The Family

Marriage Renewal Workshop Team in Vietnam
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Cover photo: Marriage Renewal Workshop US team members
Bottom row from left to right: Hoang Do, Hoa Nguyen, Hang Dinh, Huang Mai, Amanda Dinh, Thao-An Vu.

Your editors wish to announce that 2015 is a transitional period for Harvest. It is planned that, commencing with the first issue of 2016, most subscribers will obtain Harvest electronically. Details of the change will be reported as they develop.

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The Blessing of Family

In 1994, the United Nations proclaimed the International Year of the Family. In recognition and support of this, CLC-USA approved an issue of Harvest to be devoted to that theme. Now in 2015, Harvest is again dedicating an issue to “The Family.” It is most fitting in light of the upcoming World Meeting of Families (WMOF) in Philadelphia in September 2015. (WMOF was conceived by Pope John Paul II in 1992. The first meeting took place in Rome in 1994. Every three years since then, families worldwide have been invited to attend these global gatherings.) In addition to this, the Synod of Bishops will be continuing its work on the family begun in 2014. We in CLC have been prompted by the World Community to be in sync with the above by prayer and reflection. Projects 161 invites us to:

Show openness, compassion, respect and sensitivity to people who belong to diverse realities.

Create formation processes for couples and families, in collaboration with others.

Reflecting on my own family experience, I recognize how much has changed in family life and how much has remained the same. Both my late husband, Ray, and I grew up in New York City, born into immigrant Catholic families. Our parents, from Italy and Czechoslovakia, had little education and arrived in this country with no knowledge of English. They settled in neighborhoods and close to churches that could provide them with the comfort that comes from a common language and familiar customs. This same experience exists today whether among the Hispanic or Asian or African immigrant communities. As in the case of my own relatives or the more recent to arrive in our country, many are/were not welcomed or treated in a Christian manner.

Considering all of this, my parents worked hard to achieve some goals for their family. Early on, my siblings and I were taught the importance of family - working together, sticking up for each other and spending family time together. We didn’t have the distractions of TV, internet and cell phones (as important as these are today). We were expected to be around the table, especially for the evening meal. We attended family gatherings as a body - for Christenings, weddings or wakes. We learned to respect our elders and to be attentive to them.

Another goal in both Ray’s family and my own, was the pursuit of education. Three of the four never went beyond grammar school. They encouraged and insisted that their children would have more education than was available to them. How proud they were when all of the children went on to college producing a dentist, nurse, lawyer, teacher, accountant and others in assorted business ventures!

These forebears were here in the United States to stay. They learned the language, became citizens, voted and paid taxes. They spread their wings a bit, moved to other neighborhoods and were ‘assimilated.’ Their cultural heritage was never completely abandoned. Language, customs and religion kept them united with family in a unique way.

In 1959, when Ray and I were dating, there was still evidence of cultural ‘taboos.’ with which to reckon. When I brought Ray home to meet my parents, there was a little hesitation on the part of my parents in welcoming him. Although we were both born and raised in New York, Ray was still considered an ‘Italian.’ The media, even at that time, were not always kind to Italians. My parents were influenced by newspapers and radio. They were concerned about gangsters, gambling and infidelities, etc. How wrong they were! Our marriage of over fifty-two years was a loving, faithful and joy-filled one and my husband was loved and respected as a son.

When Ray and I were married, we were involved in a number of formation programs in the field of family ministry. We served together in Pre-Cana and Cana in our diocese and our parish. We gave talks to Catholic high school students on dating, courtship, marriage and leadership. We instituted a series of weekend sessions at our home for high school boys and girls. In addition to the topics mentioned above, the young people lived with us for the weekend - helping with the meals, cleaning up, attending Mass as a family and playing with the children. We were hoping that their seeing us live as a Catholic family would mean more than just preaching about one.
Our family experienced many of the challenges common to other families - a still born child, an early death of a grandmother, a father and grandfather with Alzheimer’s, assorted bouts with illness. There were disappointments when a job was offered to another or a youngster had difficulty in school or when children dated persons of questionable background. We struggled with an interracial marriage and with a divorce. Without a strong faith and trust in the Lord and without the presence and support of family (including our CLC family), outcomes could have been different. As a family we have not only survived - we have thrived!

I (we) have been blessed with six wonderful children, their caring spouses and a dozen beautiful and extraordinary grandchildren. How great a blessing this is! Most of them have learned that it is appropriate and expected to give to those in need. Pope Francis calls it gratuitousness - (you have received freely; you must give freely). Several in the family have made mission trips during the summer or winter holidays. Others are in health care. Still others serve on school and hospital boards or are active in religious education in their parishes. The older grandchildren along with their parents regularly participate in the Midnight Run - a program that brings food and clothing to the homeless in New York City. As parent and grandparent, my heart is filled with gratitude as I witness children and grandchildren becoming responsible and caring Christians.

Rick Kunkle, in “Reflections on Family from the World Assembly,” refreshes our memory about the topics regarding family that were shared in Beirut. These provide CLC members with challenges to be involved in family ministry and encouragement to share our stories of family.

In their article “Wisdom Language for the Frontier of Family Ministry,” Kim-Anh and Hung John Vu present us with an insight into the Marriage Renewal Workshop. They tell of the goal to reconcile, bring healing and enliven the spirits of couples whose marriages need refreshment, and perhaps, a fresh start.

Justina Sun Nyo Jung writes a personal and heart wrenching story in “The Lost Son.” It is a narrative with which many parents can identify. It solidifies our belief in the power of prayer especially in a time of family crisis.

Another witness is found in “An Open Letter,” written by Nicholas and Landy Tran. This letter tells of the experiences of the Marriage Renewal Workshop they attended. They express appreciation for the MRW team members who guided them. They were so moved as to offer to serve in future workshops.

In “Families Turning” Nancy Wood describes many of the present-day obstacles to better familial relationships. One of the responses to improving them is Families Turning, “a mission to empower adults one individual at a time, to be positive change agents within their families.”

Ellen Delaney, in “Confirmed by the Witness of Their Lives,” writes of a family that is not biological. It is the family that is Christian Life Community. Read of the assistance Ellen received from her CLC family after an operation and her time of rehabilitation.

Father Daniel Fitzpatrick, S.J. retired from his decades-long position as Regional Ecclesial Assistant of the Metro New York CLC. Members of Metro NY Region share a few words about Father Dan.

In “Encountering the Wisdom Language of Ignatius” by Pat Carter Anderson, we find the author exploring the idea of Ignatius as a mystic and the Spiritual Exercises as a source of wisdom language. Pat uses some key meditations to support this.

Joonho Kim has submitted one of his spiritual poems for this issue of Harvest. His poem, “Mother of God,” reflects Joonho’s concept of Mary as mother.

Frank Vuong gives us an overview of “Search-Embark-Experience-Develop”(S.E.E.D.), a program developed for youth 6-17, a retreat experience based on Ignatian spirituality. His comments are followed by a number of personal stories from participants in the program: parent leader, youth leaders and ‘seedlings.’
- Daniel Lap Nguyen describes his first experience as a S.E.E.D. parent, seeing the retreat “as a multigenerational village.”

- Theresa Duong writes of her first time as a S.E.E.D. leader. Her retreat ‘high’ included her encounter with God, new friends and skills she developed.

- John Paul Pham gives an enthusiastic and upbeat reflection of three years of S.E.E.D. retreats. “I learned not only to tolerate others but to love them, to imitate Christ not only at Church but at home and in public.”

- Paula Hoang shares some of the graces received after four summers of S.E.E.D. retreats as a SEEDling and as a leader. “Among the leaders, the yearning to serve was strong. Among all the retreatants, the yearning to grow closer to God was strong. And among the organizers and parents, the yearning to give back to their communities was strong.”

- Nam Tran participated in S.E.E.D. as a SEEDling and as a S.E.E.D. leader. She expresses the love, the joy and the nurture received as part of this involvement. “The first-hand experience of the love that everyone has for S.E.E.D. is what makes it easy for me to continue leading and supporting this ministry.”

- Mai-Khoi Vu is ten years old and has already gone to five S.E.E.D. retreats. “My favorite S.E.E.D. retreat so far was S.E.E.D. CA III. The theme was, Lifesong, My Daily Prayer. It means my life and all the little things I do daily can become a prayer to God.”

- Peter Khoa Nguyen is part of the S.E.E.D. Formations Team. “Leading in S.E.E.D. Ministry deepens my prayer life in ways that are different and complementary to being a retreatant. Together, they help me build a stronger and deeper foundation for my faith.”

- Timothy Nguyen tells of his call and response to be part of S.E.E.D. Source, a formation program that trains leaders for the S.E.E.D. Ministry. He describes some of the meetings with the openness and down to earth sharing. “These talks presented the Holy Spirit to me, gentle, humble and loving.

What inspiring testimony has been shared with us! I entreat you to pray for the continued success of S.E.E.D. and to support this valuable and inspiring ministry.

…There are so many gifts, so many riches that children bring to humanity. They bring their way of seeing reality, with a trusting and pure look. A child has a spontaneous trust in its father and in its mother; and it has spontaneous trust in God, in Jesus and in Our Lady. Pope Francis, On the Gift of Children, March 15, 2015

With gratitude to God.
Dorothy M. Zambito

IN MEMORIAM

Rev. James V. Veltrie, S.J. died of a heart attack on March 15, 2015. He served as the Group Guide for the John XXIII Christian Life Community in St. Louis for many years. He also served in a spiritual leadership role for all of the Missouri Region. He is sorely missed.

