CELEBRATING A Golden Jubilee

Part II-The People

1967-2017
## Table of Contents

3  Editorial Foreword: We Give Thanks for Your Presence:  
   *Dorothy M. Zambito*
4  In Memoriam
5  President’s Corner: *Ed Plocha*
7  Welcome: Introducing Ady P. Viera and  
   Fr. John Lan Tran, S.J.
8  The Relationship of the Society of Jesus and CLC:  
   *Dominic Totaro, S.J.*
10  Marilyn Barton, Marvelous MAR Ignatian Apostle:  
   *Ann Depner*
12  Jeanne O’Connor: Anam Cara and *Seattle One CLCs*
13  *Anam Cara - Soul Friend - Jeanne O’Connor:  
   Peggy O’Brien-Murphy*
14  Farewell Reflections: *Pat Carter*
16  Experiencing Joy in the Midst of Challenge:  
   *Ann Marie Brennan*
18  Father, Send Your Spirit Among Us: *Dolores Celentano*
20  Come Journey with Me: *Dorothy M. Zambito*
22  Memories of My Years as a Member of Sodality/CLC:  
   *Marianne Cummins*
24  Guides Formation: Becoming a Guides Community:  
   *Carmen Castagno, Hoang Do, Aneta Kumiega and Maria Martinez*
26  Listing of CLC Presidents, National Ecclesial Assistants  
   and Episcopal Moderators

Next Issue: Bearing Witness: A World in Crisis

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We Give Thanks for Your Presence

Recently, I, along with thirty other friends in the parish, was invited to a luncheon given by my church friend, Kathy. She had celebrated her ninetieth birthday a month earlier. Kathy is a widow, mother of four and grandmother to several. She lives alone a fair distance from her family. After more than a week of celebrating that special birthday, she decided to host a thanksgiving get-together in recognition of God’s goodness to her and the caring actions of friends who see her daily as part of our parish family. She remembered and thanked those who invite her to lunch or dinner; who drive her to the doctor; who helped when a tenant was making problems; who accompany her when she brings Communion to the homebound, etc. The luncheon was a joy-filled experience that was a witness to the unity, common language and values that we share. It was a time for remembering and acknowledging good deeds and good people.

In many ways this issue of Harvest is a similar celebration. Writers have shared memorable events and the people who have brought CLC-USA to its present reality. Having been part of this fifty-year experience, I connected with most of the writers on a very personal level. It brought smiles and tears to me as I recalled the many meetings I attended, the discussions and prayer times I shared and the many individuals I met and grew to love. The Sodalists/CLCers included many from abroad including residents from Europe, Africa, Latin America, Canada and Asia. How blessed Ray and I were, to be host to many who passed through the metro New York area. As co-chairs of the 1999 National Assembly held at Fordham University in New York, Ray and I had the pleasure to meet many from around the country that included new faces and old friends, both lay and Jesuit. During my four years as part of ExCo (2000-2004), the opportunity for meeting members and sharing our CLC charism was enriching and life-giving as I traveled to cities that had viable CLCs. As mentioned above, I experienced a unity in community and the common language of those called to serve in the footsteps of Christ through CLC. As President, I wept along with many as news of the horror of 9/11 reached all parts of the globe. Messages of outrage and expressions of sadness/concerns were received from CLC brothers and sisters around the world. We were one body sharing our grief.

It is fitting that we pause and take note of this Golden Anniversary. As you read names of past and present leaders in CLC, add to that list those who have touched your lives and communities. Let us join voices in thanking Father, Son and Spirit, for God’s presence among us as we continue our journey as Christian Life Community.

On behalf of all members of CLC-USA, I recognize our outgoing President, Ed Plocha, for his dedication, commitment, efficiency and caring ways during the past two years. He continually reached out to the national community, responded promptly to concerns and was a visible and tireless leader. We thank you, Ed. Thanks, too, for Helen, Ed’s wife, for sharing him with all of us.

Within this issue:

As a farewell message in the “President’s Corner,” Ed Plocha expresses his gratitude for all CLC leaders, especially those presently serving CLC-USA. He gives an overview of several national priorities including formation, communications, university CLCs, Polish CLC and the work of the National ExCo and the National Coordinating Council. Read his message and be informed about our leaders and our efforts in CLC today.

Read the bios of Ady Viera and Father John Lan Tran, S.J. as we welcome them respectively as our new President and National Ecclesial Assistant. May the blessings of our Lord be with them.

In “The Relationship of the Society of Jesus and CLC,” Father Dominic Totaro, S.J., gives a historic view of the Jesuits and Sodality/CLC. Of particular interest are the quotes of recent Superiors General regarding the importance of collaboration between the Society and CLC.

Ann Depner’s “Marilyn Barton, Marvelous MAR Ignatian Apostle,” tells of a longtime and current leader of the Mid-Atlantic CLC Region. Read about Marilyn - clinical psychologist, spiritual guide, retreat director, founder of CLCs and mover of the Bridges program -
who is an inspiration to so many. One might consider her an unsung hero.

“Jeanne O’Connor” reflects the feelings and experiences of Anam Cara and Seattle One CLCs. The members share important facts and experiences of Jeanne O’Connor, as she has served the Northwest CLCs. Among her many attributes are hospitality, humor, wisdom and courage. Read of her influence in her CLC Region and in other church concerns.

Peggy O’Brien-Murphy wrote a poem to Jeanne, “Anam Cara - Soul Friend - Jeanne O’Connor,” which is included for your inspiration and enjoyment.

In 2001 as Pat Carter completed her term as President of CLC-USA, she presented these “Farewell Reflections.” Some of the topics included: the relationship of CLC to the Jesuits and to other organizations; a changing concept of mission; becoming a discerning body; growing diversity in CLC; and CLC as a prophetic community. Do any of these come up in your discussions even today?

“Experiencing Joy in the Midst of Challenge” is Ann Marie Brennan’s reflections and memories of her years as ExCo President, World Assembly delegate and World CLC Consultant. In addition to sharing fruits of her service to CLC, Ann Marie mentions questions posed ten years ago, and she suggests that many of them resemble questions we still strive to answer. Throughout, the author expresses a sense of joy in her service to and with CLC members.

Being a delegate to a World Assembly is a graced experience. In “Father, Send Your Spirit Among Us,” [President] Dolores Celentano recalls the world meeting in Itaici, Brazil in 1998. Dolores focuses on the movements of the Spirit during her time there - while in small groups, large communal gatherings and during the appearance of two hundred Brazilians sharing their culture with the attendees through their songs and dances.

Other graced, privileged and reflective moments are presented in “Come Journey with Me.” In this article, I (Dorothy Zambito) tell some of my reactions and responses as a delegate to the 2003 World CLC Assembly in Nairobi. At that time, the world was calling CLC to be an apostolic body on mission. I suggest that each of us re-examine our way of proceeding to see if we are choosing the best way. Perhaps we are being called to redirect our efforts as we continue our journey with the Lord.

In Marianne Cummins’ “Memories of My Years as a Member of Sodality/CLC,” we are taken on a fifty plus year trip, one that spans young adult years to senior ones. Marianne mentions many members from Metro NY CLC who worked, supported and celebrated together along the way. She reminds us to be grateful for the gift of CLC in our lives.

In response to the expressed need of more guides for our communities, an important program was held in St. Louis from June 22 to June 25, “Guides Formation: Becoming a Guides Community.” Carmen Castagno provides information on the goals, topics and outcomes of the program. Following her remarks, we have brief reflections from three of the participants - Hoang Do (Dong Hahn), Aneta Kumiega (PCLC) and Maria Martinez (SF Region).

This issue of Harvest tells only a fragment of the many joys and sorrows, successes and setbacks of CLC and its leaders these past fifty years. As you read through the articles, fill in the spaces that tell a more complete rendering of who we are and who we hope to be, always acknowledging and giving thanks for God’s presence among us.

With gratitude to the Lord,

Dorothy M. Zambito
“Love ought to show itself in deeds more than in words.” – St. Ignatius Loyola

This issue of Harvest continues the celebration of our 50th Anniversary as Christian Life Community. We honor some – certainly not all – of those people who contributed to the development of CLC over these past fifty years. This issue also signals my completion of a two-year term as President of CLC-USA and Ady Viera – who has served as President-elect for a year – assuming the presidency. I will continue to serve on the Executive Council (ExCo) as immediate Past President for the coming year. The rest of the ExCo team remains, with one important and happy addition: a new National Ecclesial Assistant, Fr. John Lan Tran, S.J.

ExCo and the National Coordinating Council have, over the last several years, identified several national priorities. I’d like to highlight these and recognize some of those who have worked on and are currently contributing to the development of CLC in these key areas. Providing names is dangerous of course, because inevitably you may miss people – so I ask your forgiveness and indulgence in advance. My hope is that informing readers of these activities will attest to the fact that CLC-USA is alive and well.

