leadership and guidance.

From the beginning CLC members realize that our vocation or way of life is a gift from God, characterized by a call. We do not choose this kind of companionship with Jesus or with other CLC members unless Jesus calls us to live our Christian vocation in this Community. There are numerous other ways to live the Christian life, but this is our way, and it is important for the members and the effectiveness of our mission that we be clear about the journey of formation, investing in the opportunities for growth, inviting others who seem to have the aptitude or interest to join us, and being faithful to the disciplines and demands of growth in the stages of maturity that are marked by the graces of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.
attended to both by the guide of the group of members who are in the discernment of vocation, and by the members themselves.

The phases of deepening appreciation for all the members of the community, consciousness of the need for structures of relationship, leadership responsibilities, mutual trust, and a growing sense of apostolic responsibility with a partiality toward serving the poorest and least among us are characteristics that must be carefully attended to in this stage.

The workshop will invite guides to reflect on their own commitment to CLC and to the Ignatian way of life to which they have been called. It will also provide formation in the processes of DSSE (discern-send-support-evaluate) that is characteristic of CLC, in social analysis skills that enable members and groups to understand the most urgent and necessary apostolic work in their world, renewal of skills in guiding persons and groups in the graces of the Call of Christ (Second Week) and tools that will be useful for communities in this stage of formation.

The Guide training is taking place at the Creighton University Retreat Center in Griswold, IA, about forty miles from Omaha. Committed members of CLC who have taken the guides training of the first and second stages, Jesuits interested in working with more senior CLC groups, guides of more senior groups who want to deepen or renew their own guiding formation are all welcome and encouraged to participate. A limited number of spaces will be available so early registration is strongly encouraged. For information on the workshop please contact either Marie Schimelfening (maschimelfening@aol.com) or Eileen Burke-Sullivan (e_burkesullivan@creighton.edu). Registration is being established in an online format so further information will be posted as soon as that is accomplished.
I would like to share the History of Formation as it was on the National level and my involvement in it. Intermingled is my personal story and my YES to CLC as a Way of Life.

Once upon a time there was a book called the Blue Book written by several Jesuits, but one in particular, Nick Rieman, S.J. It was written in the late 50’s for the Sodality Movement. Early in the history of the movement we covered formation topics at our bi-annual national conventions with major speakers and various workshops. The first one I attended was in 1961. In 1963 there was a whole week of formation held in Cleveland prior to the national convention. While I was involved in Sodality since my high school days (and earlier) that formation week in Cleveland was a turning point for us from Detroit and other parts of the country. It was our introduction to the Blue Book which was a very solid formation of Sodality covering our prayer life (spirituality), our gathering together each week to share on how we were doing (community) and how involved we were in the apostolate, individually or collectively (our mission). We understood commitment and what it meant to be a part of something that was very integrated and began to experience Ignatian Spirituality.

In 1967 at an International Assembly in Rome the name was changed from Sodality to Christian Life Community and along with the name change came our new GENERAL PRINCIPLES. It was important to inform our membership of our new name and our new principles. We soon learned that we had to create a formation program that would help our members to go through a process of CLC formation that was authentic and alive. I began to work full time in the National CLC office in 1971. In the mid 70’s there were six of us who made up a formation team and began to write a program that would introduce folks to CLC and take present members into a deeper identity of CLC. We produced materials which we called “Cycles.” The Cycles consisted of introductory materials describing in depth each General Principle, especially one on Ignatian Spirituality, Community and Service (which we today call Mission). Our Service Cycle came together for us after several of our team participated in the CLC World Assembly in the Philippines in 1976. Upon our return we developed that Cycle, a Leader’s Manual for all Cycles and a Formation Course that we took on the road to the various regions (thirteen at the time) around the country. Those formation materials were used by CLCs for at least six years with already established and new CLCs that were being formed.

Throughout this time, formation continued to be developed on the world level with courses beginning in 1973. What was becoming evident on the world level of CLC was the need for having guides in each community. Thus was developed a Guides Course by the CLC world staff, namely, Jose Gsell (Executive Secretary) and Patrick O’Sullivan, S.J. (Vice-Ecclesial Assistant). The first Guides Course on this continent was held in St. Louis in 1983 at our National CLC Center, with CLC leaders from Canada and the United States. After this course a new National Formation Team was formed. We led about eight to ten Guides Courses. Later a Coordinator’s course was developed. This continued until 1991 when it was decided that, because of finances, the National Community would no longer have a National Formation Team. Formation would have to be developed in the ten regions. While we had dedicated CLCers, we missed having a consistent formation program and process.

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On a September afternoon in 2010, after a long, busy day at work, when I was driving to my daughter’s school to pick her up from the childcare center, the phone rang. It was Kim Anh, our Dong Hanh CLC President. With caring kindness, she informed me about Dong Hanh ExCo’s invitation for me to engage in a discernment process about becoming a member of the National Formation Team (NFT). During that time, two of our Dong Hanh members who had been serving in the NFT since the beginning, asked the Dong Hanh leadership to find replacements for them, for they had taken on new responsibilities. Kim Anh was very patient in answering all my questions. My initial reactions to this news were surprise, joy and a comforting sense of being loved, chosen, trusted and empowered by our leadership.

I brought the request into prayer during the following weeks. I felt drawn to reflect on the gospel passage about Zacchaeus who so desired to see Jesus passing through the town of Jericho that he had to climb up a sycamore tree to see Him because of his short stature. The more I prayed, the more the initial joy and enthusiasm slipped away. Like Zacchaeus, I felt short in many aspects.

One of the aspects was my relative “young” relationships with Dong Hanh and CLC- USA. I had been in Dong Hanh for about seven years and made my temporary commitment less than three years ago. I served at the regional level as secretary and vice president, helped organize regional gatherings and national assemblies and led children’s programs. I knew only a small number of non-Vietnamese speaking CLC members. Thus, I felt the lack of long-term experience and relationships with CLC.

The depth and breadth of my knowledge about Ignatian spirituality represented another inadequacy. I did not feel that I had sufficient knowledge to contribute to the NFT based on the limited training that I had received through Dong Hanh, the Loyola Institute for Spirituality and the Catechist program at our diocese.

Another area in which I felt short was my lack of certain qualities of a leader: patience, listening skills, wisdom, vision, genuine love, selflessness … and the list could go on and on.