“Frank” Grimminger was a long time, active member of Sojourners CLC. With his loving wife Maria, he assisted with the growth of CLC in the Detroit area. In the mid-eighties, they invited Fr. Nicholas Rieman, S. J. to their faith sharing group to familiarize the members with CLC. In time the group embraced CLC and chose the name Shelby Disciples. The Grimmingers assisted Fr. Nick when he invited some of his parishioners at St. Mary of Redford parish to explore the CLC way of life. Companions of Jesus came into being. Encouraged by Fr. Nick, some people from St. Kieran parish, began a CLC, namely Sojourners. Now 30 years later two of these groups are still active. Frank was faithful to attending retreats, regional CLC gatherings, CLC courses and national assemblies. He received regular spiritual direction, lived the CLC way of life and will be missed by all members of the region. We pray in loving memory of Franz Grimminger - June 10, 1940 – April 20, 2015

On July 2, 2015 Paul Kim, father of Christine Kim, passed away. Requiescat in pace.

On July 15, 2015 Victoria Van Tran (Cecilia), aunt of new treasurer Thu-Tam Hoang (Julienne), passed into eternal life. May she rest in peace.

Simon Lee passed away on July 20, 2015. Simon was the husband of Sooja Theresa Lee, a member of the Chicago KCLC.

Maura McCarthy of Manresa CLC, Staten Island, New York passed on July 25, 2015 in Massachusetts.
President’s Corner

Thank you to all who have sent warm wishes upon my assuming the office of President, CLC-USA on July 1. I want to recognize Rick Kunkle with whom I have worked very closely over the last year, and more so in recent months as we prepared for a smooth presidential transition. As I spent a year as CLC-USA’s President-elect, so too Rick will continue to serve on ExCo as Past President for the coming year. There is much wisdom in this “book ends” approach with a pre- and post-presidential period. It’s an opportunity to take a year to “learn the ropes” experientially and subsequently to insure follow through on important projects. I am grateful indeed for all the support I received from the entire ExCo team during the past year. I thank outgoing ExCo Secretary, Carmen Castagno and Treasurer, Sophie Nguyen for jobs well done. Both Carmen and Sophie will continue to serve CLC in a leadership capacity with a focus on formation activities. They are currently working with our new officers as they move into their Secretary and Treasurer roles. “Welcome” to the new ExCo officers, Secretary, Barb Rudolph, and Treasurer, Thu-Tam Hoang. Thank you for your generosity in accepting the responsibilities of serving as national officers and ExCo members. Fr. Jim Borbely has been re-appointed by the Board of the US and North American Jesuit Conference to serve as the CLC-USA National Ecclesial Assistant for another term. Fr. Borbely brings the perspective of many years of involvement in CLC. We will continue to benefit from his experience and wisdom.

Please pray for our team as we strive to build the one body that is CLC-USA. We continue to work with grace and will be careful not to get ahead of it. We seek to provide leadership that is from within rather than from above. We endeavor to be efficient, effective and affective in working with our sisters and brothers in CLC-USA. We thank you for your encouragement and support.

• • •

This issue of Harvest is devoted to the topic of “Family.” I’ll share a few thoughts hoping they will complement what others have written. Much has been written on the topic and by the time you read this much more will have been written in anticipation of the September World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia and the October General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in the Vatican.

As I write this column, the Pope is travelling through Central and South America. During his trip he has offered reflections on the family and its importance, saying that it is a “truly irreplaceable institution.” “The family,” he says, “constitutes the best ‘social capital.’ It cannot be replaced by other institutions. It needs to be helped and strengthened, lest we lose our proper sense of the services which society as a whole provides.” He also said the family is “foundational” to society and makes an essential contribution to the common good. In the encyclical, Laudato Si’, the Holy Father – from his typically expansive perspective – says, “We must strengthen the conviction we are one single human family.” Quite a challenge!

While the family unit is evolving beyond the traditional labels of nuclear and extended to include different family forms, such as single-parent, reconstituted families and so forth, most people will acknowledge that family does – whether done well or poorly – provide the basic structures and values that impact how its members see life and respond to it. In and through our families we learn to navigate our realities.
deal with our fears, make the most of life’s opportunities and deflect many of life’s hazards. At a core level we are strengthened by the nurturing and support provided by our families, or we spend the rest of our lives trying to recover from the trauma that we experienced in our formative years from their absence. We react to life’s different situations, often unreflectively (how much is nature versus nurture perhaps is still a debatable issue) based on responses that were deeply embedded in our psyche during our childhood.

I would like to offer three reflections on aspects of family life for us to consider. These are a small part of a bigger picture:

1. Family teaches us about God. Central to Ignatian spirituality is the perception of a loving God, actively involved in a world that is fundamentally good. We believe that this God loved us first. In the context of a family-of-faith we gain insight into the mystery of life, into the Divine. We gain confidence in living our lives knowing that we are loved by our family and by our God. Trappist Fr. Thomas Keating, in writing about the human condition (Intimacy with God) says, “Without the reassuring experience of God, the world is perceived to be potentially hostile. Since the need for happiness is so fundamental and strong, we invest at a very early age in various substitutes.” He goes on to say, “... our programs for happiness seek in vain to compensate for the absence of the sense of God’s presence.” Family creates a safe haven at the core of which is the loving presence of God.

2. It is within the context of family that we learn the mystery of relationship. We learn to think of me in a loving context of us – family and community – of which I am a valued member. I have my own identity, but I am not a solitary encapsulated individual. I am part of a “we.” Through example we learn how to be in right relationship with ourselves, with our family, with others. We live in right relationship with our families and extended communities, where we learn, or should learn, through experience: joy, faith, hope, mercy, forgiveness, friendship and love. We learn about these, the deeper values that keep us together emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. We also experience the insufficiencies, ours and those of others, and learn to deal with them. Life in a faith-based family becomes the model, the template, the script for how we see ourselves, how we value, honor and respond to those closest to us, larger society, our environment, the world we live in - creation itself. We learn from this how to be in relationship with a God who loves us. We learn to live in right relationship with God by listening with a discerning mind and heart to the divine promptings and the movements of the Spirit.

3. The family is intergenerational. Pope Francis recently said, “The family is the first school for the young, the best home for the elderly.” We live in a society that is obsessed with youth; we want to be forever young. The CLC family is inclusive and embraces all the seasons of life. We need the young. We need the mature. We need those who have gained wisdom through living life. This intergenerational participation is critically important. It has special applicability to CLC-USA where the demographic, with the exception of Dong Hanh, is heavily skewed toward an older population. Our elders pass on the human and religious heritage which is essential for every society. As Pope Francis tells us, it is so very important to have intergenerational exchanges and dialogues, especially within the context of the family. (World Youth Day July 26, 2013)

It will come to pass in the last days, God says, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. (Acts 2:17)

May we in CLC-USA continue to be prophetic, dream dreams, and be open to the promptings of the Spirit. May we, with Pope Francis say, “God is always a surprise, so you never know where and how you will find him. You are not setting the time and place of the encounter with him.” (America, September 30, 2013) May we “…await the surprise of each day.” (Conversations with Jorge Bergoglio, 2010)

Again, I ask for your prayers and your support for me and the new ExCo team.
Reflections on Family from the World Assembly

Rick Kunkle, Past President, CLC-USA

Family is one of the four frontiers identified at the World Assembly in Beirut in 2013. At the Assembly there were two presentations on family, time for reflection, small group sharing and then plenary sharing from the small groups. I felt a lot of energy around the family frontier at the Assembly, perhaps more so than the other frontiers. Family touches all of our lives. I would like to offer some observations on family from my experience at the World Assembly.

Show openness, compassion, respect and sensitivity to people who belong to diverse family realities.

This is one of the two points on family from the World Assembly report. I was struck by the strong desire of the Assembly to be open to the many different forms of family that exist. This was not an intellectual or political statement. It came from the lived experience of the Assembly. It came from the ministries and apostolic works in which participants in the Assembly were involved. It came from the desire to bring Christ’s love, compassion and mercy to the lived reality of family in our experiences and the communities in which we live. Projects 161 addresses the family frontier and speaks to this point about openness to diverse family realities. It describes what we have to celebrate and our challenges within the family. Projects invites us to reflect more deeply on the experience of family in our own lives and how we are called to respond.

We are invited to share our family stories and respond with openness.

There were two presenters on family at the Assembly, Fernando Vidal and Malesabe Makgothi. Fernando, the Director of the University Institute on Family Studies in Madrid, gave an interesting presentation on global family trends and family mission along with some proposals to consider. He presented information that was good to know. However, his presentation did not deepen my understanding of family or stir a response in me. Malesabe, a single mother from South Africa, shared her experience. Her story deeply touched my heart and the hearts of everyone present. She is a never-married mother of two children. Listening to her story of abuse and judgment, but also of love and support from her family and CLC community, was deeply moving. She ended by saying, “Thank you for this challenge to talk about family life, my family. God bless!” She clearly is a person of courage, humility and faith. Family means a great deal to her. This experience reminded me of the power of our stories, and of how CLC life invites us to share deeply those stories and to walk in solidarity with each other. God speaks to us from the heart.

A primary mission is our families.