**Formation** remains CLC-USA’s number one priority. Most recently we addressed this need through a guides training program held in St. Louis, Missouri June 22-25: “Guides Formation: Becoming a Community of CLC Guides. The training weekend was very well received and is the beginning of a systematic multi-year program for ongoing formation that includes peer mentoring/support through teleconferences, webinars and in-person meetings. The June weekend training energized and jump-started a renewed effort for spiritual accompaniment that will impact already existing groups as well as those in the beginning stages of CLC formation. I like to think of this new endeavor in terms of creating a new culture of formation that is consistent, intentional and that takes into account the unique diversity of CLC-USA.

I would be remiss not to recognize Rick Kunkle and Fr. Jim Borbely, who worked on moving this formation agenda forward. They were joined by others who brought this effort to fruition: Lois Campbell, Liem Le, Kim Anh Vu, Marie Schimelfening, Carmen Castagno, Maggie Khuly and Ligia Morales, ExCo liaison. Thank you for the countless hours you have devoted to planning and organizing this event and for making it the great experience that it was for all who participated. We are grateful, too, for the follow-up work now underway. We also appreciate the logistical help from Juliennne “TT” Hoang, and wonderful support from the St. Louis area CLC groups coordinated by Ann Padberg, Mary Wescovich and Kitty Gray. Another guides training program is planned for next year, so stay tuned! Contact: Carmen Castagno: castagno@msn.com

**Communications** has been a major CLC priority for years. Long distances between communities, even within regions, present a challenge for in-person meetings, when we wish to reach out and touch others in the national community. Increasingly, groups have been using Zoom, a video conferencing service, for meetings and dialogues and find that this high tech service has resulted in more high touch communication. Use of this video conferencing service continues to grow.

Harvest magazine has been a vehicle for serious reflection and sharing among members over the years and continues to be a source of inspiration for CLC members as it adapts to our new needs and diverse membership. We are all grateful to the editorial team: Dorothy Zambito, George Willett and Nancy Head for their servant leadership with Harvest. Contact: Nancy Head at nhead@optonline.net

The new CLC-USA website (www.clc-usa.org) was launched in January, 2017. It helps members stay abreast of what’s going on in CLC and share these activities with one another and the larger community. I want to acknowledge the competent and hard-working chair of this team, Pat Brennan, who through his technical knowledge and managerial skills directed a team that worked with a web vendor to create a handsome, sophisticated but still user-friendly website. We are also grateful to the Arrupe Fund trustees for the financial support that enabled us to contract with e-Catholic, the website vendor. From the summer of 2016 through the actual launch of the website, the team was meeting frequently via Zoom. As we approached the launch date, we were checking in on a weekly basis to make as many tweaks as we could before the website went live.

I extend sincere thanks to the communications team: Nancy Head, Bob Smith, Carol Gonzalez, Helen Seol,
Helen Plocha, Barb Rudolph, and field representatives Rolando Coutté (South Florida) and Bich-Hai Hatfield (Đồng Hành), for all you have done and continue to do in making this website a vital communications tool. We encourage all CLC members to regularly check the website. We look forward to having you – members of CLC and your respective communities – share stories, reflections, news and dates of upcoming events with the membership and the larger community. This is our website and it will be only as good as all of us, working together, make it. To offer feedback or to submit items for the website: website@clc-usa.org

We have resumed publication of the CLC-USA e-Newsletter. The Harvest editorial team, Dorothy, George and Nancy vet and edit the stories. There is a form and template for articles and photo specifications. For further information on submitting articles and photos for the e-Newsletter see: http://www.clc-usa.org/how-to-submit The turnout has been light, but we are hopeful that more of the membership will contribute. We cannot do this without your involvement, so please contact us and become a contributor of content for the e-Newsletter.

CLC-USA looks to the future for “feeder” organizations that will help with recruiting of new members. The group, University CLCs, provides one such opportunity. We are grateful to Chris Cichello, the CLC New England Region Chair, NCC Rep and a member of the campus ministries team at Boston College. Chris is part of a national group of campus ministers at Jesuit universities that is engaging with students and involving them in CLC on their respective campuses. This summer, the CLC group at Loyola University, Chicago, hosted the University CLC group conference from May 30 to June 2. Thirteen Jesuit universities were represented. Chris reported that the student leaders attending were favorably impressed. The group identified networking as a priority so that they could link up with other organizations in the Ignatian family to help students learn more about the CLC charism and way of life. This very important work is helping to introduce young people to CLC.

We are also grateful to Oliver Goodrich, CLC, Loyola University, Chicago and Fr. Manh Tran, S.J. from Santa Clara University who lends his voice, counsel and support in this outreach to university CLCs. Together, we’re building bridges and, hopefully, planting seeds for growing CLC-USA. There’s more to come. Contact: Chris Cichello at christine.cichello@bc.edu

PCLC, Chicago: On a visit to Poland during the summer of 2013, my wife Helen and I met with representatives of Christian Life Community-Poland: Wspólnota Życia Chrześcijańskiego (WŻCh). We learned from them of a CLC group at the Jesuit parish in Chicago (Sacred Heart). Subsequently, we invited the Chicago group to send representatives to the 2014 CLC-USA National Assembly. After a couple of years of dialogue that culminated in conducting a formal months-long discernment, they presented themselves to CLC-USA for formal affiliation with our national community. The NCC confirmed their affiliation request at the NCC June 27, 2017 meeting. Presently, the group numbers nearly 70 persons most of whom are young adults. We are grateful for the blessing of this most recent affiliation. I acknowledge the kind assistance of the PCLC Ecclesial Assistant, Fr. Jerzy Mordarski, S.J., the PCLC Chair, Aneta Kumiega, and PCLC’s new NCC Rep, Marta Koczwara, for the many hours spent in dialogue and discernment. They have invited me to Chicago for their commitment ceremony on September 10. Joining me will be members of KCLC-Chicago. KCLC was represented at PCLC’s commitment ceremony last year. With five distinct language groups (English, Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese, Polish) CLC-USA is one of the most culturally diverse national communities in the world. We are, indeed, blessed.

CLC-USA National Leadership has many leaders, past and present, who are honored and celebrated in this issue of Harvest. Let’s take note of the formal leadership structure: the Executive Council team and the National Coordinating Council. Our work on ExCo involves, in part, many business items and discernment issues as they come up. ExCo convenes twice a month for meetings that generally last an hour and a half to two hours. In addition to the actual meeting, there are hours spent in preparation and follow-up: Email, phone calls, visits, etc. I want to thank the ExCo team for its faithfulness in consistently taking care of business.

The ExCo team is comprised of:

Ady Viera, President; Ed Plocha, Past President; Barb Rudolph, Secretary; Julienne “T.T.” Hoang, Treasurer; Christine (Eunock) Kim and Ligia Morales, at large; Fr. John Lan Tran, S.J., National Ecclesial Assistant; Kitty Gray, Assistant Treasurer.

National Coordinating Council / Regional Chairs / Treasurer

The National Coordinating Council serves as the governing body of CLC-USA. ExCo and the NCC members are listed on the inside front cover of Harvest and on the website.

New England: Christine Kamp Cichello, NCC, Chair; Dan LeBrun, Treasurer
New York: Nancy Head, NCC; Mary Ann Cassidy, Chair; Helen Long, Treasurer
Ady Pino Viera was born in 1941 in Cuba, in a small town called Taco-Taco. She is a widow with four children and seven grandchildren. She was a law student at the University of Havana in 1960. She was among those who worked very hard against Castro, defending the Church and freedom. In the same year, Ady left Cuba, avoiding imprisonment.

Ady joined the Sodality and made her permanent commitment in 1963. However, 1992 was a year of “transformation.” Regina Mundi Sodality became CLC/CVX. She made her CLC permanent commitment in 1996. Since that time she has participated nationally and locally in meetings and assemblies. She served on the Diversity Committee nationally and was President of CLC-South Florida Region.

Fr. John Lan Tran, S.J., was born and raised in Bao Loc, Vietnam. He migrated to Kansas City, Missouri in 1983. He graduated from Rockhurst College in 1991, with a Bachelor’s in Physics and Computer Science. After college, he worked for three years as an environmental scientist and another three years as a computer programmer.

Fr. John entered the Society of Jesus in 1997 as a member of the Missouri Province. In the next eleven years, he went through the formation process of the Jesuits. During this time, Fr. John was also leading retreats geared towards Vietnamese-American youth in the U.S. For several summers, he also led retreats for men and women religious in Vietnam.

Academically, Fr. John obtained a Master’s of Art in Social Philosophy from Loyola University in Chicago (2002), a Master’s of Divinity from Boston College (2008), and a Licentiate in Sacred Theology focusing on Pauline Theology (2009). Fr. John was ordained a priest in 2008 at College Church in St. Louis, Missouri.

