The Wounds of Christ
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**Soothing His Wounds**

The wounds of Christ are evident to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Within our world the wickedness and sins of many have resulted in massive suffering to large numbers of people, and to neglect and destruction within the environment. These are a testimony to the ongoing pain of our suffering servant, Jesus Christ. We suffer along with Him as our very beings are assaulted daily with shocking headlines in all forms of media:

- A drug kingpin is on trial, not only for drug trafficking and murder but also for sex with minors.
- New York State passes a very liberal abortion law.
- Pope Francis points to the ongoing conflict in Yemen and prays for the many children and adults being assaulted and starved there.
- U.S. and Russia pull out of the nuclear arms pact.
- Deaths due to opioid overdoses increase.
- The Virginia governor is accused of racism.
- Border families remain separated from each other.
- Oceans continue to teem with plastics.

and the list goes on…

A response is called for, but the ‘wounds’ listed may seem out of reach to many. Sharpening our sight and hearing and becoming aware of pain-filled situations closer to us may be the place God is calling us to respond. There are many elderly people who are alone and lonely and in need of help with chores. There are caregivers who need time off to reenergize themselves. There are neighbors who would appreciate a ride to church or the supermarket. For some, a phone call brings comfort. And the list goes on…

As members of Christian Life Community, we claim to be prophetic, discerning and apostolic witnesses to the faith. Do we find ourselves among those who avoid the news because, “We can’t fix the problem, so why should we fret over it?” Following this kind of thinking can lead to inaction and/or indifference. If we read scripture, especially the prophets, we recall the reluctance of many to follow the call and mission God was asking of them. We know they came through difficult trials, because they trusted the Lord and knew the Lord would not abandon them or their efforts. Do we trust that the Lord will be at our sides as we labor to bring change and healing to our world?

Do you hear the Lord calling, urging and encouraging you to act on one of the wounds that is visible in our world today? Are you ready to soothe those wounds? I once said to my spiritual director that an action he suggested was not going to be easy to accomplish. His immediate response was, “Life was not meant to be easy.” This comment was followed by a discussion on how to make it work. Serious prayer and ongoing discernment are a must. Knowing that there is risk involved is important. As my pastor mentioned in a recent homily, we need to be consistent (keeping to our principles) and constant (never stopping). For example, at the local soup kitchen, we get numerous calls to serve meals on Thanksgiving Day. We could end up with volunteers outnumbering guests. We gently inform these potential volunteers that the soup kitchen is open three days a week, fifty-two weeks a year. We hope they get the message.

How we soothe the wounds of Christ can be different for each of us. Peaceful demonstrations and marches raise awareness in many. Such was the case in the recent demonstrations outside the federal prison in Brooklyn when the power was out and there was no heat during very cold days. Demonstrators reminded all that prisoners are deserving of humane treatment because of their human dignity.

All of us can be involved in lifestyle changes that can bring about healing to our earth (reducing the use of plastic or recycling or increased dependence on solar energy, etc.). In addition to adopting these practices ourselves, we need to encourage family and friends to do likewise. For others, the response may be a more hands on approach, e.g. tending to the sick, feeding the hungry, mourning with those who have lost a loved one or spending time with the elderly or infirm, etc. Again, I would encourage you in the virtues of consistency and constancy, for it is easy to step aside and forget our resolve.
Within this issue:

You will be reading an assortment of responses to this issue’s theme, “The Wounds of Christ.” Some articles are from the perspective of thoughtful observers and others from personal hands on experiences. I believe all responses come from the heart.

In the President’s Corner, “The Passion of Christ,” Ady Viera, reflects on images from a movie to see Christ’s wounds and suggests we discover them in our circumstances and respond to them.

Father John Lan Tran focuses on what he calls “Spiritual Wounds in Our Lives.” In a specific way as National Ecclesial Assistant, he shares his experience of spiritual wounds within Christian Life Community. He explains that these observations are not meant to be pessimistic but realistic. They can and should be used for growth and empowerment.

“Contemplating the Wounds of Christ” is a stimulating article by Pat Carter Anderson. As in previous contributions to Harvest, Pat draws us to The Spiritual Exercises and points to sections that relate to Christ’s sufferings as well as our own. She continues to instruct us in the steps of communal and personal discernment, especially as we contemplate our roles in response to the wounds of Christ.

Karina Barrios tells a small part of the story of arriving refugees at the Mexican border in “Hope Springs Along the Border.” She identifies two kinds of poverty few of us consider, those of community and dignity. She also recognizes the power of hospitality.