Several days before the session on the family, Franklin Ibanez (World CLC Executive Secretary at the time) gave a presentation on CLC mission¹. Franklin outlined several levels of mission – the first level being “Ordinary Activities.” He said that the primary mission of the laity is to encounter and reveal God in and through the daily activities of family and work. All CLC members are called to this mission. Franklin emphasized that this mission is not inferior to other more visible ones. We are invited to live this mission as fully as we can, “radical apostles [in] our daily life.” I can’t think of a better way to respond to the World Assembly’s call to live the frontier of “family.”

Create formation processes for couples and families in collaboration with others.

This is the second of the two points on family from the World Assembly report. I believe this point flows from the presentation of Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, S.J. (Superior General of the Society of Jesus and World CLC Ecclesial Assistant) on “Wisdom Language for the Frontiers.”² He spoke about the relevance of Ignatian spirituality in our world today to bring wisdom and depth. I left the Assembly with a strong desire to share Ignatian spirituality. I think this point invites us to think about how Ignatian spirituality can support family life. How do our CLC formation processes consider and include the whole family, not just the adults? How can we share Ignatian spirituality with couples and families outside of CLC? I think there are examples in our community where we are addressing these questions.

CLC-USA members are active in the family frontier.

CLC-USA members and communities are involved in a variety of ministries and apostolic works that serve families. The family frontier has prompted me to be more aware of this and how this service to the family occurs at so many different levels and in so many different ways. Personally, family ministry is not an area in which I am actively involved. At the Assembly I was aware that I did not have the same energy about the family apostolate as others did. That is okay, because I may not be called to this in the same way as others. However, I realized that I was being invited to consider how this family frontier applies to my life. How do I live my CLC vocation in my family? How do I share the graces of my family experience with others? How do I listen to the experience of other families? How do I support the family apostolic work of others in CLC and elsewhere? We are all invited to pray and reflect on the family and respond as a discerning community.

¹ We shared a condensed version of his presentation in Harvest (Vol 47, No 1) and the full text of his presentation is in Progressio Supplement #70.
² Full text of this presentation is available in Progressio Supplement #70.
Wisdom Language for the Frontier of Family Ministry

Kim-Anh and Hung John Vu

This is a reflection on Fr. Nicolás’ address on “Wisdom Language for the Frontiers” at the CLC World Assembly in Lebanon on August 4, 2013. In particular, our reflection is on Family Ministry as a frontier wide open with a forever beckoning invitation to collaborate with Christ in laboring to reconcile the relationship between husband and wife, to heal broken families, and to enliven the spirit of those growing tired and hopeless.

Our involvement in the Marriage Renewal Workshop since 2005 came from an ongoing reflection on the Exercises, particularly the Call of the King and the pondering of “What can I do for Christ?” In contemplating the reality of family life, we hear the cries of the broken and wounded. We hear their desire for healing and reconciliation. We discover the Suffering Christ as we move into deliberate action with the wisdom necessary to carry out the mission. We realize the Holy Spirit is guiding us in speaking wisdom language that propels us into the frontier of Family Ministry.

Following are some key points concerning wisdom as guiding principles for our family ministry team on mission:

1) Meet the people where they are in their family life situation regardless of culture, religious or economic background and take care of real needs of couples. Here we discover the common bond in family life where everyone struggles with what is real and human with all its joys and challenges. The couples are often impoverished emotionally, physically and spiritually. After hours at work and caring for the children, they have no time for one another to nourish their married life. For the short weekend of the Marriage Renewal Workshop (MRW), at least they are able to carve out some time for one another, to rekindle their romance, and rediscover their identities as husbands and wives. We find that, when the emotional and physical needs of the couples are cared for, they began to feel hopeful for a better marriage. Many of these couples aspire to more Christ-centered lives after the workshop, once their more immediate and temporal needs are met.

2) Witnessing vs. Preaching We find that the most effective way to reach the hearts of the couples is to share with them not theories, but the real stories of our married life with all the struggles and challenges as well as the joys and the hopes we experience along the way. In breaking the bread of our marital life, we share with them how God loves and cares for us, thereby helping them to get in touch with God who is also laboring to renew, heal and make whole their marriages. We feel so at home with what Fr. Nicolás has articulated, “At the frontiers, we will encounter good people of the Jubilee heart, full of compassion. Because our God is a God of compassion. We accompany people from the heart. What matters is reality, the people and what God wants from these people.”
3) Teamwork To sustain family ministry, we come to realize that teamwork is extremely important in mobilizing our team to work from preparatory phase to execution phase. In fact the DSSE (Discern, Send, Support, Evaluate) process has been instrumental in giving us a way of proceeding that allows us to be present and open to the movement of the Holy Spirit, as well as helping us to discern spirits when we go through desolations, consolations and/or conflict resolutions. In Marriage Renewal Workshops, teamwork allows us to work as one body; our unity of spirit is often one of the factors that touches the heart of the attending couples. The CLC Charism gives us the tool of communal discernment that makes teamwork feasible and effective.

4) Humility in working with parishes and dioceses where we offer our service In order to reach additional families, we find that we need to work within the structure of parishes and dioceses. We are lay ministers that need to work with the pastors and the lay councils of the local churches. Within the diocesan structure, we need to approach the Family Ministry Office. These are doors of opportunities for us to recruit couples. Therefore, we need to have humility, flexibility and sensitivity in doing public relations work for the sake of the couples we are called to serve. Often CLC is not well known or visible to the local church. We have to share who we are as well as what kinds of apostolates we have in CLC, using flyers, websites, etc. We need to meet members of the local church where they are and try to accommodate them as much as we can. The ideal situation is that the parish and our MRW team collaborate to take care of the couples and their marriages. As Fr. Nicolás has said, “Our question is always a humble one—how can we help? How can we accompany? How can we discern?”

As we continue to go forward into the frontier of family ministry, we thank God for giving us wisdom so that we can be “relevant at the present moment since [we] give response to real need[s].” We hope to expand family ministry into the larger American Church. We see more and more brokenness within families caused by secularism, amorality and loss of direction. We hope more CLC members will join the team to witness to God’s wondrous works. Indeed, “the challenge is to go deep into the life of the Spirit and find out how God works in our reality.” Our hearts sing praise and thanks to Him who calls and sends us to give witness to His abounding Love.
The Lost Son

Justina Sun Nyo Jung

For the celebration of World CLC Day in March, I was invited by the New York KCLC Apostolic Committee to present my own testimonial on “Family.” I am a wife, a mother of two married sons and a joyful grandmother.

I shared a story about my relationship with my older son who is now a happy father of a ten-month old boy. There was a period when I faced very challenging and difficult times when my son entered high school. I wanted the best for him and for his future. As an immigrant and being a Korean parent, I believed the path to success was through education. I pushed him to study and achieve success. As I pushed more, my son became defiant and oppositional. I began to feel helpless to do anything.

There were constant battles and arguments and things spiraled out of control. He ended up running away from home for a couple of months. I became frustrated and angry and I lost my ability to manage my own emotions. I felt I was already grieving the loss of my son and his future. There were tremendous sadness and anger within me. I was unable to find any light of hope. Only brokenness and disappointment remained with me.

One thing that sustained me was my prayer throughout this dark period of my life. The only thing that I could cling to was my prayer to God. I got enough energy to lift myself up and sought help from my parish priest. When I explained the situation to him, he surprised me by responding, “Be thankful for your son.” His initial response hurt me because I expected his confirmation of my own pains. But as days went by, I realized that God was telling me the following things through my prayers:

1. Respect my son as an individual person.
2. My son is not my possession.
3. Give my son freedom to do what he wants to do.
4. Do not expect rewards for my son (or associate my pride with his success).

It was a huge challenge for me to take in and accept these truths. But I gradually listened to His words and started to pray for myself to change instead of asking my son to change.

Jesus asks us to be present and stay with Him in the darkness of our inadequacy. It was a long journey, but I am grateful that I am able to accept my son as he is. God loved me so much and changed me to be a better person. My son eventually came back home. Much later, my son told me that he felt blessed because he had a mother who always prayed for him and the family. He also thanked God for giving him such a good family. It was a truly emotional moment for both of us to know that God was present in every moment of our lives, especially in our darkest moments when He revealed Himself to us. My son and I are now great friends where there is respect on both sides.

I especially feel blessed that CLC keeps me faithful when unexpected hardships and challenges arise. Through daily prayers, self-examen and discernment, I am not only growing in His love but also aware that God is in me and with me, and I am grateful for my gift of personal vocation. Over the years I came to realize God’s special ways of drawing me to Himself and making me aware of my own responses. I can see how my life has been changed by this interplay of constant and mutual communication, of “call and response,” that is constantly developing and maturing in my prayer life. I learned that it is important that we live our lives with a unique apostolic faith in our family relationship by being aware that God is actively listening to our prayers.

“Christ lives in me, I now live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave his life for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

I am truly grateful that I received the gift of a CLC vocation and am able to discern and respond to the movement of the Spirit in my daily life. I thank God for all the blessings and challenges that He has shared with me.

Justina Sun Nyo Jung joined Christian Life Community after an experience of the 19th annotation of the Spiritual Exercises in 2005. She has been a member of Immanuel Community in New York since 2005 and pledged her permanent commitment in 2012. Justina has worked as a paralegal in New York City since 1995. She served and volunteered as a Sunday school teacher at Chong Ha Sang Korean Roman Catholic Church in Flushing, New York from 2001-2008.
Dearest Dong-Hanh & CLC Families,

Nick and I would like to take time to thank you all for your love and support over the past weekend. Knowing that you all prayed and believed strongly in our marriage is by far the warmest feeling we have felt from anyone!