Thinking about other current members in the NFT, such as Fr. Costello and Eileen Burke-Sullivan, who were “experts” in their fields, I felt so short and little! They appeared like giants in my prayers with their wealth of knowledge, wisdom, and years of relationships with and in CLC.

With this sense of inadequacy, I did not want to climb down the sycamore tree. Unlike Zacchaeus, I wanted to stay on that safe tree. There was no motivation for me to “slide down” the tree.

As I continued to discern about the the invitation, fear of the unknown, the demands and time commitment overwhelmed me.

However, in gentle ways, as I persisted in praying about this invitation, God revealed to me my attachment to Dong Hanh. I loved to work for and with Dong Hanh members. I considered them to be my family. I enjoyed all the Dong Hanh gatherings, assemblies, training, retreats and meetings – despite the tiring and long hours of

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preparation. The more I looked at my role in the Dong Hanh community, the more I became aware that I was attached to Dong Hanh.

During my discernment process, Joanne Do, one of the Vietnamese NFT members, gracefully spent about two hours with me on the phone, sharing her own experiences, hopes and thoughts about her role in the NFT. Her sharing gave me insights into the dynamics of the NFT and shed some light on the workload of a NFT member.

In order to gather more “live” facts and “first hand” experiences, I volunteered for the NFT annual fall meeting in San Diego in October of 2010. The team welcomed me and involved me in their sharings and discussions. Their genuine love and openness touched my heart. Fr. Costello and Eileen no longer seemed to be those “giants” who intimidated me in my prayer experience. In contrast, Fr. Costello proved to be quite humorous and Eileen very humble and open to new ideas. My fear melted away. I felt at home. I felt excited!

As I continued my discerment journey, God opened my eyes and softly encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone. He invited me to go beyond the Dong Hanh family and to embrace other communities, to love more and to carry on that magis fire. He called me to grow in depth and richness, for my own sake and for His greater service. As I looked more closely into my deepest desire, I discovered that my desire and God’s desire were the same: growth in formation. After months of praying and discernment, I felt free. I felt total freedom to say yes or to walk away from it. Regardless of my answer, I would remain God’s beloved child; I would continue serving Him with all my capacity.

As part of our way of living, I expressed my wishes for the group’s communal discernment. In a small circle that included my group members and my husband, we dedicated a whole afternoon discerning the invitation. All my closest friends who had been journeying with me for years since I first joined the Dong Hanh family, shared about their interior movements. They encouraged me and promised their support. My husband reminded me of the various aspects of this new role and committed himself to assist me in my new endeavor.

Members of the national and regional Dong Hanh ExCo then proceeded with a communal discernment via telecon. Everyone listened to the ups and downs of my discernment process and shared their feelings and praying experiences. Unanimously, they confirmed and encouraged me to say yes to the invitation and promised their support.

As I accepted the “position,” at the end of one of the Dong Hanh regional formation team meetings, the members formed a circle around me. While laying hands on me, they said prayers of blessing and sent me forth with a lighted candle.

The National Formation and ExCo teams formally sent me also. They announced the news in the monthly ExCo teleconference and sent email to different Dong Hanh regional leaders, announcing my accepting the role and asking for prayer and support.

As I went on my first trip to the Guides Course in New York as a NFT member, the community supported me with prayers. The Dong Hanh president sent an email to the community asking members to pray for the Guides Course and for me as their representative. Another Dong Hanh member took my child to school so that I could go to the airport on time.

Whenever I need formation materials or have any formation question, I know that I can count on Dong Hanh members of the ExCo and the national and regional formation teams. We check in with one another and share our fruits and struggles in our missions. The CLC way of life, the Discerning, Sending, Supporting, and Evaluating promote empowerment, trust and unity. It helps an individual listen more deeply to God’s call and provides the necessary support and love for the individual to fully respond to the call.
I will come to you in the silence,
I will lift you from all your fear.
You will hear my voice,
I claim you as my choice,
be still and know I am here.
Do not be afraid, I am with you.
I have called you each by name.
Come and follow me,
I will bring you home;
I love you and you are mine.

...the verses of the song “You Are Mine” closely describe my journey in the “Ignatian Spiritual Formation Program” (ISFP) with Loyola Institute for Spirituality (LIS).

Early in the summer of 2006, I was searching for a religious to give me the 19th Annotation. I shared my desire with the Vietnamese Religious Education Director, a sister of the Lovers of the Holy Cross at my church, and she told me about the three-year program at LIS. “Three years? No way!” I thought to myself that all I was looking for was “just” the 19th Annotation which I had heard would last about 9 months to one year – which already sounded painfully long! Thus, I would not survive a three-year process, and I told myself to forget about LIS!

I then went to two Jesuit priests asking them to be my spiritual director. One could not do it due to his overloaded schedule, and the other offered it to me on a “telephone” basis because he was pursuing his PhD program at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. With God’s guidance and wisdom, I was led to Sr. Josephine Ngoc Thuy at the Lovers of the Holy Cross and started my first 19th Annotation journey with her on Sept. 18, 2006. With gentle love Sr. Josephine guided me through the following 17 months, preparing my weak, broken soul; helping my inner senses to see, hear, smell, touch and taste the presence of God; and planting Ignatian seeds that permanently impacted my life.

I still vividly remember sitting in my very first class called “Biblical Foundation in Spirituality” at LIS on Sept. 16, 2008 and enthusiastically announcing that I was sent by my husband and daughter to be there, and that I was looking forward to the THREE-YEAR program! Every single night when we had class, I did not want to miss it, regardless of whether it was our wedding anniversary day, or any other special occasion. The classes were precious to me. I enjoyed, tasted and treasured every word coming from Sr. Barbra’s mouth. I studied Brother Charlie’s detailed and, at times, unending handouts and reading assignments. I sweated over Tammy Ichinotsubo-Ezzi’s complicated Human Development & Spiritual Maturity material. After a stressful day at work, I rested in the gentle, meaningful opening prayer. At the end of the first year, I desired to do the 19th Annotation again, with the goals of deepening my relationship with God and with an outlook of serving others in their spiritual journeys.