In 2009, Fr. John was assigned to work part-time both in campus ministry and in teaching computer science classes at St. Louis University High School (SLUH). A year later, he was assigned Director of Campus Ministry at SLUH. In this capacity, he directed retreats, helped with service programs and facilitated student involvement and leadership in different aspects of campus ministry.

In 2014, Fr. John was reassigned to St. John’s Junior College in Belize, where he taught classes in mathematics and theology. During this time, he was also working as Director of Mission and Identity. In November 2016, Fr. John returned to the U.S. to work as a retreat director at Montserrat Retreat House in Lake Dallas, Texas.
The Relationship of the Society of Jesus and CLC

By Dominic Totaro, S.J.

The early Jesuits did the same thing that Ignatius of Loyola did. They gave the Spiritual Exercises to lay people, especially people who were discerning how God was calling them. St. Pierre Favre had a community of twelve men at Parma, Italy three months BEFORE the Society of Jesus was recognized by Pope Paul III in 1540. In 1563 Jan Leunis is credited with having the first Sodality or Marian Congregation at the Roman College. The early Jesuits were known to take the groups with whom they came in contact and form them according to the Jesuit way of proceeding. Thus, Jesuits had a very strong relationship with Sodalities. They were the promoters and directors; they made the decisions, and the lay people gladly did the work. I hold that as a result of the initial activity of Ignatius’ companions, the Society of Jesus has never had need of a Third Order.

In 1967, the World Federation of Sodalities became the World Federation of Christian Life Communities, now World Christian Life Community. Fr. General Pedro Arrupe approved of this change and handed over to the laity the responsibility for the running of the new association. He also asked Jesuits to relinquish their role as directors insofar as possible and at the same time assume the role of guides and sources of inspiration for the community.¹

At that time, several negative things happened which brought about a separation of the Society of Jesus and Christian Life Community.

1. Many Jesuits saw CLC as a lay movement and saw no need to continue working with CLCs. Some of this separation was simply a new way of looking at CLC. Some, unfortunately, was very negative. These Jesuits saw that they would no longer be the persons in charge and felt that they had no role to play.

2. Also, some lay persons felt that they had now “come of age,” and did not want Jesuits to be around and, especially, to be telling them what to do. In this way, some Jesuits felt driven from CLC.

I am certain that there must have been other factors, but the reader can see that both of the reactions which I cited HURT both the Society of Jesus and CLC.

Fortunately, there were many lay leaders who recognized their need for spiritual assistance and the wisdom of discernment, and there were many Jesuits who were willing to assist the laity in this way. Both were reading the “signs of the times.” They also began to live the reforming vision of Vatican II regarding the laity, especially from the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium. The Church herself had begun to see that its authoritarian or hierarchical structure was in need of a more prophetic and more communitarian one.

Recent Superiors General and General Congregations have given strong endorsement to Jesuits concerning Christian Life Community. Pedro Arrupe was a continual promoter of CLC:

Although over the past two centuries the work of the Sodalities has no longer been exclusively reserved to the Society, it is still one of our proper ministries for the good of the People of God.²

¹ Document: The Relationship Between the Christian Life Community in the Church (2010), 2.1
I single out particularly the excellent work accomplished by CLC in the areas of community discernment, the personally guided Spiritual Exercises, and efforts undertaken for justice, development and human liberation.  

CLC can give you that Ignatian depth and flexibility which in our world of rapid change and of impoverishing and distracting superficiality is so powerful.

Peter Hans Kolvenbach has become even more involved in CLC. Soon after his election as Superior General, he agreed to be the World Ecclesiastical Assistant for CLC, a role which Gregory XIII had given to the General of the Society in 1684. He accepted this request from the WCLC on the condition that this role not be an essential role of the Superior General. He also wrote:

Sharing the apostolic spirituality of St. Ignatius with the laity is a central element of the Society’s charism. ...There is no doubt that the Christian Life Community wants to work in mutual collaboration with the Society of Jesus concerning its apostolic commitment and the formation of its members. ... The Society should, as far as possible, show distinct preference for the Christian Life Community when it comes to working with and for the laity.

At the 13th World Assembly at Itaici, Brazil, Fr. General added:

For CLC as for the Society, people must have a wide and generous heart and desire profoundly to share in Christ’s mission. That means that everyone is not called upon to join us; but, in return, CLC and the Society need to live their vocation and their mission openly so they can be recognizable by those men and women who have the desire for the desire to live Ignatian spirituality fully.

The 33rd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus in October, 1983 urged that we Jesuits work more closely with laymen and laywomen, respecting and supporting their distinct responsibility in the Church and in the world.

Recent experience teaches us we can make a real contribution to forming a truly apostolic laity, as well as receive from them great strength in our own vocation and for our mission. The renewal of Ignatian spirituality in certain fields (the Exercises, the Christian Life Communities, etc.) can help deepen this mutual collaboration.

Decree 13 of the 34th General Congregation furthered this Cooperation with the Laity in Mission.

Christian Life Communities address people who, being formed in the Spiritual Exercises, hear a call to follow Jesus Christ more closely and to make a life commitment to work with others through apostolic witness and service. ... We pledge ourselves to share Ignatian spirituality with them and to accompany them in their mission.

In addition, Provincials and Province Assistants have written to invite Jesuits to work with CLC.

Happily, I can say that both the Society and CLC have addressed this issue boldly. The Society has urged its members to be available to CLC. CLC has made it clear that Jesuits are wanted and needed by them. In addition, as the Society of Jesus in the USA is moving toward a closer consolidation of its provinces, it may actually have more to gain from this collaboration with CLC. CLC has made it a point to make its decisions through communal discernment. This discerning process was more recently emphasized in its World Assembly in Nairobi in 2003 when it strongly recommended that CLCs put in a DSSE process; i.e. CLCs would make their decisions through a process of Discerning, Sending, Supporting and Evaluating. For their part, the Society of Jesus has emphasized communal discernment from the time of The Deliberation of the First Fathers in 1539 and, at the present time, is striving to have communities in which the members can discern better how they can assist one another in their apostolic life.
The mission of CLC comes from Christ himself who invites us to join him in preparing the world to become the complete Kingdom of God. He calls us to be at the very heart of the world experience and to receive God’s gift in its fullness. (Our Common Mission, summary document of the 1998 World Assembly in Itaici, Brazil)

When Marilyn Barton first read these words at the 1999 National Assembly at Fordham University, she instantly knew, “Oh, I am CLC! This movement expresses my heart!”

The Lord had prepared Marilyn’s heart for this striking insight over many years. Back in 1984, Marilyn’s Jesuit spiritual director asked if she would like to make a retreat in daily life. Knowing little about St. Ignatius or his Spiritual Exercises at the time, Marilyn prayed over Father’s invitation and felt strongly drawn to accept. Upon completing the Exercises several months later, she experienced herself a “changed woman,” someone with a clear mission to share what the Lord had given her through the Exercises with as many people as possible.

Opportunities to live out this mission quickly emerged. As a clinical psychologist and committed Catholic Christian, Marilyn had always prayed for her clients and viewed her practice as a sort of ministry. But no sooner had she finished the Exercises than people began asking her to serve as their spiritual director. (Lucky me! I was her first directee.) Before long, Marilyn was deftly guiding me and others through the Spiritual Exercises. She also completed a course in directing the Exercises by the Pittsburgh Sisters of the Cenacle. Those of us fortunate to make the Exercises under Marilyn’s direction knew her as a natural – she is instinctively attuned both to the movements of the Spirit and to the hearts of her directees.

It was natural, then, that when Richard and Tracy Knowles asked Marilyn in 1987 to join a Christian Life Community they were starting, she immediately said yes. Richard was the head of Duquesne University’s Psychology Department from which Marilyn had earned her Master’s degree. His young wife Tracy had moved to the U.S. from South Africa to build a life with him, bringing with her a firm commitment to CLC. The group they founded became the Community of Hope, Pittsburgh’s first CLC and Marilyn’s home community. When untimely death struck first Tracy and then Richard, Marilyn capably transitioned to the role of guide and helped ease the shock of loss for others with her solid faith and stability. As God would have it, she had recently completed both units of the Guides Course. Since then, various members of the Community of Hope have come and gone, but Marilyn has remained at the heart of the group, radiating her mature love, generous wisdom and unfailing hope to the rest of us.

Marilyn’s gifts, however, were not to be restricted to a single community. In 1996 she was invited to give the Spiritual Exercises to a group of interested folks at a local parish, St. Mary’s of Glenshaw. Since these busy parishioners had limited availability for meetings, they agreed with Marilyn to gather for six monthly sessions, praying their way through Helen Swift’s Living Room Retreat, a program based on the Spiritual Exercises. As the six months drew to a close, several exclaimed, “Oh, we can’t stop now! These meetings and this process have been wonderful!” Thus the St. Mary’s group continued and evolved into the Life-Giving Bread Community, Pittsburgh’s second CLC. Marilyn continued with them as guide.