MRW13 was definitely a graceful and invaluable experience for the both of us! Nick and I went there with few expectations: to be closer to God and possibly to get to know the Dong Hanh’s family ministry better. We came out with more than we bargained for! This Marriage Renewal Workshop opened our eyes to the other side of married life that we never knew and helped prepare us for the unknown. We would like to say that it really gave us a different perspective on our marriage and family life. Many couples at the workshop mentioned that it doesn’t matter if you’ve been married for 3 months or 30+ years, we all go through the same issues. We can’t agree more. All the couples who shared were definitely a gift. We couldn’t ask for more! They all allowed themselves to be vulnerable in front of a bunch of strangers. This made such a positive impact on both of us. One of the most profound moments for us was when we were in the chapel. While the team couple was sharing, Nick and I had a strong awareness that GOD WAS THERE and talking directly to us, advising us and comforting us in our marriage. We were so overwhelmed by the whole experience. That very moment brought me comfort and tears! Really, we can’t express enough gratitude to all of you - for sending us an invitation, and for praying and supporting us through the entire weekend!

We understand that all the events Dong Hanh organizes are not easy tasks, but somehow you are all doing a miraculous job with everything! We know that the MRW13 was the first English-speaking workshop and I think it really hit home for a lot of people. We strongly believe that there is a need for workshops like this in Houston. We’ve been helping out at our parish marriage prep class, and it seems everyone is getting married at a younger age. Most speak English. This workshop will definitely become a valuable experience for many. Nick and I have talked it over and we would love to help Dong Hanh in any way we are can! Please feel free to contact us for any reason. Once again, thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Blessings, Landy Tran

The workshop was definitely the experience of a lifetime; a self-examination and reminder of my relationship with my significant other. As convinced by the busy world, I often forget what’s truly important. MRW has shown that there is nothing more important than my faithful partner and most importantly, to always make room for God in my relationship.

Thank You, Nicholas Tran
Families are messy. We love our families but are not always sure how to live within them. As adults we often want better relationships and are forced to work through the needs imposed by various life events with our parents, siblings and children. But, right when we need to be able to communicate and support one another most, we fall into old patterns that get in the way. When we want to work on family relationships we often turn to just improving our communication skills. What we really need is to take a step back and look at our family members from a new angle and to consider our family life with a fresh and positive perspective. The goal of Families Turning is to provide practical and accessible skills and ideas to work on this project.

We live in a broken world and have from the beginning. You cannot turn the first page of the Bible without seeing a broken family and upon turning the second page there is another. We cannot live out Christ’s mission without being committed to working through our differences and working to live in a harmonious and fulfilling community; this includes our families. For some family relationships this can feel almost impossible; this I know from professional and personal experience. My husband and I are loaded with family: step, full, half and adopted siblings, divorced, step-parents, all while being brought up to live and prioritize intergenerational family life. Easy? No way! Fulfilling? Absolutely!

It’s hard to understand the struggles related to family relationships without considering the culture we live in and how it affects our ability to relate, stay connected and find peace. I look around at the amazing advances we have made and just marvel. For example, stop and think about each decade you have been alive and how music was made available to you during that time. In 2005 a bunch of 6-10 year olds could not tell me what a “record album” was when I showed it to them; they had no idea. The definite consensus was that it was some type of flying disk that should be thrown. Ouch! I remember in the 70’s going to the mall and buying a 45 rpm record of the top radio hit. Today, I can hold my phone up to a speaker that is playing music and it tells me the name of the song and the artist; then with just a few clicks and within seconds I can buy it and play it from my phone through a nearby wireless speaker. WOW! Isn’t this an amazing time!

The flip side of this top hit of immediate gratification is stress. Your boss might expect you to be “on call” all the time. You find yourself being “on” when you need emotional down time. You might find yourself asking, “Why am I checking my work email? It’s my day off.” These cultural demands are exhausting. We live with an expectation of immediate communication, along with our cultural emphasis on individualism and excess consumerism. Exhauion melts into a sense of fear that right now or just around the corner we will not be able to keep up.

The elderly father who has worked all of his life is ignored or devalued, while the middle-aged son feels he is not doing enough. The feelings of insufficiency can come from so many directions. The son could be trying to juggle his kids, his job and his parent’s needs and this is overwhelming. With the current financial conditions, adult children often find themselves living with parents because of any one of life’s many
circumstances. When we add together the feelings of a life that doesn’t measure up to expectations, the value system thrust upon us by our culture, and the fact that we often do not build adult relationships with our parents, siblings and children, it is no wonder that our family relationships are suffering. We often find it difficult to empathize with the aging father who has become disabled or isn’t the father that we wanted; the sister who isn’t living a life that we approve of; or the brother who is lost in addiction.

This culture is like a riptide at the beach; no matter what your past or upbringing, it can pull you under. We can easily get lost. What has happened to grace, empathy, happiness, forgiveness and hope? We have all found ourselves impatient and with a loss of empathy at one time or another. We put up boundaries to survive the bombardment of input and unrealistic expectations. I would argue that we put up boundaries to family relationships and community in order to survive.

So what would it take for families to thrive instead of just survive? The Families Turning mission is to empower adults, one individual at a time, to be the positive change agents within their families. In order to strengthen the family relationships and become that positive force, we need to take some time and give some energy to this project of change. This change will require us to do some internal work to understand our actions and reactions, find the capacity for gratitude in what we have, to overcome some of the expectations that we have placed onto our relationships, and see that we can live a new course for the future.

In our experience at Families Turning we have seen a great thirst, willingness and enthusiasm on the part of individuals, groups and congregations for something better within their family relationships. Families want to turn toward each other. We all need the right skills and ideas at the right time to strengthen exponentially our relationships.

This deepening desire and movement is in alignment with CLC’s emphasis on family as one of its four frontiers. We see Pope Francis coming to this country with his priority on family as an added dimension of interest and importance to this ongoing ministry. Families Turning hears a call to continue its development, which includes further outreach into CLC groups across the country to concentrate our mission on family.

In addition to the initial workshop for family members, we are clearly seeing the next two dimensions for this program. We will complete a thorough written explanation of the foundational key ideas for this apostolate, and then prepare helping professionals who can communicate and disseminate the initial workshop program. This is a grace we feel that can grow in CLC given the other initiatives that are already focusing on family life in this country. We look forward to journeying with you and keeping you updated on the developments in our work.

Families Turning asks for your prayers as we all continue to discern and develop this ministry to families for our Lord.
Confirmed by the Witness of Their Lives

Ellen Delaney

How can we define the institution of the family? Is it a group of people related by blood, marriage or adoption, or a group of people living in one household, or a group of people who love and care for each other? Most people prefer the broad definitions based on love, care and nurture. This is a family story of a group of people who love and care for each other and who have made a commitment to live a life centered on Jesus. The story begins with my recent accident, but is actually the tale of my CLC’s love, care and nurture.

I broke my hip this March. My whole profile made me a patient who deeply concerned her doctors and other medical staff. I live alone with no close relatives to care for me. CLC came to my rescue. This community, like most families, consists of a nucleus and its extension. The nucleus is my home community, the one I pray with and share with twice a month. My extended CLC family is all those people in the region whom I have grown to know and love through the many days of prayer and other regional functions. They joined, family-like, with my home community in my care and support. Working together, I had prayers, visitors, flowers and fruit. There were people deeply concerned about the many hazards in my apartment and people who facilitated paying my bills. Others made sure I had enough changes of clothing and reading material. People met with me, attended care plan meetings, did research on housing, financial questions, after rehabilitation options, and so many of the other questions that impacted my life. The list could go on and on. Whatever I needed, they were there. Whenever I needed someone, she was there. The people in the community even started to pack up my apartment to make my moving easier.

Like all families, we have had some moments of tension, but the love which motivated the community’s actions was so present that these moments became moments which led to prayer and growth. The challenge of living the Ignatian idea that there are many roads to the same goal is especially hard. One needs to trust the presence of the Spirit in others even though they are following a path that you would never have taken, and don’t understand. Yet this is one of the main ways families reflect the unconditional love of God.

My experience of the way this challenge worked in my CLC family has shown me that it is possible to love like this. It also expanded my definition of “good.” Up until this time, whenever I thought about the second point in the “Contemplation on the Love of God” that “that love consists in mutual sharing of goods,” the ‘goods’ that came to mind were always rather concrete. Ignatius’ examples of honors and knowledge indicate that the goods are more than material. Even the description of the sharing of knowledge as, “the one who has knowledge shares it with one who does not,” does not describe the vulnerability and trust that allowed us to expose some deeply held aspects of ourselves that we may have wanted to keep buried. This honest sharing of ourselves affected each of us. Individually we have been shaped and strengthened by this deeper vulnerability. The bonds of love and trust that were forged have brought each of us into a better understanding of each other and ourselves. Thomas Merton is credited with saying, “Our relationship with God will grow no further than our most advanced human relationships.” I am grateful for the opportunity we have had to grow in both types of relationships.

I am also grateful that the writing of this article has given me the opportunity to think about my definition of family. I find myself thinking that whatever definition we may adapt for practical purposes, there is a more universal one. As adopted children of the Father and siblings of Jesus, the same love which flows between the Father and Jesus and the Spirit must be our lived life in all our relationships with our siblings, both familial and universal. I am deeply grateful for all the love and support I have gotten, and continue to get from my CLC family, but I am more deeply moved by the realization that I have been the beneficiary of the living out of Ignatius’ dictum, “... love ought to show itself in deeds over and above words.” (SP230) Indeed, I see in the lives and actions of my CLC family, the living enactment of a line from the Collect of June 22, 2015, the feast of St. John Fisher and St. Thomas More, which provides the title of this article, “That we may confirm by the witness of our life, the faith we profess with our lips.”
Retirement of Wisdom Figure, Leader, Friend – Daniel J. Fitzpatrick, S.J.