We are grateful to Gilles Michaud for sharing an update on the Charabati family in “CLC, Opening the Door by Welcoming a Syrian Refugee Family.” CLC members from North America joined together to make the family’s arrival in Canada a reality.

A unique, heart wrenching and still hopeful narrative is found in Abed Rayess’ “Dear God, Are You Still Working?” I am certain many have asked God a similar question when life appeared too difficult to handle. However, few of us have suffered through the ravages of war first hand as Abed has. Consider his experience and his questions related to those who fail to work alongside God.

“Abed Rayess’ “Dear God, Are You Still Working?” I am certain many have asked God a similar question when life appeared too difficult to handle. However, few of us have suffered through the ravages of war first hand as Abed has. Consider his experience and his questions related to those who fail to work alongside God.

“Serving the Most Vulnerable in Jamaica” is Dr. Nanette Jongco’s reflection on her recent mission trip to Kingston, Jamaica. She tells of the crucial work of Mustard Seed Jamaica and her work along with others from her parish to serve the needs of babies, boys with HIV/AIDS and severely handicapped adults. In the midst of pain, she and her fellow ‘missionaries’ found God and found love.

Each of us is called to speak out and act according to the Spirit’s working in us. For Mary Ann Cassidy, the focus is the tragedy of Yemen. In “Wounds,” she presents some recent history along with statistics of the war. Then she shares some of her responses and questions our reactions.

A statue called “And Jesus Wept” provides the backdrop of Lorraine Damman’s “When God Weeps.” In her article, she identifies several current topics that would cause our Lord to weep. She looks forward to a future when God rejoices in us.

In “Caring for the Earth and Its People,” Jungsook Catherine Chung reports on the formation of the Korean community in matters relating to ecology. She describes a creative way of doing this in the setting of a picnic. Information was shared and monies raised to help worthy charities. Catherine also tells of the work the members do regularly at a local soup kitchen.

Barb Rudolph’s “Remembering” includes reflections on the Anima Christi prayer, remembrances of the life of Father Henry Birkenhauer, S.J. and questions for the readers based on a Good Friday experience of hers.

This prayer is adapted from Evangelium Vitae of St. John Paul II:

\[
O\ \text{Mary, Mother of the living, to you we entrust the cause of life. Look down, O Mother,}
\]
\[
\text{Upon the vast numbers of babies, not allowed to be born,}
\]
\[
\text{Upon the poor whose lives are made difficult}
\]
\[
\text{Upon men and women and children today who are victims of threats and violence.}
\]
\[
\text{Grant that all who believe in your Son may proclaim the Gospel of life with honesty and love to the people of our time.}
\]
\[
\text{Help us to stand up, like Jesus, for the weak and oppressed.}
\]
\[
\text{Pray that we may receive the Gospel with joy and gratitude throughout our lives.}
\]
\[
\text{May your Spirit give us the courage to bear witness to Him resolutely, in order to build together with all people of good will the civilization of truth and love, to the praise and glory of God the Creator and lover of life. Amen}
\]

With gratitude to the Lord,
Dorothy M. Zambito
The Passion of Christ

The controversial movie “The Passion of Christ” depicts the final twelve hours of Jesus Christ’s life, ending with his crucifixion outside the walls of Jerusalem. No other movie before or after portrayed Christ’s physical and spiritual agony so vividly.

This vision of brutality, horror and torture made me really realize what Jesus must have suffered. The apostles and his other followers, however, even witnessing the physicality of sweating blood through death on the cross, failed to be moved in compassion. Fear took over. I, today, am included among those followers.

How has it happened that I, we, have abandoned him, have managed to hide from his wounds? His friends did not see them then, and very often we don’t see them now. We do have Mary’s example of feeling Jesus wounds all the way to the foot of the cross and to his death. With her eyes fixed on her Son’s, she accepted her mission of motherhood to us all.

Why are we not following Mary? Yes, we have experienced human rejection, jealousy, hatred and fear. Jesus in his humanity felt them all and much more. He, however, remained deeply anchored in the love for his Father and for us.

Pope Francis said, “We are not asked to ignore or hide our wounds. We can only enter the heart of God through the Wounds of Christ.” (*Projects 171*)

This poses the question of where we see Christ’s wounds within our specific circumstances and how we choose to respond. Our Church should understand the wounds of today’s world, make them her own and engage us in healing.

A wounded Church is not perfect and cannot do any of this without God’s grace. CLC, as part of this Church, can participate in this healing, with Jesus Christ in the center healing all our wounds.