Other invitations and opportunities to spread Ignatian spirituality and CLC soon followed. Marilyn gave the Exercises to a group of retired persons in Monroeville. She founded CLCs in Altoona and Washington, Pennsylvania, traveling frequently to these far-flung sites despite harsh winter driving and the demands of her busy private practice. A veritable Johnny Appleseed of CLC, her version of Johnny’s song might have been, “The Lord is good to me, and so I thank the Lord, for giving me the things I need - a car and the Spirit and some energy!” She found that the deep hunger of people for relationship with Christ and the spiritual oneness that developed in these groups did indeed give her the energy she needed, confirming and strengthening her faith.
Sometime early in 2002 Marilyn began to sense one of those “good problems” – she couldn’t give the Exercises to all the folks who were asking for them! At about the same time, she learned of the Bridges program in St. Louis, a group process that both guides retreatants through the Exercises and trains prayer companions to guide future retreatants. With her typical can-do attitude, Marilyn asked Fr. Jim O’Brien S.J., Ecclesial Assistant to MAR and her spiritual director, if he would help her establish a Bridges program in Pittsburgh. Fifteen years hence, Pittsburgh’s Bridges program is still going strong, producing staunch disciples of Christ who see God in all things and serve God’s Kingdom in multiple ways. Again, Marilyn is the beating heart of this program, though her protégés may lead a given meeting or handle a particular phone call from a prospective retreatant.

Marilyn’s deep-lived experience of Ignatian spirituality enhances and clarifies her other vocational passion, Bowen Family Systems Theory. Both have formed the basis of her clinical work with clients and spiritual work with directees, and both have formed her mature functioning as member or guide of so many groups. Bowen Theory is ultimately about the ability of a person to be a self who knows clearly and lives steadily one’s convictions, especially when they differ from those of significant others. Thus her counsel to us who belong to CLC is, “Take it on as an individual. It’s great to be part of a loving, supportive group, but you have to make CLC your very own.” Just as Marilyn realized at Fordham in 1999, “Oh, I am CLC! This movement expresses my heart!”

MAR CLC 2017
Front row – Marilyn Barton, Fr. Jim O’Brien, SJ
Middle row – Al Yarzebinski, Kathy Yarzebinski, Paul Wood
Back Row – Diane Werley, Carol Zieba, Carol Gonzalez, Henry Gonzalez

Pat Carter and Marilyn Barton, 1999
Members contributing to this article have been in CLC groups with Jeanne from one to thirty-one years.

- She was one of the first to introduce herself when I was new to the parish. Her hospitality, humor, compassion, love and steadiness have bonded us for many years.
- She is an accomplished artist. Her portraits capture the souls of her subjects.
- She is a poet and a prophet.
- She speaks eloquently about her daily life filled with myth, mystery, wonder, facts and faith - always searching, always believing, always trusting.
- Jeanne is not only a teacher (a title she rejects), a guide, an inspiration, a source of many lighthearted moments and hearty laughter, but also humble and kind.
- She stressed the special gift of grace in our lives, how to see God in our everyday life and in each other.
- Somehow, Jeanne manages to be outspoken and kind at the same time. She speaks her truth and lives it. You always know where Jeanne stands.
- Jeanne was super-interested in CLC members and worked hard to make the groups succeed.
- I came to consider Jeanne’s living room a “sacred space” comparable to a small chapel.
- Jeanne shared the basic Christian Life Community principles with us. She helped us share with each other our current faith beliefs and to accept where each of us is on our own particular faith journey.
- Her leadership in CLC and in Call to Action (CTA), and her desire to stay current theologically, are always inspirational to me and others.
- I assumed she was a religious. One day I heard her speak of her son. How could this be? Eventually the mystery was solved, but I never forgot my image of her.
- Jeanne is a wise, humble, yet strong and outspoken “activist” in social justice issues.

Linda Ellis invited Jeanne to her first CLC informational meeting in 1986 or so. She felt an immediate connection to Jeanne. They were both born and reared in the Bronx and attended the same high school and college a decade apart. She writes, “At that time Jeanne was a practicing RN in a local hospital. She spoke eloquently of her commitment to nursing as a vocation. I had been teaching in high school for several years and had never looked upon teaching that way, until Jeanne’s sharing. Her sharing gave me a whole new outlook on what became a 35-year teaching career for me.”

Jeanne’s group invited participants from the Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (SEEL) to “come and see” what CLC was about. It was this invitation that inspired Deb Flynn to begin a group in Poulsbo and my life-changing journey as a member of CLC in 2002. I didn’t fully understand it at that time but I now know how courageous and selfless it was to invite strangers to attend your CLC meeting. I admire her courage to speak out, which is a great inspiration to me to do likewise. She has been involved in CTA for as long as I have known her. In the CLC Northwest, Jeanne is a true example of a contemplative in action.

In some special way Jeanne chose eight participants from a St. Patrick’s Women’s Retreat to join her for the start of a new CLC group. We each received a letter in the mail inviting us to join her at her home on a particular April evening in the spring of 2010. Thus began our particular CLC group, now named Anam Cara (Soul Friend). It was the beginning of a journey with Jeanne that has given us many gifts.
One CLC group member shared a funny memory. Jeanne decided she wanted our group to be called the Burning Bush. We wanted nothing to do with that name. She persisted, trying it out at a Regional Northwest CLC retreat. The group nixed that idea immediately. Jeanne took it in stride. We remained nameless for some time until the original Anam Cara discontinued as a CLC. We jumped on the opportunity to adopt that name.

Of the graces of CLC remarked upon by all of Jeanne’s groups are the love and acceptance of each member and a deep commitment to our own and each other’s growth. One type of challenge is saying “goodbye” to members and accepting when members discerned that CLC was not their charism. All are always welcome back. Most of Jeanne’s group members expect to remain together as long as they have two legs to stand on.

Jeanne O’Connor’s mother was an active Lutheran and her father a faithful Catholic. She was the youngest of five and is the only remaining child. She remembers walking to her Sacred Heart Parish with her father, and sometimes to the closer all-black Resurrection Church in north Harlem. Her father died when she was eleven. She attended Cathedral High School in Manhattan, Mount St. Vincent College and the Cornell Hospital of Nursing. She got her BSN in 1948 and practiced for a while in NYC.

An adventurous woman, she travelled from New York to Portland, Oregon to visit friends and secured a nursing job there. She returned home after a few years where she became a nursing mentor in the Operating Room of Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. Wanderlust descended again, and she moved to Minneapolis where she taught OR techniques to new nurses. Intrigued by the skiing possibilities in Washington and encouraged by an instructor, she transferred to the state of Washington where she obtained her Master’s in Nursing.

When she first met the future love of her life at a Seattle Communion breakfast, she wasn’t impressed; Barney persisted. They married and not long afterwards adopted two very young boys. This was in the 60’s. They were lovingly together until his death in 2002. Jeanne attributes participation with Barney in a Catholic marriage enrichment program as the turning moment in her spiritual journey. “What d’ya mean, a relationship with God? What’s that supposed to mean?” She slowly began to realize, with awe and wonder, that God was IN her life in a profound way. Just as her relationship with Barney deepened in ways she’d never imagined, so did her relationship with God.

She has been a parishioner at St. Patrick’s since buying a nearby home in 1967. She’s been involved in numerous roles in the parish including the Parish Council. Jeanne also completed programs in Cabrini Ministry and the Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life. She was a Eucharistic Minister and conveyor of cheer for many years in hospitals.

Jeanne continues to inspire us all. We are grateful to God for God’s work through her.

Anam Cara “Soul Friend” – Jeanne O’Connor

By Peggy O’Brien-Murphy

She loves – Sr. Sylvia, Gooley, Morwood & Rohr
That’s easy to learn, when you walk through her door.
She hails from New York yet moved to Seattle
A bit on the shy side – not given to prattle.
But over the years she has come to her own, and
My oh my, the ways she has grown!
Christian Life Community, Parish Council, Call to Action
This is but a fraction – of ways she’s in action
Symphony and Opera, both beckon and call
And, did you know this woman can draw?
Oh yes, she does commissioned work too
Can fix a mean Manhattan and other cool brew
But the best thing she’s done, without much of a fuss
Is to bring together, so many of us
For wondrous discussions on “God of Mystery” –
and our spiritual goals
About caring for others, about nourishing our souls
Thank you for being friend, teacher and model
For being who you are, someone to follow
We all love you Jeanne, that’s easy to see
So let’s settle back with Manhattans and Brie
To celebrate life, as we celebrate thee!
(This article is a summary of Pat Carter’s farewell reflections given at the multiregional meeting in Pittsburgh in 2001 at the completion of her term as President.)