At the beginning of the second year, I was somewhat disappointed at not having a religious as my spiritual director for the 19th Annotation. But throughout the Exercises, God opened my eyes that it was He who was the real Spiritual Director. The fruitfulness of my retreat depended on how much I was open to Him, how seriously I took my daily-one-hour-dating-time with Him, and how many graces He wanted to bestow on me. God used my spiritual director to teach me to be humble, to realize my nothingness and inadequacy, to yearn for deeper heartfelt knowledge and to be spiritually poor. In our monthly meetings, I shared the joys and tears with the larger group about our spiritual experiences. I witnessed the miraculous transformation in other retreatants. I became close friends with classmates and found myself being part of the blessed, chosen people.

The third year included a practicum, role playing in spiritual companioning and readings that made me aware of my deepest desire for continuing formation. I also discovered my call to be a spiritual director, not just any spiritual director, but a Christlike one.

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SEED in the eyes of a 13 years old child (Catherine Trinh)

“If you have faith as a mustard seed...nothing will be impossible for you.” (Matthew 17:20) SEED came about as an effort by children and parents to introduce the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises in the form of a spiritual journey. This three day retreat incorporates God through praise, worship, community time and faith sharing. SEED introduces God through games, activities and prayer – to help us see God in a whole different way. The retreatants experience God through friendship and as a community. During these three days of searching, embarking, experiencing and developing our relationship with God, we are able to live more fully as members of His community. Retreatants, parents and retreat leaders alike, we are all able to S.E.E.D.

...and from one of the SEED retreat masters/current coordinator of the Mustard Seeds (Diana Pham):

The S.E.E.D. retreat was developed from the ground up in response to the needs of the families and children who yearn to deepen their relationship with God. For years, there has been a lack of retreat programs that have catered to children before their years at high school. With this realization, the students from the Vietnamese Catholic support group called Mustard Seeds (Hat Cai) at the University of California Irvine were invited to form this unique retreat experience.

Although the S.E.E.D. retreat is designed to serve the needs of children, it has continuously evolved over the years to be an integral experience for older teenagers as well. Even the parents and adults that have been involved with the retreat have had unexpected encounters with God as they have served in a support role for the children and leaders on the retreat.

The S.E.E.D. retreat has been spread through multiple states and regions in the country over the years to serve the needs of the children and teenagers who want to search, embark, experience and develop their relationship with God.

Search: There are many instances in life in which we actively search for meaning, a purpose given only by God. This search for truth, love and guidance is not limited to any age group nor is it limited to any location or time.

Embark: We make the choice to take that first step with love, faith and trust as we embark on a journey to embrace and encounter God in a whole other way.

Experience: By taking the initial steps and allowing God to lead us on a journey, we surrender ourselves to be showered by God’s graces so that we can experience all God has to offer.

Develop: With the gifts that God has so generously given us, we ask God to help us develop those gifts, experiences and graces so that we can continue to grow and turn them into seeds that we can spread and share amongst our family, friends and community.
Encountering God: 
Guides Formation for the Welcoming and Preparations Stages

Jen Horan

We have hosted two Guides Formations in the past year to encourage development of CLC in the Welcoming Stage. The four-day workshop encourages and supports those wanting to form a new CLC group, welcome new members into an existing CLC or deepen their own experience of CLC. Together, we draw on the new World CLC document “Process of Growth in CLC” and our own lived experience of Ignatian spirituality and CLC. The first two offerings have involved both adults and young adults, coming from Latino, Korean, Vietnamese, Filipino and European-American backgrounds. They have been held in Saint Louis, Missouri and Staten Island, New York.

Feedback from past participants indicated that the experience of small group sharing throughout the weekend was particularly helpful. Workshops included topics such as listening exercises, personal testimonies about experiences of CLC and the integration of deeper sharing and reflection within a CLC group. There was also a comfort in exploring our uncertainty and hesitancies in helping CLC grow and balancing information with experiences. Above all, we have had the opportunity to share with a diverse community of others following Christ through the CLC model.

Two of the overall questions explored through the weekend which might be helpful to all of us involved with CLC to consider are:

1. How have I been personally drawn to CLC?
2. Do I desire to share this grace with others through leadership in my own community or in helping to form a new CLC group?

If you are interested in future offerings of a “Welcoming Stage” guides weekend, or any other type of formation event for your region, cultural group or local area, please feel free to contact any member of the National Formation Team.

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Eileen Burke-Sullivan (Omaha, North Central Region)
Carmen Castagno (Dallas, New Orleans Region)
Creating Spaces of Welcome

Nancy Head, Locust Valley CLC

Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
Compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.  
—St. Teresa of Avila

I heard about the Workshop for Guides at a Metro NY CLC Leadership meeting in the fall and took a flyer back to our CLC. The invitation intrigued me. Was God calling me to attend? After personal and communal discernment, I signed up for the workshop because I want to share the good news about CLC with others. I plan to retire in a few years and expect to move from Long Island to Connecticut to be closer to my daughter, her husband and my grandchildren. I don’t know about any CLC groups existing in their area and I will probably have to start one. At the workshop I did connect with someone who lives in Connecticut and we traded contact information for the future.

A few days before the workshop began, an email arrived asking the participants to reflect on the Annunciation reading from Luke 1:26-38 and two questions. The questions were: “What in your life right now fills you with energy and excitement? What has been a significant experience for you of CLC or Ignatian prayer?” The answer to the first question was my grandchildren, leading a Little Rock Scripture group in my parish with CLCers Dorothy Zambito and George Willett, and co-editing Harvest with Dorothy and George. The significant experience of Ignatian prayer has been doing the Spiritual Exercises and incorporating them into my daily life.

About thirty-five of us gathered at Mt. Manresa Retreat House on Staten Island. I arrived early and helped to meet and greet. Driving from my home, I had been a little apprehensive about the workshop, but once I was there and saw a few familiar faces, I felt more comfortable. CLCers are special people who share the Ignatian charism and I always feel an affinity with them.

After dinner, we all gathered in a large circle to introduce ourselves and share about our answers to the two questions. People had come from Texas, Michigan, Florida and the Eastern seaboard. They varied in age from young graduate students to grandmothers and grandfathers. There were a lot more women than men. All of us were happy to be there and enthusiastic about CLC, Ignatian prayer and learning to become guides. We want to share the vocation that CLC is with others and feel that God is calling us to do more and reach out to others in a welcoming way. The session that really stood out for me was “Creating Spaces of Welcome.”