On August 31, 2014 Fr. Dan Fitzpatrick, S.J. stepped down as the Ecclesial Assistant in the New York Region, concluding over three decades of devoted ministry to Metro NY CLC. Suffice to say Fr. Dan will be greatly missed, not only for the tireless effort he devoted to the region but also for the personal relationship many of us developed with him as he guided us on our spiritual journey.

Realizing the significance of naming his successor, a search committee, led by Ann Marie Brennan, was formed to fulfill this mandate. After a great deal of effort, including consultation with the Society of Jesus and other individuals within the Ignatian community, we were delighted to name Sr. Eileen Schulenburg, SC, as our new EA effective October 15, 2014 —Steve Macy

“There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for everything under the heavens.” Ecclesiastes 3:1

The quote came to mind even before I realized it was to be found in this week’s readings at Mass. Father Dan’s decision to retire as Regional Ecclesial Assistant of Metro New York Christian Life Community was not a shock to us. He had been trying to prepare us for this reality for a few years. That being said however, it still produced a shock reaction to most of us. How could we continue being CLC without him? Who was going to help form new CLCs? Who was going to be our intermediary at Fordham regarding upcoming CLC events? The questions came quickly and in large numbers as we expressed concern for our future as CLCers and CLC groups.

As I reflected on the reactions within myself and others, I was awakened to the fact that the concerns were almost a selfish response to the news, to the reality that Dan’s retirement was a fact. Dan has discerned what God’s plan for him is at this juncture in his life.

Instead of focusing on me/us, we need to move on with Dan, rejoicing in his many accomplishments, giving thanks for his compassion and generosity to all of us and praying for him as he continues the work of the Lord in a new way.

The written memories and photos tell a great deal about Father Dan and who people say that he is. The pages are filled with adjectives describing him: wise, joyful, spirit-filled, funny, supportive, energetic, inspirational, generous, serene, patient, present. We are reminded of his many roles: retreat director, guide, celebrant at liturgies, confessor, teacher, advisor and always friend.

As Father Dan moves along may we all be close by, offering our friendship and support in whatever way we can. Let us pray together that God grants Dan peace, health and happiness in the years to come.

Dorothy M. Zambito
There are so many wonderful graces that Fr. Dan has brought to our Metro NY CLC and to me. One memorable time was the retreat that Fr. Dan gave to the NNJCLC at the Jogues Retreat Center in Cornwall. Fr. guided us through several of the GP’s and helped us to deepen our understanding of our CLC commitment to build the kingdom. It personally was a wonderfully guided period of reflection and the first time I really integrated what God was asking from me as a CLC member. For all of our community the retreat was a renewal of our CLC vocation. This past spring I was privileged to be part of guides training for six members of the pre-CLC in Metuchen. Here again the Spirit of God shone forth as Fr. Dan presented, explained and led us to reflect on the basic principles of CLC. Each member of the group came away from the 3 sessions with Fr. Dan feeling the joy of his love for God and for God’s work. It is a blessing that will continue to be with all of us. I am grateful to Fr. Dan for his guidance, support and presence to each one of us in CLC. Fr. Dan, thank you for your steadfast love and commitment to helping us to be a world-focused lay apostolic community.

—Terri Mierswa

Well, it has been a great run of twenty-eight years for Pat and me in CLC with you at the helm. When we first joined CLC, we were just engaged to be married. Your invite to us to join the Westchester CLC and your accompaniment on our faith journey has been a great blessing to us and to our four children who joined us along the way. Your prayers and your wisdom have been steadfast, especially during some trying times. Of course we always appreciated your wit and humor! I must say that you showed much faith and trust in recommending me, Ann Marie, to the position of chairperson of the Metro NY CLC at the age of 27 - through a couple of concerts, then visiting us in snowy Vermont, starting young adult CLCs with us in Riverdale, NY and in Glen Rock, NJ. Most precious is your love of God and the very personal, deep retreat experiences that you have led for us. You have shown us how close Jesus walks with us, feels with us, loves us. Such wondrous and joyous love! We are so grateful to you! May God bless you on this next phase of your life. And may you always know how much we all love you! AMDG!

—Ann Marie and Patrick Brennan + Kieran, Michael, Paul and Sarah

How do we thank Father Dan for all these years? What do we say about Father Dan? Plenty! He was our father, brother, friend, spiritual adviser/director with us in joy and sorrow and all the good or boring times in between. He guided our retreats, was with us when we helped the Little Sisters of the Poor. He and Father Nagle were fellow pilgrims to the Holy Land. He facilitated the discussion of the many books written by his fellow Jesuits during our meetings. He married our children, baptized our grandchildren and extended his spiritual services to our in-laws and other family members, blessing birthdays and wedding anniversaries, blessing our houses, our cars, our rosaries bought from other places, hearing our confessions, and in April burying one of us, Tessie Bobila - may she rest in peace. He was genuinely one of us, our deepest and highest friend in Christ and the Holy Spirit. We put out a book of his Advent homilies. He learned to eat Filipino food. He understood our culture of singing and dancing and cooking and eating and being very close to family. We were comfortable talking in our language with him around, and some of us even listened to Yankee game scores during our Jogues retreat in October, much to his dismay. He focused us on Christ. Specifically we learned the CLC way of life from him - discernment, the examen of consciousness, the Spiritual Exercises, strengthening our prayer life.

We love you Father Dan. You will always be in our hearts and minds, guiding us, loving us, giving us strength in the Lord. May you have a quiet, fruitful retirement filled with wonderful deeds offered to him. Godspeed

—Cora Custodio
Fr. Dan was persistent in coming to Fordham Prep in the 1990’s to present the idea of starting a CLC. We resisted at first, much like the fishermen who tried to put off Jesus. Holy persistence seems to always pay off, and we could not be more grateful to our founder, leader and friend who has guided us with the perfect balance of faith, enthusiasm, insight, gentleness, challenge and humor. Your life and apostolate have been such an example and such a grace to so many of us for so many years, Fr. Dan. Thank you and may God continue to bless you in the years ahead.

—Paul Homer

For over 20 years, “Diaspora” members of Loyola CLC conducted an Easter Triduum at St. Andrew’s Retreat House in Walden, NY. Fr. Drolet and Fr. Dan led our Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday liturgies. These were memorable events which were attended by many families, including babies, toddlers, school age children, teens, and sometimes even grandparents. The Hunters, Durkins, Cummins, Hayes, Hekkers, Mc Dermotts, Hoppes, Messinas, Plaskons, Zambitos, Hamils and Boyles were among the families who participated. Fr. Dan usually conducted the liturgies for the youngest children with Marianne Cummins and Lillian Caldarese. He would take the children to gather the wood to be used for lighting the fire for the liturgy on Holy Saturday and even helped washing the dishes!! (There were many mouths to feed!) The tradition lives on as a few of these families continue to gather on Good Friday at the home of Dennis and Marianne Cummins. Fr. Dan was the ‘young’ priest then and we were the young parents of the 70’s and 80’s. We have all continued to age, hopefully gracefully, but the events of those years will long be remembered by us and our children.

—Marianne Cummins

One fond memory of Dan is the time that he asked me to help him restart Westchester CLC. It was a wonderful experience for Dan and me to rekindle friendships with the Hayes and the Messinas, former members of the Loyola community. It was also satisfying watching Dan successfully establish the new Westchester CLC community.

—Joan Woods

My memories of Fr. Dan and Eucharist are more a many layered picture than the recall of a specific event. The Eucharist is very important to Fr. Dan. He celebrates Mass every day, even if it means celebrating it alone. We at Faber ended most of our meetings with Mass. My image of these Masses is one of Fr. Dan reverently unpacking his Mass kit, setting up the “altar” and asking individuals to do the readings. It was an unadorned, but very devout, prayerful liturgy with a thoughtful, well prepared homily. A few times, we were asked to listen to his homily for Sunday and give him feedback. Even then, it was plain that Fr. Dan had given the homily much attention and work. But what stands out for me is how Fr. Dan always started intercessory prayer, or the prayer of the Faithful: “Let us thank God for giving us his Son, Jesus.” So direct and to the point! So simple, yet so deeply an expression of identity.

—Ellen Delaney
Encountering the Wisdom Language of Ignatius

Pat Carter Anderson

When I read Projects 160, I felt it was an invitation to explore Ignatius as mystic and the wisdom language to which he invites us in the Spiritual Exercises. This wisdom is not one that comes from the mind, but from the Spirit. It is biblical wisdom. The wisdom is described in the book of Wisdom and is often called Sophia, especially in the Eastern Church. It is the wisdom described below:

When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race. (Proverbs 8:27-31)

It is the wisdom of the mystics who have been immersed in the Cosmic Christ who “know” at the deepest level of their being that all is an expression of the Divine. All is One. The mystical tradition was an important part of the early church and is still prominent in the Eastern Church. But in the Western Church, once the church was sanctioned under Constantine, interest in the mystical tradition waned, replaced instead by institution, hierarchy and dogma. These dynamics are good, but they need to be in balance with one another. Interest in the mystical tradition is drawing more of a following in the Western Church because of people like Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen and Teilhard de Chardin. Yes, even the Jesuits have their mystics. In fact, their founder Ignatius was one. His experience at the Cardoner River where he encountered the Cosmic Christ and experienced the incarnational reality of all existence was an experience that changed his life.