Here in Pittsburgh we have reflected on the symbol of two rivers converging to form a third. In St. Louis, my home town, the convergence of two rivers is also an important geographic, historic and spiritual symbol. For me, it is a symbol of graced history — as the river flows, it grows and evolves through the contributions of various streams, creeks and ditches. CLC in our country certainly has a graced history, and much of that history is present in this room today in the persons of former CLC-USA presidents and others who have contributed so much to CLC. I am filled with gratitude for the contributions these people have made, the ground they plowed before me.

In the past several years as part of our evolution, I have seen some paradigm shifts taking place, many of them still evolving. However, there is a definite sense of movement from one world view to another in CLC-USA.

**Our relationship with the Jesuits has moved from dependency to collaboration.**

Often I used to hear the question, “Why aren’t the Jesuits giving us more money, people, support…” in a way that almost seemed to be demanding these things from them. Today, CLCers are taking ownership of the movement and are seeing our Jesuit brothers as partners in this journey. Fernando Salas, S.J., has said that CLC and Jesuits have much to learn from each other. Hopefully, this relationship will continue to evolve as we become collaborators in mission.

**In our relationship with other organizations, we have moved from a rather self-centered stance to one of collaboration.**

We seemed to have had an attitude that said, “We’re this wonderful organization with all these fine gifts. Come and join us.” We wondered why we were left talking to ourselves and referred to as the best-kept secret. In recent years we have begun to take a stance similar to the one that Greg Boyle, S.J. challenged us with in his address at our convention in Los Angeles — just show up and learn their names. So we have been going to various events of other organizations, showing up and learning about them and from them and sharing our gifts. In all of these events we had a definite corporate CLC presence, not just a group of individuals coming to the event. And people are beginning to notice.

**We are moving from a concept that mission is just something else I have to do on top of everything I’m already doing, to an understanding that mission permeates our very being as individuals and as community.** Mission is our stance in the world and is expressed in every breath and every action we take. It is not something we do alone but in the company of all those on the same path. It is a shared responsibility.

**We are moving from a sense of scarcity to one of abundance.** We often used to say that we can’t do that because we don’t have enough money, people.... Today, because we are more discerning in how we make decisions, we realize that if we are responding to God’s desire for us, the resources to accomplish whatever we decide will be available. We are acknowledging our poverty, but also our giftedness and our wealth.

**We are moving from a representative style of decision-making to a discerning body.** Many of us have memories of delegate assemblies with 60 or so communities represented, each with its own agenda. People came away feeling like winners or losers. By using discernment, everyone is heard equally and who they are is respected. By coming to a consensus around an issue, even those who might not fully agree need to leave the meet-
ing with a sense of peace around the decision. Particular agendas are at the service of the greater good.

**We are moving from a sense of individual communities to one of world community.** In our individualistic society, it has been a struggle for many local CLC groups to feel a sense of connection with a larger body, or even want to. The NCC decided after the last assembly in 1999 that we would have a national gathering every five years, instead of every two, the year following the World Assembly. It was strongly felt that the sense of a larger body needed to be built on the regional level first and that time and energy needed to be spent there. This gathering, with representatives from all the regions, seems to be evidence of the wisdom of that decision. The sense of the larger community is slowly being built. Next year, in September, there will be a North American CLC Conference in Guelph, Ontario which is being co-sponsored by English-Canadian CLC, French-Canadian CVX, USA-CLC and the Vietnamese Companions of Jesus.

**We are moving from a minimally diverse community to a multi-cultural one.** This can be seen at this gathering where we have representatives of Cuban, Korean and Vietnamese communities. Across the US we also have Filipino, Native American and African-American CLCs. While we are growing in cultural diversity, the next step is to share the giftedness of each of these cultures more fully with each other.

**We are moving from groups with members who have not experienced the Spiritual Exercises to those that have had a full experience of them.** In the early days of CLC, Ignatian spirituality was not strongly stressed. Groups developed with members who were drawn from any number of types of rather random groupings that had no real common spirituality. As a result they have struggled to figure out what they are about. As ExCo traveled around the country visiting with local communities, we were amazed at the depth of the formation of many new groups. These were formed with people who had the experience of the Exercises. This experience brings a common language and depth to their community life that provides a much stronger foundation for ongoing formation. By making the Exercises a foundational element of our communities, we will grow more deeply into being a discerning community for mission.

So where are these shifts leading us? The theme of the Ignatian Spirituality Institute in Seattle was the Two Standards and Culture. I attended a workshop that looked at the Church in light of the Two Standards. The presenter, John Topel, S.J., stated that the purpose of an institution is to be a carrier of the prophetic message. It provides the structure and history necessary to carry the message from one generation to another, but in the process often mitigates the prophetic message. On the other hand we have the prophetic message that is ever evolving, growing, charismatic, even scandalous. Ideally there is a creative tension between these two aspects of church.

**How can CLC be prophetic? How is CLC prophetic?**

**CLC is prophetic by creating another model of being church.** Instead of hierarchical, we are a discerning community for mission. Organizational decisions are made through discernment where all participants are heard and respected equally. Discernments made at a local level become part of the discemments of regional, national and world levels. And the discernments made at the world level are implemented at the national, regional and local levels. These activities are then reflected on and the discernment continues.

**CLC is prophetic by its focus on the lay vocation.** As Catholics, we have grown up with the notion that there is the sacred, those activities that relate to Church or faith, and the secular, the activities of the rest of our lives: family, work, politics, neighborhood, etc. What Vatican II stated and what Ignatian spirituality tells us is that all activity is sacred. It is the unique vocation of the lay person to encounter God, to unpack God in these daily activities. By forming lay people in the Exercises and building faith-communities to support our activities, CLC is prophetic.

**CLC is prophetic in proclaiming the sacredness of the world.** In our throw-away society and where many of us are disconnected from nature, our CLC way of life calls us to encounter God in all of creation. It calls us to right relationship with our world — to receive all things with gratitude, hold them lightly and let go.

**CLC is prophetic in seeking unity vs uniformity.** In a world where McDonald’s and Dockers can be found in most major cities of the world, respect for diversity, for the uniqueness of cultures and beliefs is eroding. The depth of community is measured by the amount of diversity in the group whether that is expressed in terms of gender, race or world views. Community grows from the respecting and sharing of the uniqueness of each individual to make a sum greater than the whole. *continued on page 18*
Experiencing Joy in the Midst of Challenge

By Ann Marie Brennan

Two days ago, we celebrated the Feast of St. Ignatius and prayed “Take Lord and Receive.” This prayer of St. Ignatius’ offering his all has real resonance: his liberty, his memory, his understanding, his entire will, indeed offering all that he has to God. Sometimes I feel as though I have jumped into CLC as I would into the deep end of our neighborhood pool on a bright summer day. It has been a total immersion of sorts, and I have found that the greater the investment of oneself— with even more work, time, money and responsibility—the greater the joy! The Gospel reading both today and this past Sunday affirmed this principle of total giving / total joy: The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (Mt 13: 44)

Certainly Jesus desires joy for all of us. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. (Jn 15:11) I love how Jesus is so open in expressing this. In CLC, in each of our local groups as well as in groups that gather across the country, this joy, Jesus’ joy, is present. It is present especially in the dynamic of sharing our faith journey and listening together for the voice of the Spirit in that shared, communal setting.

I served as President for two of my four years on the National ExCo of CLC-USA from 2006 to 2010. It was a wonderful experience for me personally and for my family, too. Before that I was a member of the National Coordinating Council and since 2013 I have been a Consultor on the World Executive Council.

The work for us on the National Coordinating Council and on the National ExCo was to connect and support groups committed to the CLC way of life as well as to promote outreach to young people who might desire CLC. Our reach was limited for sure, but we were emboldened and affirmed that CLC served an important niche in our world. Though numbers might seem small by some standards, we hold a big vision. Members in CLC feel called to give witness to the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives, in our families, in the workplace, in communities where we live and in those circles of influence where we find ourselves. Saint Ignatius has given us the beautiful tools of the Awareness Examen and the Spiritual Exercises that serve us well as we live in the world as lay people striving to bring about the kingdom of heaven here on earth. The big-picture vision holds strong in the midst of a world that has fierce challenges.

The members of the ExCo that I worked with were vibrant, energetic, thoughtful and lots of fun. They included: Fr. John LeVecke, Tom Bausch, Kitty Gray, Paula Burgan, Liem Le and Fr. Robert (Cos) Costello, S. J. Our quarterly meetings were held around the country as a way to meet various regional and cultural groups. These included Dong Hanh CLC, KCLC, Regina Mundi + Manresa CLC in places such as Miami, Detroit, Boston, Los Angeles, New York, Washington, D.C., St. Louis, Seattle, Milwaukee and Omaha. Issues that predominated our tenure included:

• Reaching out to college students and young adults; sponsoring biannual Cura Personalis leadership programs, procuring a $60,000 grant that resulted in the website and resources now available to all http://www.youngadultclc.org/. Help came from our Young Adult NCC leaders: Jen Horan Coito, Elena Morales, Angelique Ruhi-Lopez and Carmen Santamaria.