It started with a prayer text from paragraph 95 from The Process of Growth in CLC: Guidelines for Formation which states, “The objective of this phase is to get to know each other. Participants work on self-knowledge and personal acceptance. They
discover deep within themselves profound desires inspired by the Lord while, to a certain degree, they live out the CLC experience and they receive the basic information about its structures and spirituality. All this will allow them to decide if they wish to start the process to discover if CLC is the path to which the Lord is calling them.” We asked for the grace to experience how God has created a space for us personally to be welcomed and cared for. We imagined and reflected on this community and our personal experience of it. We thought about how we were invited to CLC, the people in our community and how we came to know them. Over time we spread our wings and came to know others in the wider CLC.

The Locust Valley CLC had been together for over thirty years when I first started meeting with them. They were active in CLC in the Metro NY area, nationally and internationally. We all belong to the same parish and knew each other through the various ministries and weekday Mass. They made me feel welcomed and I felt right at home with them. It was like being part of the family and being able to share what was happening in your life with the added bonus of getting to know God better. They prayed, read encyclicals and spiritual books and attended National CLC assemblies and conferences on Ignatian Spirituality. I didn’t know any other people who did these things and I wanted to do them. God found this community for me and it is right in my neighborhood. As far as I know, we are the only CLC in the Diocese of Rockville Centre, which has 1.2 million Catholics.

Before I joined CLC, I had taken some Little Rock Scripture courses on the Gospels and St Paul’s Letters at my parish. The basic format is to read the scripture, the associated commentary and answer a few questions on a daily basis. Once a week, the participants get together and share their answers and experiences of how God is moving them. The courses had been discontinued for many years, but a new pastor asked if Dorothy, George and I would consider leading them. After a communal discernment, we said yes and everyone in our CLC attended. We started with the Infancy Narratives for Advent and had fifteen people attend including our five CLCers. Each week we became closer and more intimate in our sharing. The Holy Spirit helped us to create a space of welcome. For Lent, we did the Passion and Resurrection Narratives with fourteen people. This group may have some future candidates for CLC because a space of welcome and trust has been created.

I started this article with a quote from Saint Teresa of Avila. As I was taking my final walk around the grounds of Mt. Manresa Retreat House, I saw a full size statue of Jesus with his Sacred Heart and arms and hands outstretched in a welcoming pose. His right hand was missing. Every time I think about his missing hand, I am reminded that I have been invited to be his hand on earth to help build the kingdom.
What the Guides Training at Mount Manresa, NY, Meant to Me
March 31 – April 2, 2011

Gini Grommes, Community of Hope CLC

Using the CLC Charism “God calls each one of us to a personal vocation, which reveals itself in our deepest inclinations and our most authentic desires,” I wanted to experience guides training.

This charism speaks volumes to me and my desire has been to attend guides training since the National Assembly two years ago. I find God’s will imbedded deep within my heart but it takes me time to peel back the self-centered layers so that I can discern it, appreciate it, pray about it and choose it.

Preparation for the guides course involved praying with the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38), and thinking about what gives me real energy. My discerned answer was “facilitating a small prayer group.” The second question asked what a significant experience in CLC or Ignatian prayer is for me. My discernment concluded a deepening prayer that descends downward from my head and fills my innermost being. It is a joy to experience this in my individual prayer and during our CLC meetings.

My CLC spiritual family is so loving, supporting and encouraging that we are one in Christ, yet each person reaches out in mission, in supportive unity, to our diverse acts of service to the Church and world.

At Mount Manresa we shared significant experiences that first evening in profound gratitude, excitement and desire to know each other more deeply. The primary gift of the weekend was the deepening understanding of the Discernment tool of DSSE (Discerning, Sending, Supporting, Evaluating). We practiced various types of exercises using DSSE.

In the beginning of the weekend we delved into the format of DSSE in CLC Formation in the Four Stages of Welcoming, Preparation for Discernment of Vocation, Discernment of Vocation and Apostolic Discernment. These formation stages are not descriptive titles, rather each one, for example Welcoming, starts with a holy desire. A person searches what the desire means and in time, with prayer, one discovers its truth or alternatively, the selfishness of the desire that arises. Over time and with prayer and direction one awaits confirmation. “Confirmation in Ignatian spirituality is a special interior experience of Consolation given by God in response to a request by a person seeking to discern God’s call” and this assures the one searching that the desire is from the Lord.

The next formation stage is Preparation for Discernment of Vocation. The desire that has taken on more personal meaning is examined prayerfully and in community. One waits for confirmation without running ahead of the Spirit; when confirmation in this second stage is given, a new desire for Discernment of Vocation is set into motion.

In the third stage of this formation process one desires and searches for a clear vocation. In God’s time it will be determined through prayer, listening and direction. Once discovered, it is again time to await God’s confirmation. Assured of confirmation of a specific vocation, the fourth stage, Apostolic Discernment, is the specific desire where one is being called. When that fit is determined through discernment and is obvious through prayer and community sharing, the last piece of a response to a call to mission is understood. One waits now in expectation for individual and communal confirmation from God.
The next part of the weekend included Sophie Nguyen’s personal example of the DSSE process involving her role in the Dong Hang community (see Sophie’s article, “Our Way of Life” in this issue). The workshop then looked at Phase Cycles that are contained in each Formation Stage. We see that discerning is required in all four ‘phases’ in the DSSE process (Discerning, Sending, Supporting, Evaluating). We return to our human experience to discern and evaluate it in the light of CLC values. For practical purposes I am just looking at the stage of ‘Apostolic Discernment’. In this CLC-USA Communal Discernment Process (Spring 2009), the activity engaged in during the phase named ‘Discerning’ might be more clearly described as ‘Determining’. This is the phase when a course of action is determined through discernment of spirits. ‘Sending’ is an action in the realm of decision and commissioning which also requires a discerning Ignatian engagement between the community and those being sent. ‘Supporting’ requires ongoing discernment with those who are sent, and those who are being supported in the myriad interpersonal situations and choices in their life of serving and being served need to continually discern how to be more Christ-like in everyday life. “Evaluating” is in fact an examen, a testing of experiences in relation to deepest values.