Pope Francis’ closeness to the mystical movement is probably the source of the wisdom that he has shown navigating the precarious waters of the papacy. He states, “Ignatius is a mystic, not an ascetic…. It irritates me when I hear that the Spiritual Exercises are ‘Ignatian’ only because they are done in silence. In fact, the Exercises can be perfectly Ignatian also in daily life and without the silence. An interpretation of the Spiritual Exercises that emphasizes asceticism, silence and penance is a distorted one that became widespread even in the Society, especially in the Society of Jesus in Spain. I am rather close to the mystical movement, that of Louis Lallement and Jean-Joseph Surin. And Faber was a mystic.” (Interview with Pope Francis by Fr. Antonio Spadaro, August 19, 2013)

Mystical spirituality moves us out of a dualistic, judgmental mindset (black-white, right-wrong, good-bad) to an inclusive, expansive mindset whose starting point is: all is sacred, all is part of the unfolding of the Cosmic Christ, all is One. When we live out of this mindset, we experience the spiritual freedom that Ignatius offers us in the Spiritual Exercises. Looking at the Exercises through the lens of the unity of all creation, there is a significant shift in how we experience them. We’ll look at a few examples of this.

In the Principal and Foundation, Ignatius reminds us whose we are, and that we along with all creation are part of the unfolding of God’s Kindom (I use the word...
kindom instead of kingdom because I feel it more accurately reflects the reality of the sacred community we call the Body of the Christ). We are all part of the Oneness that works in harmony and balance. Therefore we need to let go of our preconceptions of what is good or bad, helpful or not, and just enter into the present to experience God’s presence here – encountering the Divine in all things.

We know that all is not in harmony and balance. The Body of the Christ is still unfolding and imperfect. There are energies that work against the building of the Kindom. And so Ignatius invites us to enter into the experience of sin. He does not begin with our own sinfulness. While the concept of social sin is fairly recent, since the 1960s, I think Ignatius would recognize this concept as he invites us to consider the sin of the angels, of Adam and Eve and of a single person. He understands that these acts of pride, greed and arrogance have had consequences throughout the Body of the Christ. He invites us to the cross with Jesus where we are asked to enter into a conversation with God about the passion of the Christ being suffered today and to ask: What have I done for the Body of the Christ? What am I doing for the Body of the Christ? What should I do for the Body of the Christ?

It is only after we have encountered the brokenness in the Body of the Christ that Ignatius invites us to look at our own sinfulness. Beginning with our childhood and family life we examine those influences and cultural mindsets that were part of our formative years and that might still influence us today. Ignatius invites us to experience deeply our sinfulness and its effects not only on our lives and relationship to God, but also how it has impacted the entire Body of the Christ, like an ulcer that spreads its infection throughout the Body.

Then Ignatius again reminds us whose we are. Even though our sinfulness has polluted the Body of the Christ, that body still sustains and supports us through God’s compassion and mercy. With this deeper understanding, we are invited once more to commit ourselves to do our part in building the Kindom to its fullness.

This leads us to the discernment of spirits. How do we make choices that will build the Kindom? Here Ignatius calls upon our rational mind to work with the wisdom of the mystical mind to deepen our understanding of God’s desires for us and the world. The rational mind often uses dualistic thinking to come to decisions. When it is informed by the mystical mind we enter into discernment with much greater spiritual freedom. We make decisions unbiased by our own enculturation, judgmentalism, prejudice and compulsions. Ignatius invites us to consider the Two Standards, not as a choice to make between the two, but to enter more deeply into an understanding of the workings of those forces which lead to chaos and fracturing of the Kindom compared to those forces which lead to unity and communion. Today we might call this theological reflection: looking at a situation and discerning what forces are at work and where following a certain course eventually leads, either towards the building of the Kindom or destruction of it. I invite you to explore other elements of the Exercises from the context of the wisdom of the mystical mind: the Call of the King, Three Persons, Three Kinds of Humility, the Life of Jesus, the Last Supper, and his Passion, Death and Resurrection.

The Principal and Foundation introduces us to mystical union with God. The Contemplation on Divine Love revels in it! The Suscipe calls us to the total surrender to Divine Love which, paradoxically, leads to total spiritual freedom. Each point of this contemplation leads us more deeply into the mystery of God’s presence in all of creation, into the Body of the Christ, and our immersion in it. It calls us to love the world as God does, with joy, mercy and compassion - even in its woundedness. It calls us to labor with God in the building of the Kindom.

As Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, S. J., reminded us at the World Assembly in 2013, “the wisdom of finding God in everything…It is the language of God working in the family, in the children, in culture, in everything. This leads the people into a new relationship with God, a relationship of depth and wisdom.” Our U.S. culture, especially, seems to be based on superficiality: the sound byte, the most recent polls, who has the most money, power, prestige. The news media seem to thrive on issues that divide us and call us to choose between one side or the other. Wisdom language offsets this and challenges us to recognize the Kindom even in differences. It offsets the temptation to label ourselves as belonging to one party or ideology rather than another and place our primary loyalties in the Body of the Christ. It calls us to claim the sacredness of all, to see beyond labels, and to respond to the questions: What have I done for the Body of the Christ? What am I doing for the Body of the Christ? What should I do for the Body of the Christ?
God envied people He created; they had mothers. The Creator rushed down from Heaven devoid of Mother to the Created on the Earth full of mothers.

God found a shy little girl called Mary In a remote hamlet, a humongous cage. Would you be my mother, red canary? God danced when she sang YES onstage.

God flung the door open and Mary fluttered out of the cage. He shouted like a thunder; now I have my own mother!

God was becoming a human inside a tender body. God was becoming a boy with sweet milk of a woman. He became a man under the tiny wings of a feeble lady. He became a son of the most elegant human.

God whispered; I love you, Mother!

Poor Mary returned back God’s gargantuan love lavishly! She made God smile by keep everything deep in her nous. She made God not to abandon hope for humans easily by crouching down at the foot of the Cross.

God who created mothers came to know; mother’s bosom as vast as Heaven, mother’s love deeper than the deepest well, mother’s sacrifice beautiful only to the eyes of God, mother’s suffering allowed only to mothers.

God wanted to magnify mother’s love dearly by wiping Eve’s stain off Mary’s feathers by re-creating Mary’s body lest it would rot vainly by crowning her as Queen of Heaven and Earth with a wreath highlighted by plenty of white roses.

Now I envy God; He has the most beautiful Mother!

Yet God glorified us; here is your mother, He pleased His Mother; here are your children, while dying on the Cross; so concrete. That’s God’s love; so complete.

Holy Mary, Mother of the Absolute. How dare can we call you our mother? Your son was nailed on the Cross by the resolute. How can your son be our brother?

Now we have the most wonderful Mother. She gives us her little love that raised God, She feeds us her plentiful milk that fed God, She leads us with her endurance that sustained God.

Mary has shrunken to become my little mother. Mother of the Almighty has become plain mother of mine. She willingly has become the mother of this miserable debtor. She is having a happy life in Heaven with God in shine, but she flies down to this world to raise us, to raise me.

Mother of God’s; Mother of ours; Mother of mine Mother, Mother, Mother….

What’s going on, my son? Mary is your mother?!! Mom, she’s your mother too… Nothing would matter, wouldn’t it, mom?

I crown the mother of my ducklings as Queen of my Family with a wreath adorned with wild flowers and twigs delivered by cardinals.

Joonho Kim is an IT professional with a Ph.D. degree in Medical Informatics. He has been working for a software company more than 20 years. Joonho is an avid poet who enjoys writing spiritual poems. His dream is to write a grand epic poem about the life of Jesus Christ. He has been teaching RCIA at the Korean Martyrs Catholic Church in Atlanta, GA for the last eight years. Recently, he stopped walking alone and jumped on a clattering oxcart named CLC as a new spiritual adventure. He serves as a member of the translation team in the Atlanta KCLC.
“It is never too early to begin a relationship with God!”

S.E.E.D., established 2006, was founded and developed to serve the youth in our Church, specifically ages 6-17, through a retreat experience based on Ignatian spirituality. As a national ministry, we hope to prepare the sacred space for our retreatants (called “SEEDlings”) to find God in all things, and develop a deeper, intimate relationship with Christ.

S.E.E.D. Ministry is a lay community ministry belonging to Dong Hanh, Christian Life Community USA. As a community, we value the importance of prayer through reflection, discernment and support to send off our children to be with the Lord on retreat. The retreat is supported by a community of families and led by young adults. Every year, at an event called SEED Source, we continue to form and train teams of young adult leaders that are called to serve the children and teenagers through sharing their Catholic faith, specifically with an Ignatian perspective and the Spiritual Exercises. We find that young adult leaders make a great impression on the children and teenagers, while having the support of the parent organizers that prepare the logistics of the retreat. It is through an organic leadership community that SEED Retreat continues to be delivered across the nation for the past decade in order to provide an intimate experience with God for hundreds of children. It is our mission to exemplify our belonging to the One Apostolic Body of Christ through engaging the youth at retreat in experiencing Christ, active in our everyday life.