• More actively engaging and supporting cultural groups with help from the Diversity and Organization Committee

• Engaging in broader apostolic initiatives and advocacy with help from the Apostolic Advocacy and Action team

Ann Marie Brennan
• Collaborating with the Jesuits and Ignatian ministries including the Ignatian Solidarity Network and annual meetings at the Jesuit Conference Office in Washington, D.C.
• Meeting annually with the USCCB office in Washington, D.C.
• Developing our communications via website and e-newsletter
• Cultivating a greater sense of commitment of members
• Working on ways to support financial sustainability and growth
• Hosting the National Formation Institute Program for guides and coordinators at Creighton Retreat House in 2007
• Participating in the World General Assembly “Journeying as an Apostolic Body” held in Fatima, Portugal in 2008
• Organizing the USA Assembly “Called to be a Prophetic Community” held in Washington, D.C. in 2009, and more.

Fortunately, we had a wealth of talent and generosity among our members nationwide who stepped up to assume these many and varied responsibilities.

Even though there was much work to do, there were also many laughs that naturally bubbled up during our times together. One example was chasing down Fr. General Kolvenbach, S.J. in a parking lot in Detroit. Others included re-enacting scenes from the movie Titanic on a ferry boat in Seattle, running along the beach in Santa Barbara, watching fireworks on July 4th on the rooftop of the Jesuit residence in Omaha, testing out “Onstar” to find copy stores and even Chinese restaurants in Boston and attending baseball games with the Cardinals and the Marlins. Memorable moments included attending Mass together in the exquisite Los Angeles Cathedral and a visit with a local community organizing group working on affordable housing in Omaha with Maryanne Rouse. Actually, in all of our meetings, it was a special privilege to be able to celebrate daily Mass together. And certainly there is much gratitude to our Jesuit brothers in accompanying us and generously working with us.

The big questions during our meetings of ten years ago probably resemble the big questions of today:

• How can we do effective outreach to share the gift of CLC with others?
• How can we best support existing groups in embracing the CLC way of life more fully?
• How can we support one another in our diversity—geographically, culturally, generationally, politically—and at the same time express a sense of unity?
• How can we be sustainable and find resources to support and grow this gift of CLC?
• How can we support communal discernment at various levels? Locally? Regionally? Nationally?
• How can we bring members together for mission, to network, to read the signs of the times and to discern a communal response, especially when identifying and responding to the needs of the most vulnerable in our midst?

At the Fatima World Assembly in 2008, with representation from over 65 countries, Liem Le, Angelique Ruhi-Lopez and I attended as delegates from USA along with Lois Campbell of World ExCo and Sylvia Schmitt of our CLC UN working group. We had a deep experience of being one world apostolic body. From that gathering we were all sent out so that all members of the World Community ‘store up all these things in our hearts,’ that we might live more deeply and act more effectively as an apostolic body journeying with the poor and humble Christ through human history, and become ever more closely identified with his mission.

Back home, we wrestled with questions that did not necessarily have clear answers: What does it mean for us to be “One Body?” What does this look like? Feel like? In all our diversity? How can we be apostolic as a national body?

It was challenging to raise these important questions without immediate steps or solutions to work toward—especially in an organization across such a big geographic area as the US and with growing diversity of large cultural groups of first generation immigrants from Viet Nam, Korea, Cuba and other Latin American countries. To help us understand the realities of CLC-USA, frame a vision and examine a new organization for us, our Diversity and Organization team, renamed as such in 2007, led us through a series of annual leadership meetings held in Pittsburgh starting in 2008. We grappled with how to organize ourselves in order to support growth of this USA community as a whole as well as to support the richness of the cultural groups and still be a unified body. I don’t think that we have fully figured this out, but those gatherings were indeed grace-filled. With about 70 participants meeting together from diverse regions and cultural groups, we did find common ground and joy in the talks, prayer, exchanges and even social times. Sophie Nguyen organized amazing programs of skits and performances showcasing talents among the group in dancing, singing, humor, acting and more.

We had a beautiful National Assembly in 2009 at Trinity College in Washington, D.C. where we used the creative “Open Space” model to elicit those priority topics.
for members of the community. I believe there were about 60 topics that were discussed and recorded. They brought forth a lot of energy and enthusiasm, and while we were not able to follow up on all topics, they did provide a useful base upon which to direct several efforts, particularly as related to mission. One successful project was the CLC Leadership Education Fund which raised $70,000 to support a student from St. Al’s in Kibera at Loyola University Chicago. We also heard powerful testimony from CLC members of Rwanda, Yvonne Umrunguri and Dorothee Mukesha Zimulinda, who spoke of the tragic genocide and the miraculous reconciliation process in their country in which CLC members of Rwanda were part. Being in the DC area, we also embarked on field trips to engage in advocacy, meeting staffs of congressional leaders on Capitol Hill as well as advocacy organizations in the area. For many, this was a first in engaging in the political process. We considered how we might discern our participation in this arena using tools of Catholic social justice teaching and discernment.

As I reflect back on these years, I realize how blessed I have been to be part of a community, of such special people who are so committed to bringing Christ’s joy and love to one another and to those we encounter. If there is a shadow side of this quality, perhaps it was the tendency to avoid differences of opinion and perspective. While there were instances when people expressed differing points of view, on some occasions I felt that we could have used our own gifts of discernment to delve more deeply into a problem to discern the Holy Spirit’s invitation to us.

Some practical learnings that I experienced as part of our national leadership team involved:

1. **Composition of the NCC:** It is important that the members of the NCC have the full support of their respective communities and that they have the ability to speak with confidence and authority to carry information and influence back and forth between the national community and their respective regional community. Such authority allows for a more informed discernment at both levels. Ideally, this representative would be the chair or president of the regional community.

2. **National Communal Discernment:** I think that there has been a more explicit and intentional practice in using the process of discernment at the national level. It is helpful to share and illustrate examples of this so that more people can better understand what this looks like. Additionally, I would suggest a couple of caveats: it is important that all participants are well informed on the issues before any discussion and decision takes place; it is also important to recognize the value in addressing even one dissenting voice; and there is a need to return to a significant decision to see if there has been confirmation of it.

3. **Discernment for Mission:** It is important to raise the opportunity for communal discernment for mission at the national level. CLC has a national capacity, and this is a gift—a responsibility even—for us to use our national voice to influence and to help the most vulnerable in our midst. Since CLC also has a global capacity, it has an analogous global voice and influence. What are the urgent issues toward which the Holy Spirit may be pointing us? How are we being called to respond to some of these more urgent needs? Our ability to lift up these needs in prayer and to discern a response is testimony of the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Even for areas where we may not agree, (for example, politically) these are points for healthy dialogue and pursuit of a deeper and more complete picture of the truth. And while we may discern action in our individual and local realities, we can also discern and act at the national level in a balanced and non-burdened way.

In conclusion, the encouragement that I would offer to my CLC brothers and sisters in our country is to trust and not be afraid to jump into the deep. Christ tells us many times “Be not afraid.” And we can be assured of his presence and joy.

Indeed being part of Christian Life Community and serving on the World Executive Council continues to be a source of joy for me. My husband Pat and children Kieran, Michael, Paul and Sarah (now all in their twenties) and the members of my local group, St. Catharine CLC, have been very supportive of my work. I am very grateful for their accompaniment on this beautiful journey. Even more, I feel that I am so very blessed with CLC family across the country and across the globe! AMDG.

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**Farewell Reflections continued from page 15**

**CLC is prophetic because it dares to be community.**
In a society that is anti-community, CLC calls us to form community. And not just a feel-good community, but one that shares at a very intimate level God’s action in our individual and communal lives. The power of that urges us to create community in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. We are after all simply one community, of one Church, of one Christian faith, of many religious traditions. The General Principles call us to collaborate with all people of good will.

At the Ignatian Spirituality Institute in Seattle, Greg Boyle gave the closing remarks. A comment he made struck me very deeply and has challenged me daily, “We’re in the right place if we stand with those we thought we could safely despise.”

And so the challenge that I leave with you today is this: That CLC is in the right place when we are standing with those we thought we could safely despise.
Father, Send Your Spirit Among Us
by Dolores Celentano

(First published in Harvest Vol.31, No. 3, Fall 1998, after the Itaici World Assembly)

Lord Jesus, we ask you to remain near us today
So we might become your letter...
Help us to keep your face ever before us.
Let your love shine through our eyes
So we might see you in all people,
And bring them closer to you.
Father, send your Spirit among us
So we will find ways to continue your mission
Among our neighbors.
Then we will be able to discern Your will,
Ever seeking the magis.

This prayer was offered at one of the morning services at the World Assembly. I feel it is representative of the thought and process that occurred there.