One of most surprising insights we experienced was that we don’t use DSSE in our CLC gatherings to full advantage. Are we missing its power of hearing individuals and the community? Are we resolving conflict in order to re-invigorate our CLCs in the light of our calling for renewal within the Church? DSSE emerged after Nairobi as a tool of the Spirit. The question for each of us is how do we use DSSE in our CLC groups? Think of how we all might use this discernment tool to clarify and propel us forward as partners in apostolic action both individually within our own CLC group, or as a unified CLC community group in local, regional, national or worldwide apostolic action. Wouldn’t this bring us closer to the realization of striving to be an apostolic community called to serve the will of God in a common mission, which the World CLC has brought to our awareness?

The only thing that keeps us from discerning as a community is fear. We surely pray for one another and our needs but possibly we need to move from ‘desire to desire to desire’ in the stage of Apostolic Awareness and await confirmation for both the individual and the community. Confirmation leads to communal conviction and individual decision. Using DSSE is like ‘living water’ that is always moving, always cleansing, always changing us as we move more in peace and joy in the present, within the Sacred Presence and into the future according to God’s will.

In the third part, we prepared individually and then came together in groups to discern cases and situations from prepared handouts that might occur in one of the stages. Need I say that the sharing was enlightening and broadening and our exchanges very dynamic, intense and peppered with humor! The more I seemed to learn, the more I desired to understand. I felt overwhelmed yet happy to be a part of this ongoing training.

How do we apply CLC Formation in Four Stages and the Discernment tool of DSSE to continually grow our communities? Please note that the application may differ in different cultures. For example, in a Korean community, an individual will choose to do what the community discerns. In an American community, the individual listens to the communal discernment and then chooses his or her decision which the community agrees to support. One practice is called “The Second Round of Sharing” or “Listening Deeper.” It might be of use here. This practice reflects back to the group what has been stirred within them as they have listened to others in the group share. The concept is very simple, but it is a hard shift for a group to make. This Second Round is not an opportunity for people to expand their ideas. Rather, it is for the whole group to listen together to how the Spirit is moving in the group. What would be useful for your present CLC in the following Group Sharing model?

1st Round – Each person has a chance to speak, sharing the fruits of personal prayer

2nd Round – Time of silent reflection and sharing based on the following questions:
- What have I heard?
- What touched me in what others have shared?
- What gave me peace, joy, trust…? What made me sad, discouraged, worried…?
- What new perception or understanding have I received? What new light?
- When did I feel harmony or union with others in the group? When did I feel opposition?
- What are the consequences of the truths we have shared?

At the end of this round, try to name common themes.

3rd Round – Prayer or thanksgiving, request for light, for forgiveness, etc., emerging from what has been shared.

(Taken from Exercices pour un Discernment Apostolique en commun www.esdac.be)

Many CLC’s do this well but let each of us ‘Be aware of the movements of God’s grace within… so that the light and the love of God inflame all possible decisions and resolutions about life situations’ (Spiritual Exercise 15). May the Spirit enlighten each of us in how to use this DSSE discernment gift more frequently for our own benefit and ongoing growth in our CLC communities.
Formation: Called More Deeply into Relationship with God and CLC

Ellen Delaney, Faber CLC

Many people in today’s world are hungry for a deeper relationship with God. CLC, with its basis in Ignation Spirituality, is a way for some of these people to answer this call from God. We, as a worldwide community, have seen this need and are responding to it. In the United States there have been several initiatives, e.g. National Guides and Coordinator courses. Programs and books serve as resources for introducing those who are searching for CLC, preparing them to discern if they have a vocation to CLC and guiding them when they discern they do have one. The way Faber, my community, is involved in formation illustrates one response to this hunger.

Faber has developed a structure that welcomes new members, but which still manages to maintain stability and foster trust. Faber came into being in 1998 by merging two other groups of young professionals. In that year the demands of careers and marriage had reduced both groups to a few members. Since the emergence of Faber from the two groups, we have aged some, parted with some members and welcomed new people. At present we are eleven members, three from 1998 or before, three members who have joined between 1998 and 2010, three people from other communities and two new people this year.

This fluidity makes the formation needs of Faber complex. Not only is there a wide range of people, but our current configuration masks the various other configurations present over the years. We have had graduate students and young professionals who have been CLCers in their home country and have been part of our community for six months to three years. We have had several people who have been through a formation program and discerned that CLC was not for them. Given this diversity we have handled formation in many different ways. We have had both our regular meeting and a formation meeting going on at the same time in different rooms. Members of the community would rotate into the formation meeting for specific topics. We have met in the morning for our community’s meeting, in the afternoon for formation and have been part of regional formation programs. We have used materials prepared by Fr. Dan Fitzpatrick, our E.A., and also used Fr. Larry Gooley’s, To Share in the Life of Christ.

Now I am meeting informally with the new members ahead of a possible region-wide formation program in the Fall. However, the most powerful factor for formation is the community itself. Participation in our meetings is the real demonstration of the CLC way of life.

Christine and Brad Hinze are two members of our community with long and varied experience in CLC. They also teach Theology at Fordham University. Through their interactions with undergraduates, they realized the need for Young Adult CLCs. This year, in collaboration with Fordham’s campus ministry, they were able to contact Fordham graduates who had participated in CLC while they were in college.

Through a process of informational meetings, with discernment using the material from Fr. Gooley’s Tracking the Spirit and prayer, two Young Adult CLCs have been formed. The members of these communities include not only Fordham graduates, but also friends of the original contacts. Not everyone had prior experience of CLC. These Young Adult CLCs now function with leadership from within the group. Christine and
By paying attention to how God was communicating with us, we were able to grow in self-knowledge and acceptance, use our newly acquired listening skills to hear others and the Holy Spirit…

Brad Hinze and Fr. Dan Fitzpatrick serve as advisors and guides. Three members from the Young Adult communities attended the CLC Guides Workshop in New York this spring. The advisors group will discern its next steps in relation to this year’s graduates from Fordham and expansion to other groups in the New York Metropolitan area.

Additionally, the New York region has had a Leadership Group started by Fr. Dan Fitzpatrick before the current national initiative to train coordinators and guides. The group is made up of at least one member from each of the CLCs in the New York area. It functions as a formation group, a networking group and a growth group. We have looked at leadership by using *Spiritual Exercises for Church Leaders, Discovering Your Personal Vocation* by Herbert Alphonso, S. J. and the *Spiritual Exercises*.