We believe in building relationships with God, family and community as well as learning more about our identity and discerning our calling and vocation. We invite God’s children to embark on a journey to explore and experience God’s love throughout a weekend filled with prayer, reflection, community-building activities, faith sharing, bonding, song and worship. It is never too soon or too late to plant and nurture the seed of faith!
Daniel Lap Nguyen

My first time attending a SEED retreat with my family was about two years ago in Southern California. I remember our teenage daughters hanging out with their friends, coeds and all, behind closed doors, way past midnight. Just once or twice I wondered about activities in which they were engaged. But I felt a perfect peace going to bed early and giving them complete freedom to do whatever they wanted. We were on the mountain for the weekend. Aside from the perfect peace of mind, I sensed the love and care everywhere that weekend. There were home-cooked meals and fruits and snacks piled up in the kitchen since early Friday afternoon. Enthusiastic parents showed up next, followed by endless activities and showering the children with messages of love and hope. From the many shades of the green SEED T-shirts the kids wore during the retreat, it was easy to see that the T-shirts brought forth fond memories since the last year’s retreat. Throughout the weekend I was comfortable in the knowledge that my kids were in better hands than my own. I had the complete trust that they were getting the attention, the education and the knowledge of God in ways that I could never provide.

Having recognized my own limitations as a parent, I have learned the benefits of surrounding my children with people who are in some ways better than I am. Despite the stress and desolation when planning SEED, it was worthwhile and beautiful in the end. I will always be grateful for the friends I met through SEED, my encounter with God during the retreat through the retreatants and the skills I’ve developed from planning the retreat. The endless love and support I felt in different ways from the very beginning has continued after the retreat. I may still be on that retreat high, but I can say my decision to lead SEED was one of the best decisions I have ever made in my entire life. I will definitely be coming back to help again next summer!

Theresa Duong

SEED CA III was a blessing for me to be involved in and to experience. It was my first time being a retreat leader. I left the retreat with a high that retreatants normally feel. I believe everything happens for a reason and that God gives us opportunities which we should accept with open arms. Therefore, I believe that SEED was a gift from God to me and an opportunity for me to grow as a person.

I never thought I’d ever lead retreats since I was so used to going on them instead. I never thought I had the capability to work with a team of leaders who seemed so much more dedicated and talented than I am. SEED has not only helped me grow in faith, but has also helped me grow as a person. Planning SEED as a retreat leader has taught me to understand teamwork, flexibility, support, grace and love. Without my strong, loving team of leaders, I don’t know how I could have survived our long meeting nights and deadline pressures. Whenever I was trying to improve my activities for the kids, I had the entire team giving me suggestions and assuring me that everything would be fine. They were my backbone and support system throughout the entire process from start to finish. I can’t explain it any more than to say that I have been blessed to meet and work with such a phenomenal, hardworking and caring team of leaders.

During SEED weekend, there were definitely many graces received. One that really stands out to me is the fact that I had so much energy all day Saturday from 7 AM to 12 Midnight, despite having only two hours sleep. The kids’ unending energy and enthusiasm rubbed off on me and made me energized and enthusiastic all day long. I really enjoyed talking with the kids from Kids’ Track and the teens in Teen Track. They all had so much to share which helped me see each person’s uniqueness. Throughout the retreat, all leaders were working to have everything run smoothly. It didn’t even feel like work because I was having so much fun (with Praise and Worship, leading the stations for the Relay Race and Scavenger Hunt, and being the MC for Entertainment Night). I forgot about being tired. This was something I recognize as a grace because without God’s presence in the retreat, everything would have been so different. Overall, SEED CA III was a weekend to remember and I loved it with all my heart. Despite the stress and desolation when planning SEED, it was worthwhile and beautiful in the end. I will always be grateful for the friends I met through SEED, my encounter with God during the retreat through the retreatants and the skills I’ve developed from planning the retreat. I may still be on that retreat high, but I can say my decision to lead SEED was one of the best decisions I have ever made in my entire life. I will definitely be coming back to help again next summer!
Two hours into my first SEED, and I understood. Surrounded by new personalities and old friends, the energy in the air was contagious. Laughter intermingled with talk that ranged from contemplative to joyous. What I experienced at this three-day retreat has been an unforgettable experience. I’ve been to plenty of religious summer camps, but they all seem to fall short compared to what SEED is: finding God in your own personalized way, and then learning how to discern and use the gifts that you discover in the real world. In many parish bible camps, I was put in the position of sitting in an auditorium with a speaker rambling about something obscure in the Bible that I couldn’t relate to, surrounded by kids and teens as bored as I was. It wasn’t engaging. It wasn’t fun. It wasn’t impactful. I wasn’t experiencing Christ. I was listening to a person describe him for me, but not at SEED.

SEED is different. Its foundation connects Ignatian prayer in a meaningful and approachable way, for kids, teens and adults. The graces I’ve received over the past three years of SEED are lasting impressions on my life and faith. I learned not only to tolerate others but to love them, to imitate Christ not only at Church but at home and in public. It gave me a survival kit for the sweaty, awkward and inhospitable wasteland of teenagehood. SEED has taken the negatives of my life where I once thought impossible to find Christ and transformed them into positives. I received goals for improvement, with Christ guiding me through these obstacles. The effects have been apparent. I’m more comfortable with my faith. Church and prayer have changed from obligations to celebrations. Family meals are now times of genuine conversation.

Okay, you might be asking yourself with your finger about to dial the 24/7 SEED registration hotline, (we don’t have a SEED registration hotline), What sort of sorcery do the wizards at SEED do to give ALL of these graces in only three days? You can thank the wizards themselves, mostly young adults still in college who have sacrificed their time, energy and instant ramen budgets to provide this wonderful experience. This legendary species, known as SEED Leaders, are some of the coolest and friendliest people you will ever meet. They are energetic, goofy, hilarious and insightful to the point of questioning if they’re actually Catholic leprechauns disguised as college students. When they’re not dancing, singing or hogging the SEED nacho cheese pot, they provide a learning environment where they share their experiences and encourage us to share our own journeys with Christ in intimate, small groups. Small groups are one of the most powerful experiences of SEED. These smaller circles of friends provide a place for discussion without judgment, because whatever you say in your small group stays in your small group. You begin to recognize the presence of Christ in your fellow retreatants, all under the gentle guidance of the SEED leaders. SEED’s small groups and leaders allow you to be your most vulnerable and real self, but in a good way. At SEED, your imperfections and disguises don’t matter, because everyone values you for who you truly are. After a day or two, you begin to treat everyone as family under Christ. It’s miraculous, to say the least.

SEED combines the best of both - reflective solitude and joyful community in a retreat that will literally change your world. I can say confidently, I am better spiritually than the person I was three years ago, before SEED.

It’s that time again! Summer time means SEED, SEED and more SEED. I’ve been blessed to be a part of the SEED ministry for the past four years. Being a member of the CLC group Hat Cai, or Mustard Seed, during my time at the University of California Irvine, I often heard about SEED retreats. During my first and second year, a majority of the leaders came from the group. I took time during my second year to discern if it was my calling to serve on the California team. I felt called to serve my extended community, and that summer I led my first SEED retreat. I received more graces than I could count. I found a welcoming community, a beautiful family during the summer of 2012. I had always heard of Dong Hanh and Christian Life Community, yet words found on a PowerPoint slideshow did no justice to them. I found unwavering support from the organizers and parents, especially during the retreat. They supported us emotionally, physically and spiritually whenever we experienced times of desolation. We made connections with the retreatants that have lasted to this day. As a community, we journeyed together to know and love God. During that summer, I found a family, my potential to lead and spread God’s words, and years of blessings.
I was called again to serve in 2014, but this time, on the Denver team! Apart from nervousness, I was thrilled to meet and serve others from a different region. How beautiful to not only see such a ministry spread nationally, but also be a part of it. It was definitely a challenge, mostly because the retreat was in a different state. Instead of meeting in person with the other leaders, many of the meetings were held via webcam because the leaders came from all over the United States. This brought diversity to the table during the planning process. During the retreat itself, I found that despite the different region, the love and search for God stayed the same. Among all the leaders, the yearning to serve was strong. Among all the retreatants, the yearning to grow closer to God was strong. And among the organizers and parents, the yearning to give back to their community was strong. I had the chance to work with the high school track this year and it was one of the best decisions. I received gifts, not only by sharing my faith with the teens, but also, by witnessing their faith sharing within our small groups. I was able to connect with each member in my small group and couldn’t be more blessed to be a part of their spiritual journey that weekend and onwards. This SEED experience was one of the most fruitful in which I have served.

Again this year, I was called to serve on the Denver team. I am ecstatic to work with this year’s team and provide a meaningful retreat for the children in Denver. I am thankful for the opportunities I had to serve with Dong Hanh and CLC. Throughout my service these past years, I have seen communities brought together through SEED. It is amazing to think of how the ministry has thrived and grown. A retreat that once started in Arizona is now nationwide because of our desire for God’s love to be widespread. All it took was a little bit of faith! “I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move.” Matthew 17:20

Nam Tran

To truly express the graces I have received from SEED Ministry and why I feel called to serve, I would like to take a step back and start by sharing with you one of my most memorable experiences when I was a SEEDling. After a long day of pushing physical, emotional and spiritual limits, it was Saturday night of my last ever SEED retreat as a participant. I was sitting in a circle with SEED leaders, friends I grew up with and friends I just met. A candle was being passed around the circle and anyone who felt called to share feelings was given the floor. Even though at times it was completely silent, I could tell that this was a very loving, caring, open and nourishing environment in which to be. As the candle got closer to me and I continued to contemplate my sharing, a bittersweet feeling came over me. After seven years of attending SEED retreats, this was my last one. I began to realize all the graces I had received and how SEED had shaped me. I couldn’t be more thankful to all those who had played a role in my faith journey. From the leaders who were my navigators, to other retreatants who were my passengers, and all the parents who were the fuel that drives my faith, I was filled with gratitude for these people whom I can call my lifelong friends and role models.