I have been specially graced to have been able to participate in a World Assembly of Christian Life Community. I believe its imprint will always remain in me. The experience of meeting people from more than fifty different countries is quite impressive. Realizing that each of them is a living gift to others by trying to live out the CLC mission, is even more so.

By the second day, we began gathering into specific workshop groups, in order to share the most urgent needs of our countries. At the very first of the workshop sessions to which I was assigned, Christ and Growth in Christian Life, an initial prayer was being offered to the Holy Spirit. This was our actual start in the task of defining a common mission for our communities, as set forth in the last World Assembly in Hong Kong in 1994.

In the background, I could hear the strains of Gounod’s Ave Maria—softly playing through the intercom system. How very CLC! I knew we would have the assistance needed to fulfill our calling at this World Assembly in Brazil. The presentations were inspired and inspiring. I marveled at how each seemed to either call to the fore or recognize some needs or desires of our different countries, and offer some ways of dealing with them.

The methodology used to discern our common mission was truly well-planned, and obviously quite effective. Each phase of our discernment seemed to build on what went before. With the able assistance of both Workshop Facilitators and Coordinators, our initial input was both refined and broadened. What evolved seemed to incorporate what was needed and hoped for in our different countries, and how we might respond as a World Community, ever seeking what we can do for the Lord. I really felt the Spirit at work in these deliberations.

The movements of the Spirit seemed ever present during workshop sharing, prayer services and Eucharistic celebrations. Who could possibly erase from our minds the moving entrances, prayers, dances and songs used during the various liturgies, whether presented by Asia, Africa, South America, Europe, North America, or even a Maronite Rite Mass? I can still hear the drums, guitars and chants. What a joyful noise that must be to the Lord!

I often sensed the Spirit at work among the many participants: in my own small workshop group and in the larger sharing groups; in the depth of commitment; in the quiet times of personal reflection and their aftermath. There was a willingness to be open to whatever was to be revealed as our work for the Kingdom--eyes, hands and hearts, prepared to go where the needs were.

One very unquiet time that seemed to be truly inspired by the Spirit occurred when more than 200 Brazilians entered the auditorium with song and dance, welcoming us to their country. The happiness that radiated from each of the faces and voices as they traveled from the back entrance to the stage was infectious. It was a very moving moment of the World Assembly--members from our host country--from youth to older folk--all filled with such spirit, sharing their joy in being members of Christian Life Community, all knowing they are God’s instruments in that portion of the world where they have been planted--and are obviously blooming.

Father General Kolvenbach, S.J., brought across some very practical considerations. I especially liked his retelling of how Ignatius’ disappointment and inability to live in Jerusalem became a means for even greater service. He reminded us that we should be discerning, “...how to be servants of Christ’s mission here and now.” As members of a World Community, we are most certainly committed to service to the Church, and for most of us, that means being a presence at/to our local churches.

The fruit of our deliberations was presented in an initial draft, Our Common Mission. Each National Community was given time during the Assembly period, to go over what was developing as our common mission. The World ExCo had prepared an outline of the days’ goals, and one of them stated, “As we receive this mission with which God entrusts us, we desire the experience of that inner peace that is a sign for us of the Spirit’s presence within us.”

The proposal was accepted unanimously by all member countries! Because of our diversity, there were some suggestions offered. But this document is not a finality rather it is a means to help us be...

A letter from Christ,
written by the Spirit,
sent to today’s world.
The invitation to go to the Fourteenth World Assembly of Christian Life Community as the third United States delegate was a special gift on an almost 45 year journey in Sodality/CLC. Initially, my emotions were mixed and the discernment confused and difficult. I was asked to consider going just a few weeks before the assembly was to begin. Since I had not expected to be going as second alternate, I had other plans in the works. I needed to change plans, purchase tickets, receive immunization shots and leave family affairs in order for my two and one half week trip. All was accomplished with a very supportive husband’s encouragement.

Early arrival in Nairobi at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa afforded me, along with Lois Campbell and Ramon Calzada, the opportunity to meet and share quality time with other delegations and especially the CLCers from the Kenyan host team. Eyes were opened as we spoke of our CLC reality with its successes and failures, its growth and weaknesses, its hope and dreams. So much of what we experience in our country is a repeat of others’ stories. There remains the need to be more authentic, to be more collaborative and to be more apostolic as communities.

I am amazed and pleased that after so many years on the journey what I heard and saw and what we as an assembly discerned, were not ‘old hat,’ but a further development of what it means to be CLC. The documents that emerged provide an ongoing challenge to be more than we presently are as Christians in the Ignatian family, especially the family we call Christian Life Community.

Throughout the years we have spent time forming our spiritual lives - a consideration that is proceeding for all of us. We have done a pretty good job in developing strong, trusting communities in our local CLCs. Individually, most of us have been actively involved in apostolic works in our homes, parishes, communities and workplace. Now World CLC is encouraging us to become an apostolic body on mission. Even five years after Itaici, we repeat the question: “What do we mean by Common Mission?” I think we are all comfortable saying and believ-
ing that our common mission is Christ’s mission, to bring the reign of God to our world. The question remains: “How do we bring this about?”

If the needs of the world are so great, it might be a time to consider what the more universal calls to mission are in our lives and in our communities, and how we go about responding to them. We can do great work as individuals, but do we take time to consider how much more can be accomplished together as local, regional, national or world community?

When Jesus and his disciples journeyed to Jerusalem, they needed to be ready to embrace the mission before them. I would guess they weren’t eager to jump on board when they heard the meaning of discipleship and the challenge of the cross which Jesus set before them. A change in the way they thought and in the shape their lives would take must have been frightening to them. How often do we feel as they did? Are we willing to change even the good things we do, if it means more and better works result from it?

The journey to Nairobi set me to thinking differently about how I have been traveling the CLC way of life. I have found comfort in the activities, the apostolates and the projects in which I have been involved. Now, however, I feel called to re-examine my journey with the Lord in CLC to determine if I am being called to proceed differently. This re-examination, hopefully with my local community, will take note of the needs around us and the gifts and talents of all members of Locust Valley CLC. Together we hope to discern where the Lord is calling us on this phase of our journey with Him.
My introduction to Sodality/CLC dates back to the 1950s - my freshman year in high school. At that time, most parishes and Catholic girls’ high schools had Sodalities, but they were primarily women’s organizations. At St. Peter’s High School, there was an effort to create an authentic Sodality, following *Bis Seculari*, the Apostolic Constitution (1948). There was an emphasis on Sodality as a way of life with daily prayer and apostolic activities. A highlight of my Sodality days in high school was attending the SSCA (Summer School of Catholic Action) at Fordham University in the summer of 1955. It was a memorable experience to attend this program with hundreds of like-minded teens and adults. Fr. Daniel Lord, S.J., National Promoter of Sodalities, organized these programs throughout the country to train Sodality leaders. They began in 1931 and by 1963, two hundred thousand had participated in the program.

Continuing the journey in college, I was introduced to a deeper spirituality with days of reflection and retreats. I attended the Sodality Congress of the Lay Apostolate in New York (SCLA) and Boston (BCLA), and in 1959 the Second World Sodality Congress held at Seton Hall University in New Jersey. During these years I also met Fr. Frank Drolet, S.J. and Fr. Dan Fitzpatrick, S.J. and members of the New York Professional Sodality (NYPS).

I joined NYPS soon after graduating from Notre Dame College of Staten Island. Lay leaders included Tom Monahan, Ellen Durkin, Dorothy and Ray Zambito and many other dedicated Sodalists. Lifelong friendships were formed in these early years: Don and Pat Hayes, Irene and Roy Messina, Kathy and Tony Hunter, Corinne and Jerry Hekker, Linda and Bill Boyle, Adrienne and Jim Hamill, Ron and Una Sarno, Lorraine and Tom McDermott, Gwen and Mike Hoppe, Pat McCarthy, Joan Woods, Gale Knipper and Lillian Caldarese.

My husband, Dennis, became an active member of this community while I was becoming less active as I was busy raising our four children. Many of the young couples were no longer able to attend meetings on a regular basis as they moved to the suburbs and beyond, but they continued to live out their commitment to the Sodality/CLC way of life within their families, their professions and their work in local parishes.