*Creating Spaces of Welcome: A workshop*, the first phase of the training course for Guides, was held on Staten Island, New York this spring. The workshop was hosted by the Metro New York region and attended by CLCers from many regions. Three members of the Faber community in addition to the three members from the Young Adults group were among the participants.

It was a full weekend. We got to know other CLCers and renewed our relationships with those we had met before, and we got a lot of information. However, it was the prayer and the stable small groups which functioned as communities that made this weekend a lived experience of the grace we were asked to pray for: “Loving Father, assure me of Your ever-fresh presence, assist me to recognize Your Son’s Spirit in me and in those you call me to accompany. Free me in this small way to build Your Kingdom.” By paying attention to how God was communicating with us, we were able to grow in self-knowledge and acceptance, use our newly acquired listening skills to hear others and the Holy Spirit and prepare to discern our response to the final question of the workshop: Are you called more deeply into relationship with God and CLC as a Guide?

This opportunity to reflect on four examples of formation in a specific context has lead me to the conclusion that all formation activities are a call to enter more deeply into relationship with God and CLC, both for those doing the guidance and those being guided, and to do so with care for the entire person. In the words of Blessed Peter Faber: “Consoling the spirit, healing the soul, loving the world with the heart of God.”
The National Korean Christian Life Community (NKCLC) was formed in 2002 as a network for the Korean CLCers in the U.S.A. to connect with each other and to share resources and materials. It is comprised of five regions in CLC-USA (Metro New York, Mid-Atlantic, Atlanta, Chicago and Western CA) and KCLC in Toronto, Canada. We have been very active in sharing formation/education resources and materials. In 2008, during the annual meeting of the NKCLC ExCo and regional presidents, we agreed to develop, plan and implement our first formation workshop, “Train the Trainers,” to help each region with its formation program as well as to form ‘trainers.’ We all agreed that there was an urgent need to form the trainers who can carry out the important mission of forming the CLC members and strengthening our communities.

Our first weekend workshop in Pittsburgh in 2009 focused on presenting and sharing the general overview of the CLC General Principles and Norms, Charism and the Spiritual Exercises. Each region was assigned a task of presenting a given topic which allowed each CLC group an opportunity to study each topic in depth. It turned out to be a huge success, not just in the area of formation, but also in giving us the opportunity to gather from all regions and socialize with each other on a grand scale. It gave us a real sense of unity in the CLC way of life.

Based on the evaluation and feedback from the first workshop, our second weekend workshop in 2010 focused on the coordinators’ roles and responsibilities, considering the program offered in the Coordinators Course in Omaha in 2006. The focus was on forming and sustaining the small community which is the keystone of our CLC way of life. This was attended by over fifty people from the regions. The second workshop was opened not only to the trainers but also to CLC members who were interested in participating.

These two workshops have helped to promote CLC identity, to increase the awareness of the importance of the community life and to form members making a permanent commitment. Initially, Korean CLC communities were founded on the Spiritual Exercises where the small communities were formed as prayer groups, not as apostolic communities, leaving many members confused as to “who we are.” These workshops have helped to redefine and clarify the identity of “who we are,” fostering our commitment to the CLC way of life.

Our third workshop will be held in July of this year in Pittsburgh, on the Spiritual Exercises led by Fr. Luke Sim, a theology professor from Sogang University, Korea. There was an urgent call to go deeply into the source of our spirituality and to be grounded in our CLC way of life. This workshop is open to all our members to help them live out their lives grounded in the life center of Jesus Christ. We are expecting about 60 people to participate in this year’s annual formation workshop.

There was an urgent call to go deeply into the source of our spirituality and to be grounded in our CLC way of life.
Summary reports from the regions regarding their current formation programs:

**Metro New York**

First, there has been a shift in our formation program. Instead of inviting people to the 19th Annotation of the *Spiritual Exercises* as it was done in previous years, we have formed several pre-CLC groups where we focused our formation on helping them to discern their vocation. We currently use *Tracking the Spirit* (Fr. Gooley) and *LightWorks* (Fr. Tetlow) as resources for the groups. The guides are trained to lead these pre-CLC groups.

Second, to strengthen the small communities, we have presented workshops on the roles and responsibilities of the coordinators (with the materials from the NKCLC workshops), to form them to become the leaders of the communities.

Third, we have presented various workshops to the members that focused on the CLC way of life, CLC identity based on General Principles and Norms, and *Charism*. We have also focused on relationships among the members making efforts to bring the larger community together.

There is an ongoing need to determine the formation materials on topics such as CLC identity, General Principles and Norms, and Ignatian prayer. We are also planning to focus our formation efforts on the training of guides and preparing members for permanent commitment.

**Mid-Atlantic Region**

Member programs: We have developed formation programs and materials for the pre-CLC groups, temporary commitment and permanent commitment. The pre-CLC program is comprised of 10 weeks focused on basic prayers and an introduction to Ignatian prayer. Members preparing for temporary commitment meet once a month and participate in a study group using text books (e.g., *Listening* by Thomas Hart). Members preparing for the permanent commitment do the 19th Annotation retreat again as a group. We also have formation programs for the entire community, primarily led by the Korean Jesuits in the area and the formation team. Based on our survey, members are interested in prayer, spiritual life and apostolic life in that order.

**Western CA**

The monthly formation program is carried out using the topics/presentations presented by NKCLC workshops. Additionally, it is recognized among the leaders that knowing “who we are” is very important in forming our members. We are using General Principles and Norms and *Charism* to further our identity as CLCers. We are assisted by Korean Jesuits in studying the above. We also recognize the importance of forming CLC leadership (i.e., coordinators, guides). We are planning to continue to focus on this for the next year.

**Atlanta**

We are actively developing and providing the formation program to our members using the workshop materials provided by the NKCLC workshops. We have focused our formation in promoting awareness of CLC identity and the roles of coordinators and guides. We have also begun using DSSE in our discernment process. We are also introducing Ignatian spirituality and CLC community life through our pre-CLC program. We have regular gatherings of members who are preparing for their temporary and permanent commitments. We are also actively gathering formation materials to enrich our program.