I remember when I was a retreatant, I would look forward to SEED because of the fun aspect, but little did I know that I was being formed and shaped in God’s will. As a SEED leader I can see the positive influences that the retreat has on the participants and their families. The retreatants take the graces they have received and apply them to their daily lives with the help and reinforcement of their parents. This is just one of the many beauties of SEED. One of my personal favorites is seeing the joy and excitement not only on the SEEDlings’ faces, but also on those of the leaders and parents. The SEEDlings look forward to retreat each year, the parents are always supportive and the leaders are eager to lead. By leading, I continue to receive many of the graces I had received as a retreatant. I notice that these graces of Ignatian spirituality positively affect other aspects of my life and aid my faith journey. In conclusion, I feel called to serve because I see all the good that SEED Ministry does and I want to continue being a part of that. The first-hand experience of the love that everyone has for SEED is what makes it easy for me to continue leading and supporting this ministry.
Mai-Khoi Vu

Next week will be my fifth time at SEED. I started going when I was five. My favorite SEED retreat so far was SEED CA III. The theme was “Lifesong My Daily Prayer.” It means my life and all the little things I do daily can become a prayer to God. My favorite SEED leader was chi Theresa because I was reminded by her that we can do little things with big love. I had learned that from school but I had forgotten to apply it until chi Theresa’s talk reminded me. I really liked anh James’ talk, “Every Day Is Christmas.” Every day is a gift from God. My most memorable experience was when the rattlesnake showed up in the kids’ scavenger hunt and the parents killed the snake to keep us from harm. I loved all the activities, especially when we made the popsicle stick bridges. My group’s name was “The Artists” and we truly lived up to that name. We drew a lot of pictures of God’s creations. I enjoyed all the skits of the entertainment night. My favorite skit, besides the one I was in, was “St. Francis Xavier.” It was very amusing. I made some new friends at SEED and I was happy to spend the weekend with my old friends as well. I look forward to every year’s SEED.

Peter Khoa Nguyen

My calling to join SEED Ministry came during my college years at UC Irvine when I was a leader on SEED 3 and SEED 5, both in Arizona. I am sure that many of the other leaders will share about the graces that come from being a SEED leader, so I would like to share about the graces that I’ve experienced in getting to train those leaders. I was approached two years ago to help out with Seed Source as part of the SEED Formations Team. At first, I felt that this was very strange since I hadn’t done any SEED Ministry work for three years after I moved to advance my career. When I asked why I was invited, I discovered it was for my experience of Ignatian spirituality rather than for my experience in leading SEED retreats. I was searching for ways to serve and to live out my faith. This invitation came at the perfect time.

I have learned that Ignatian spirituality is a gift that is accessible to anyone, young or old. The culture all around us would like us to think that religion is for old people or for naïve people. In SEED, I see young college students embracing their faith, filling their hearts with peace and joy. This contradicts the culture in a beautiful way. Personally, I have seen myself grow away from satisfying cultural norms towards satisfying my soul, which longs to be with God. Leading in SEED Ministry deepens my prayer life in ways that are different and complementary to being a retreatant. Together, they help me build a stronger and deeper foundation for my faith.

I recently had the opportunity to speak with past SEED leaders at the Dong Hanh CLC National Assembly. As we looked at how the ministry has grown, I found their hearts full of love for God. There is a phrase that comes to mind when I think of what it means to lead in SEED ministry. It goes like this, “Our job as SEED leaders is to set the dining table for SEED retreatants to have a meal with their God.” When I take a step back, I see that the leaders, myself included, can’t set this table without getting to know our God in the process. What a gift it is to lead others to God and to walk on our path towards God at the same time!

Timothy Nguyen

God calls to us. We either hear it and rise to His expectations or press ignore. SEED is my calling in disguise to do His work. The ministry is unlike any with which I’ve been involved. It was an experience that heightened my spirituality to where I hear God’s voice thundering through every part of my being. It is a ministry that strengthens my faith in Him and allows me to grow in my mission to do His work.

Sign me up! The problem was, I didn’t know what SEED was about. A friend approached me after a retreat that I had been doing for years and recruited me. Sure, why not? I didn’t know what I was getting myself into as I filled out the sign up page for SEED Source and answered the questions. One in particular was, “What are your hopes and/or desires for SEED Source?” My answer was to learn about the Holy Spirit, because I haven’t been aware of His presence. SEED Source is a formation program given by veteran SEED leaders that trained us in how to create retreats from scratch with a team, inviting God along the way. Other retreats were orchestrated by a nun or priest, or someone who had already pledged his/her whole life to God. Leaders just had to connect the dots and carry out the instructions. It was foolproof. SEED was different.

The concept of SEED was foreign to me. I hadn’t heard of a ministry that creates retreats catering to the needs of the retreatants. My SEED experience was rewarding. There were times I questioned my role in the project, but with every question, I sent a prayer to God and He answered.
The process took me on a joy ride. It was fast and furious but not up to the number seven. I knew planning for SEED would be a lengthy process. I asked God if this would be taking too much time away from my family. I realized that I was doing His work. I quickly composed myself and let Jesus take the wheel to the second fast lane. It was then that I gained insight into why I was called. I had to learn before I could lead.

The meetings lifted my spirituality to the heights of Kanye thinking he could touch the sky. It was through this whole process that I learned about humility, service and the attitudes of my peers. At first, I felt disconnected from the group. Most of the team had already known each other for years while I felt like the lone wolf. During discussion, as people said they were content with their spirituality, I held out hope that they would reveal what “content” meant. I didn’t know these people or how the Holy Spirit had touched their souls. This made me inquisitive. The problem was that I was too timid to ask questions or speak up. I felt out of place but not for long. Once I learned not to doubt myself and that my contributions mattered, I was able to feel the Holy Spirit guide me.

Meetings weren’t just about organizing events, but also to learn about oneself and others. The Holy Spirit was present in the people I encountered. I was amazed by the complexity of those who sat beside me or through the computer screen. It gave me greater understanding, feeling the Spirit’s love in everyone. The fact that the leaders chose to spend every week on this task opened my eyes to the amount of calls God made to each of us. It was through the conversations with them that I saw why God had called upon my peers. Their service and humility made me long to serve as they do. A wise, mature and playful friend spoke to me saying that he views himself as a child and has much more to learn from Our Lord. You can never get enough of Jesus.

Conversations were also very raw. Listening to others speak, I could feel the deep connections tugging at me. They were intimate and real. Their openness allowed me to see everyone in the eyes of Love. These talks presented the Holy Spirit to me - gentle, humble and loving.

The most important thing I learned was about St. Ignatius. I already knew about his life and importance, but not about his order. Having been exposed to it only six months earlier, I was eager to learn and soak up the information. I loved it. I loved the teachings of Ignatian spirituality and how it had lifted me up to the Lord. Each prayer I had with God, each talk, allowed me to learn more about how I viewed the world, myself and others around me in a way God sees them. This was one of the best parts about my SEED experience.

There were countless highlights to the event. I acknowledged God’s call. With it, He showed me a world where I could lead others. It wasn’t just about learning how to organize a retreat but rather coming together with the Holy Spirit. In times of doubt, He was there. The Lord was with me in my journey teaching me to understand others, their contributions and their ideals. He taught me to accept others for who they are and not why they are. I was focusing in a new light on a commandment I’ve known since I could talk, to love thy neighbor. Love them as they are and learn from them. This was the reason why God called me. I may not know the journey that lies ahead of me. This SEED experience with Him leading the way will be fine, because His love is now.

REGIONAL NEWS

Report on CLC in the Missouri Region—Mary Wescovich

The Missouri Region held World CLC Day on March 7 at De Smet Jesuit High School. Ann Padberg and Fr. Cos led the morning with an opening prayer, scripture and a short homily.

Julie McCourt, campus minister at Saint Louis University, gave a presentation on the CLC student program at the University. She shared how the program has a kick-off at the beginning of each semester. It has grown to over three hundred student participants and now has reached out to a number of sororities that include a CLC option. Next year, the plan is to invite fraternities to have a CLC component.

Kitty Gray, Dennis Roach and Mary Wescovich shared their experiences from the CLC Assembly held last July in St. Louis. This was followed by a question and answer period.

Sr. Mary Funge, S.H. has been staffing the National CLC office in St. Louis for a number of years. On May 20, she celebrated her ninetieth birthday. CLCers joined with several other Ignatian groups and had a picnic with Sr. Mary on Memorial Day, May 25. Sister is retiring and moving to a retirement community near her religious order’s provincial house south of Chicago. Once she is settled in her new home, she will explore starting a CLC there. Mary will be greatly missed in St. Louis.

Our local CLC board met on Saturday, June 6 with representatives from eight of our ten CLC groups. Two new CLCs formed over the last months. One is connected with St. Francis Xavier College Church, guided by Fr. Cos and coordinated by Ann Padberg. The other group is located in St. Charles, Missouri on the outskirts of St. Louis. Carol Boerding, retired campus minister from SLU, guides and coordinates the St. Charles Group.
Your contribution can make a difference in faith formation, building community and promoting the Ignatian charism.

Even a small contribution can make a huge impact over time...

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