A tradition during the 1970s-1980s was the Easter Triduum celebration at St. Andrew’s Retreat House in Walden, N.Y. Many families celebrated the Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday liturgies. The Hoppes assumed responsibility for preparing dinners. Fr. Drolet, Fr. Dan and Fr. Andrew celebrated the Triduum services with the adults and children ranging from newborn to teens. We gathered for a Seder on Holy Thursday and many of our children...
celebrated their First Holy Communion at the Holy Thursday liturgy. On Friday, many “day hops” joined for the outdoor Way of the Cross. One year, we even made the NY Times. Participants often ranged upwards of 30 children and 20 adults. Activities were planned for the little ones, but sometimes trouble ensued. One year a group of 7-11 year old boys decided to throw rocks into the well, much to the dismay of Fr. Andrew, who was the director of the retreat house. This incident led Dennis Cummins to take all the children out on Saturday afternoon (in the days before seat belt laws). With over a dozen in our VW bus, he took them on what he called the Magical Mystery Tour but which they called the Tragical Misery Tour. He brought the horde of children to historic sites, bowling and out for ice cream. They returned for dinner and the Holy Saturday liturgy. This tradition of the Triduum continued for close to 20 years. Later it evolved to Good Friday gatherings at some of our homes. For the last 20 years, we have had our Good Friday gathering at the Cummins’ home where we gather for prayer, discussion and the outside Stations of the Cross with the parishioners of St. Anne’s Parish. Our numbers have dwindled as we have suffered the loss of many of our dear friends, but a few of us try to maintain this tradition.

The Diaspora also gathered during the summer at the home of Kathy and Tony Hunter with our families and with Fr. Drolet. We enjoyed fellowship and fun with liturgy and long discussions around their kitchen table. These gatherings continued over the years and these friendships have been a source of support for all of us. We have shared much of our lives with these CLC friends, celebrating weddings of our children, births of our grandchildren and our sorrows at the loss of our loved ones.

Our North Jersey group evolved from the NJ members of the NY Professional Sodality which by this time had adopted the new General Principles and the name of Christian Life Community. We have been meeting either in a parish located in Bergen County or in each other’s homes for more than 30 years. Blessed with Fr. Dan Fitzpatrick’s guidance and the celebration of the Mass at our meetings, we have been graced with many new friends as companions on our spiritual journey. We have benefitted from the leadership of Mary Ann Cassidy and Terri Mierswa who have guided our group since Fr. Dan’s retirement from Metro NY CLC. There has been a deepening of our spiritual lives through the Spiritual Exercises, the Examen, days of prayer, and sharing our insights at our meetings. We have mourned together at the passing of many of our members, including Ellen Durkin, Deacon Joseph Marcom and his wife, Marianne, Peter and Dorothy Charlock, Robert Krebs and Sr. Elizabeth Ann.

Sodality/CLC has been an essential part of my life since I was a teen. Through it I was introduced to Ignatian spirituality, meditative prayer, discernment, seeing God in all things as well as the importance of our mission to the world. To quote our pastor, Fr. Joseph Doyle, in a recent message to our parish, “God encounters us in and through the human situations we share with each other. As the Communion ritual at Mass reminds us, it’s in that human encounter between two people that Christ offers himself. This is a revelation of what is true in every encounter we have. He gives himself so that we can be a gift to one another. …It’s true in every exchange of goodness in any of our lives. It’s simply the Gospel: God isn’t distant. He’s in the midst of life. Every exchange we have with one another is a gift in which he seeks to open our hearts in goodness to each other. Our lives are filled with such gifts.

North Jersey CLC with Fr. Dan- sometime in the 90’s

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Sodality/CLC has truly been a gift in my life and I am filled with gratitude for the many people who have been a part of my spiritual journey, some for a brief time and others who have remained in my life for many years. Their presence has been one of the greatest blessings of my years as a part of Christian Life Community.
Formation is a top priority for CLC-USA. When people express interest in the formation of a CLC group, often they don’t know where to start. When existing CLC groups want to grow to the next stage of community, they need guidance and resources to do so. To better respond to these requests, CLC-USA is developing an integrated formation program. Ultimately, the goal of this program is to help us grow more and more as an apostolic body for mission. An important first step in the program is developing well-trained guides.

For this purpose, CLC-USA recently hosted a gathering called “Guides Formation: Becoming a Community of CLC Guides” in St. Louis, Missouri on June 22-25, 2017. Thirty-two attendees, who were discerned and sent from their communities from across the country, convened to deepen their understanding of what it means to guide a CLC group and tap into the wisdom of their collective experiences as guides. Attendees came from various regions and cultural groups including Dong Hanh CLC, KCLC, South Florida CLC and the newly affiliated Polish CLC. The experiences shared by the guides of these diverse groups elicited a very rich and vibrant dimension to our gathering.

Our presenters, Lois Campbell, Liem Le and Marie Schimelfening, led us through the weekend, along with Kim Anh Vu as our process guide. Their individual talents combined synergistically and emerged into a grace-filled program that well exceeded the sum of the parts. They were amazingly adept at listening to God’s spirit and leading the group through a process that met participants where we were on the guide continuum and carried us forward together. Their presentations included:

- Role of the CLC Guide - what it is and what it is not
- Essential characteristics of a CLC group
- Key elements of the stages of community growth
- Supporting each other as an ongoing Guides Community
- Sharing this experience within our local communities

The gathering itself was a wonderful opportunity for building community. To further build on these relationships, a new National Guides Community was established. We will continue to meet quarterly to check in with each other, to offer peer mentoring and formation so we may better serve CLC-USA. In addition, quarterly webinars will provide topic-based formation for those who guide or are interested in guiding. Our hope in all this is to support the growth of CLC as one apostolic body for mission.

Many thanks to the NCC, ExCo, the Guides Program Team, Thu-Tam Hoang and the Logistics Team, the Jesuit Hall staff and the local St. Louis CLC members who warmly welcomed us.

By Hoang Do

Seeing the needs for group guides and guides formation in our community, I was grateful for the invitation to attend this gathering as a Dong Hanh-CLC member and guide. Overall, it was a grace-filled experience for me. One highlighted moment was “a clear understanding” of the correlation between the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises on the individuals and the group development as shown with a simple 2-line chart. Of course they are related! But as guides and how we were trained, the focus seemed to be on the growth of the group through different stages, rather than the spiritual growth of individuals within the group. It should be both. I think that’s where we are stuck and confused. I hope future training will explore this and help move us forward.

As I shared on the last day, I was overwhelmed with gratitude for this new understanding, and for the team’s efforts in putting together this program, where each of us shared and learned. Listening to each other’s stories and experiences connected us in a beautiful and life-giving way. The gathering
proceeded in the spirit of DSSE (Discern-Send-Support-Evaluate), and brought about a real sense of an apostolic community, from which each of us was sent forth to where we are called to serve.

By Aneta Kumiega

I represent the Polish CLC group from Chicago. We are a community of 65 people, with a cluster of 5 small groups. We started forming as CLC about 10 years ago. We are very active from the point of view of apostolic works. We have many passionate people who are really devoted to the Ignatian way of life and spirituality. Our community is blessed to be guided by Polish Jesuit fathers, but we also need trained and experienced people who would be ready to become guides for our cluster. This is the reason why our community delegated Katarzyna and me to participate in the guides’ meeting that took place last June in St. Louis.

It was very consoling for me to meet people from all over the United States who share the same values, who are really devoted to their mission in Church, and who define their involvement in CLC as a calling. During the three-day-long workshop, we defined the characteristics of a good guide and the exact duties of such a role. I realized that being a good guide was a calling from God, and that this calling may be a way for me to serve in the Church. I value the fact that I had a chance to see how other guides lead their group’s meeting. This gave me some light on how our groups in Chicago should be led in the future.

During our meeting, we created a community of 30 people, who will be sharing their experiences, who will be supporting one another, and who will be mentoring one another on how to be better guides and servants to people in our communities. I am grateful for this kind of support, and I am convinced this way of guides’ formation will generate fruits in the future.

I feel that CLC is my place. I feel at home, and I ask God to give me more light to recognize whether He wants me to work as a guide in the future. Both of us, Katarzyna and I, certainly will share with our community what we have learned in St. Louis.

By Maria Martinez

I am a coordinator in my community, Compañeras de Jesús. I was chosen to participate in this amazing experience of becoming a guide and to know the essentials of CLC and the stages that build this community. I cannot count the graces received in this course. I enjoyed the presence and participation of everyone and how they showed their love and care to others. This makes me feel part of this Community of Guides.

What challenges me is to apply all these ideas in the different communities that we have in Miami. I am clear that a guide is a committed companion steeped in Ignatian spirituality and the CLC charism. Could I be a good guide for at least one of the communities? I will try hard because after all the concepts, information and ideas received, I feel so excited that I want to be part of this project that wants the best for CLC.
**CLC Presidents**

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<td>Paul Roy, S.J.</td>
<td>Fall River, MA</td>
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<td>1979</td>
<td>Robert Johnston, S.J.*</td>
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<td>Walter Farrell, S.J.*</td>
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<td>Laurence Gooley, S.J.</td>
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<td>John LeVecke, S.J.</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Robert Costello, S.J.*</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>James Borbely, S.J.*</td>
<td>Wernersville, PA</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>John Lan Tran, S.J.*</td>
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* *Deceased*

**National Ecclesial Assistants**

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**Episcopal Moderators**

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

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Calendar

See website CLC-USA.org for dates.

NCC Meeting
St. Louis, Missouri
October 12-15, 2017

Next Issue

Bearing Witness: A World in Crisis