**Toronto, Canada**

We meet with the Canadian CLC formation guide team every two months. After the annual 5-day retreat, we invite interested people to our pre-CLC group for 10 weeks of prayer sharing. Last year, we held a 3-day workshop focused on the identity of CLC and the importance of apostolic community life. We also encourage members to study *Charism* and GP & GN to foster deeper commitment to the CLC way of life.
Learning and Celebrating at the Guides Course
Fast forward to 2005. There was a meeting of CLC leaders and Jesuits involved in CLC in St. Louis prior to the Ignatian Spirituality Conference. It was a turning point for us in realizing that there would not be consistent growth in CLC unless we had consistent formation. We had new guidelines from our world office – *The CLC Charism: Guidelines for CLC Formation*. This was later revised. How could we make this available to our members in such a way that it would be alive and not stagnant? I recall at that meeting that many were surprised to hear that once upon a time we had a National Formation Team. After the meeting a new National Formation Team was formed. It is good to know that the Formation Team is expanding its vision about CLC in our many cultures, namely, Korean, Vietnamese, Hispanic, Youth and Young Adult and Anglo. Several Guides courses have been given since that meeting and continue to be given.

FORMATION continues to stay with us and for good reason. For a while we thought we would be on the road called Formation for a period of time and then we would be considered formed. Well, we won’t, because formation is constant and evolving. I like to look at formation, especially in CLC, as a spiral that is winding and winding. I have been on that spiral for many years myself.

My hope and prayer is that CLC Formation will not only be on-going, but will also be challenging – challenging enough for all of us who have different roles in the community not to be afraid to step onto the next spiral.

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*I recognize this three-year Ignatian Spiritual Formation Program is a gift from God, a blessing of my life, an integral part in my becoming the person God desired me to be. It is neither the completion of my formation nor the accomplishment of myself. It is a journey marked by sacrifices of my husband and daughter, supported by my family, impelled by the Sisters of the Lovers of the Holy Cross, shared by my Phuc Sinh/Resurrection faith sharing group and my Dong Hanh friends, motivated by the Youth and Young Adults Ministries of the Dong Hanh family, labored by the loving staff of LIS and embraced by an increasing number of people yearning for a deeper relationship with God.*

My formation journey is not over. It’s God’s long term project, like the potter with the clay. I know that neither He nor I are done with one another. He will give me a little rest before He picks me up on my next journey!

*He comes to me in the silence*

*He calls me by name*

*He lifts me up*

*I am his*

*I am home!*
Ellen Hogarty was born and raised in Hawaii. It was while she was attending college at the Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio that she met Fr. Rick Thomas, S.J. who was visiting the campus to receive an award. He challenged the students to seriously dedicate their lives to serving God in whatever way He called them to. That summer, Ellen went with a group of students on a mission trip to El Paso and Juarez, Mexico, to help out in the ministries to the poor that Fr. Thomas had started. Although the trip was only supposed to last for three weeks, Ellen felt a strong calling from the Lord to stay, and has since dedicated her life to being a full-time missionary with this lay apostolate that seeks to serve those in need by practicing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, both in Mexico and in the United States.

The Lord’s Ranch community in New Mexico was blessed to have Marie Schimelfening and Carmen Castagno come and lead us in a Faith Sharing Experience on May 27-29, 2011. The weekend began with Marie accompanying us to our mission headquarters in Juarez, Mexico, to participate in our weekly home visits to the elderly and sick. Each Friday we take groceries to the homes of 90 people who are unable to make the trek up the steep hills of the Lord’s Food Bank. Besides bringing them their food - a bag of beans, rice, potatoes, onions, green chili, cabbage, celery, chicken and whatever canned food is donated, we also spend time chatting with each person, listening to what has been going on in their lives and finding out what their special needs are. We end the visit joining hands in prayer for the intentions that they have voiced.

After coming back across the border and having a little time to rest, Marie and Carmen gathered with the six of us who have been holding pre-CLC meetings, and they led us through a time of sharing our genealogy – where we have come from, our culture, which people and what events were particularly significant in our faith beginnings. We closed the day with an Examen and some quiet singing in our peaceful chapel before the Blessed Sacrament.

Saturday morning we reconvened. This time we were challenged to share on the major turning points in our lives, up until the most recent, which have led us to where we are today in our faith journey. As each person shared, we laughed, we cried, we empathized and we grew in deeper appreciation for what had brought us to the present moment. We then left the Ranch to go to nearby Las Cruces to join in the 50th Anniversary celebration Mass for a dear priest friend of ours, and we returned to a simple lunch of sandwiches and salad, continuing our time of fellowship. Two of the youth who live on the Ranch, ages 13 and 15, did the cooking throughout the weekend, enabling the retreatants to focus on our time together.

The afternoon session continued on the theme of turning points, but this time sharing the latest one in our lives which has called us to come closer to God. More tears, more laughter and stronger bonds formed as each person shared the most recent struggles, joys and learning curves. The day concluded with a penitential service and a sharing of our favorite Scriptures.

The culmination of the Faith Sharing retreat was Sunday morning as we each wrote down how we saw Christ in one another. We wrote our name on the top of a paper, and that paper was circulated around the group with each person writing down some words of affirmation and encouragement. We then took turns reading out loud what the others had shared about us. It was a beautiful and moving end to a wonderfully enriching time of unity. Carmen then asked each of us to share how we felt about the call to CLC, and without exception, each of us felt God is leading us in this direction and we are ready for the next step.

We celebrated Sunday Mass at our local parish 15 minutes away, and then gathered outside the church to say our goodbyes. Marie and Carmen needed to catch their afternoon flight, and as we hugged one other, we expressed our gratitude to them for making this weekend such a powerful and enlightening experience. We look forward to meeting them, and other CLC friends, in the future as the Lord interweaves our paths.
Missouri Region

Mary Wescovich

On March 12, approximately 25 CLC members met at Holy Spirit Parish in St. Louis for World CLC Day to participate in an exercise in communal discernment. Linda Leib arranged the day at her parish and Fr. Robert (Cos) Costello led us through the discernment process. After beginning the day with prayer and song, we broke into small groups and went over a list of topics gathered from CLC meetings over several weeks. Our task was to choose several topics we saw as most important. We shared our chosen topics in the main group and studied the topics chosen by the other groups. The small groups met again to close in on one topic as standing out from the others. Back in the main group, we proceeded to go over the topics presented for development into a vision statement. After much pondering and talking back and forth, we came to agreement and asked several participants to write a statement. We posted our vision statement by the altar as Cos prepared to close the day with Mass. Our vision statement is as follows: “In Solidarity with Christian Life Community, we will bring the grace of a discerning lifestyle rooted in the message of Jesus to the ongoing challenges of our tumultuous times.”

The week of May 30, Saint Louis University Campus Ministry will host the Curą Personalis Retreat for about fifty college students from various schools in the United States. Angela Batie is the campus minister who oversees CLC at the University and she and the staff are in the process of putting the final plans in place. Local CLC members are joining to host the students on their last evening before returning home. Liturgy will be at 6 pm at the University’s Manresa Retreat Center with dinner following in the main dining room. We look forward to meeting and visiting with these young people.

South Florida Region

Ady P. Viera

The region celebrated World CLC Day on March 12, 2011, at Casa Manresa Ignatian Spirituality Center. The formation theme was based on the Progressio issue “CLC and the Poor.” Project 147 was also reviewed.

Our May 7th regional assembly had as the guest speaker Dr. Manuel Antonio Pelaez, Coordinator for the Hispanic Ministry for Young Adults of the Archdiocese of Miami. His talk focused on Mary as the poor of God, Mary as the slave of God, Mary as the one with absolute trust in the Lord and Mary offering Jesus Christ to us.

Individual communities continued with their own formation programs. Pascua, for example, prepared for Easter with Progressio’s “CLC and the Poor”, reflecting on the relationship between living an authentic CLC way of life and preparing to celebrate the resurrection of the Lord.

New Orleans Region

Carmen Castagno

John Brown, S.J. has been appointed to succeed Ken Buddendorff, S.J. as Regional Ecclesial Assistant for the New Orleans Region, effective June 12. He was ordained on June 4 and assigned as parochial vicar at Sacred Heart Church in El Paso, Texas.

He follows the faithful service of Ken Buddendorff, S.J. who served Marian Sodalities and CLC since 1964...47 years! We are most grateful for his fervor, generosity and many, many, many contributions to CLC through the years. Thank you Fr. Ken!!

North Central Region

Maryanne Rouse

Omaha CLC member, Dr. Roger Bergman, has just published his first book, Catholic Social Learning: Educating the Faith That Does Justice. Roger is the founding director of the Justice and Peace Studies Program at Creighton University where he is also Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. “The canon for Catholic social teaching spreads over six hundred pages, yet fewer than two pages are devoted to Catholic social learning.” In this long-needed book, Bergman, a 30-year educator of faith-that-does-justice, begins to correct that gross imbalance. Copies of the book are available from Bergman at Creighton University.
Rieman Great Lakes Region

*Sylvia Shorter, Fifth Week CLC*

The Nick Rieman Guides CLC brought the challenge of Project 147 to the six local communities of the Detroit cluster of the region, with a combination of study, debate, reflection and prayer. In preparing for World CLC Day, we realized that many members of our local communities would not be completely familiar with the structure and activities of our worldwide CLC movement. Most of the Executive Council is volunteer, but there are a few paid positions. There is an administrative fund and a special fund. Project 147 asked us to select one of these funds (Africa Fund, Apostolic Fund, Formation Fund, Advocacy Fund) to support. Our challenge was to ask members to support activities they did not know were taking place. How to proceed?

The World CLC Day program began with a review of the CLC structure and operations. A PowerPoint presentation familiarized members with the World Executive Council, showing photos of: Daniela Frank from Germany our World CLC President, Chris Micallof from Malta our Vice President, Lois Campbell (USA) Secretary, Adolf Nicolás, S. J. Father General of the Society of Jesus, Luke Rodriguez the World Vice Ecclesial Assistant, and Franklin Ibanaz our Executive Secretary. We also were able to see our five Consultors, Rita El Ramy (Lebanon), Mioricio Lopez (Mexico), Edel Chiru (Kenya), Christopher Hogan (Australia) and Jean Paul Biruru (D.R. Congo). The presentation then turned to a discussion of the Operating and Special Funds. The World CLC web page provided us examples of each of the Special funds: Africa, Apostolic, Formation, and Advocacy.

The fact that our world movement touches the lives of people in need was a source of pride for our local communities. This CLC organization really does stuff! Touching the lives of people in need is the responsibility of every baptized Christian. It is a responsibility given to Catholics in the documents of our bishops and encyclicals of our popes. Knowing this, the Guides Group looked to Seven Principles of Catholic Social Teachings (CST) to guide our discussion. We reflected on how our local communities and our world organization supported these principles and which fund most directly supported each teaching.

Being CLC, a fun group of people, we could not just read the principles and go from there. “Boring!” Instead we broke into groups, each group taking two CST principles and debating their pros and cons. The exercise forced us to challenge our basic Christian beliefs. One member asked, “You mean we are going to debate the dignity of the human person?” Yes. What we in the Guides Group came to realize was that much in the CST runs counter to our secular climate. And so we debated. Does the church (the people of God) have the right to say we as a nation must seek peaceful resolution to national and international conflicts? Are we not a people who “speak softly and carry big sticks?” Do we as Catholics have a responsibility to shape national policy or are our beliefs religious stuff? The debates drew a lot of laughter, some nervous laughter and some resulting from the realization that it is actually easier to articulate secular views than the Christian ones. The secular conversation about our national need to be safe and about keeping out people who are different from ourselves tend to be better accepted and more comfortable than the radical message of Jesus to love your enemies and do good to those who hate you.

After the debates, each individual spent time in prayer, reflecting on how we as CLC – local, national and international – lived the principles of CST. We asked what we had done, what we are doing and what we could do in the future. As we came back for our large group sharing a consensus emerged that we should offer financial support to the Advocacy Fund. One of the sages of the group suggested dividing our financial support between Apostolic and Formation. And so we will.

The challenge of Project 147 opened the door to looking more closely at our CLC structure – what it is and what it does. It asked us to take responsibility – to know what our world community is doing and to know that we are a part of it. By rising to this challenge at World CLC Day the members of the Detroit Cluster of the Great Lakes Region grew in both understanding and responsibility.

(Note: While our World CLC Day focused on Project 147 the day was also inspired by the articles on Catholic Social Teaching in an issue of *Harvest*)
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Calendars

Omaha Guides Course
September 29 - October 2, 2011

Next Issue

The Embrace of the Impoverished and Excluded