AMDG

Ady Viera
President
One of my favorite Lenten readings is an article by Msgr. Francis Mannion titled “A Spirituality of Ruins.” In this article, Msgr. Mannion uses historical ruins as a metaphor for the spiritual wounds in our lives. He writes:

The ruins of our lives are the terrible and unfixable mistakes we have made, the wrongs we have never been able to right. They are the relationships, once valuable and cherished, that have broken down, never to be rebuilt in this life. They are the irreversible illnesses and ravages of age that bring pain, feebleness, depressions and a growing sense of mortality. They are the lost arts and skills, abilities and agilities that once we thrived on, but now are fading. They are the people we love, once joyful and happy, who have fallen into pessimism, unhappiness and despair. Our ruins are the painful imprints made upon us because of the terrible things that have happened to us. They are the loss of family, friends and companions through age and death. They are the unrepairable things that have happened to nearly every person, every family, every community. (https://www.praytellblog.com/index.php/2013/10/28/viewpoint-a-spirituality-of-ruins/)

I can relate to many of the wounds that Msgr. Mannion describes above, especially the wounds of past mistakes, broken relationships and physical decline. About broken relationships, I lament the fact that in twenty-one years of being a Jesuit, I have lived in eight different cities, have known so many people, and yet, I also have forgotten so many. The more I moved, the harder it has been to establish and maintain relationships.

Taking this metaphor to CLC-USA, I categorize our wounds into three levels: personal, group (or local community) and national.

At the personal level, community life inevitably leads to personal conflicts, resulting in pains and wounds. One of these wounds comes from the inability to be honest. I call this phenomenon “being nice.” Since we belong to a religious group that has as its goal “loving one another,” we somehow interpret this as a mandate to avoid conflicts. It becomes an unwritten rule that we can only say nice things to one another at the expense of not expressing our true emotions. As a result, people carry their own hurts and wounds yet are unable to express them. Consequently, many leave silently, licking their wounds, but some leave in anger. Most never come back.

At the local community level, CLC groups have their own wounds. Perhaps one of our deeper wounds has been losing members, the so-called graying phenomenon. This happens not only in longer established communities but also in the younger cultural groups. The pain of losing members, of diminishment, creates a doubt that perhaps we have wasted our efforts. What we cherish, CLC life, seems not worthy to many.

Finally, at the national level, we are working at overcoming divisions, distrust, misunderstandings and perhaps some other wounds. Let me take up distrust. Due to some past wounds, we still have a lingering distrust among cultural groups. It is painful that as NEA for more than a year, I am still learning about what different cultural groups do. There exist some invisible curtains that divide us into different sub-CLC national communities. There is a sense of separateness, not only in our actions but also in our mentality. I hear comments such as:

Some individuals cannot be trusted because they are very political.

Why does Dong Hanh still have their own ExCo?

Why can’t they assimilate into our national structure?

Other comments come from long time CLC members.

Do I paint a gloomy, pessimistic picture here? I hope that I have painted a realistic, honest picture. Wounds and pains are normal parts of life. In fact, in acknowledging them, we can grow and be empowered. As Christians, we believe in “good endings,” as Msgr. Mannion concludes:

Life, in the Christian perspective, is not a tragedy. A tragedy has no good ending. The Christian view of life is that God’s saving power always overcomes human pain and suffering—but only in God’s good time, which may be in eternity. We cannot forget that Christ’s human life ended in the awfulness of Calvary, but it was raised up in the glory of the resurrection. Thus, we have to await the final Easter to see the rebuilding of all earthly ruins.
Contemplating the Wounds of Christ

Pat Carter Anderson

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” (Matthew 5:4) With these words Jesus invites us to journey with him through the Paschal Mystery as we encounter it in the Body of Christ today. As we become more aware of the wounds of Christ around the world and in our own lives, the amount of pain and suffering in the world can become overwhelming. Where is this Peaceable Kingdom that God promised us? Where do we see any evidence of it in our world? Is it futile to attempt to confront the vast amount of destructive attitudes and behaviors in our world? One of the great dangers of this time is that we are so bombarded with news of suffering that we withdraw and become immune to the pain. But that is not our Christian calling. Jesus gives us an example in his mourning over Jerusalem.

The Spiritual Exercises invite us to enter into the pain of the world, initially in the First Week as we contemplate our own sinfulness and our implication in the sinful social structures. Then again in the Third Week, we are invited to accompany Jesus through his Passion and Death. These are transformative experiences calling us to experience as fully as possible in our whole being the suffering of the Body of Christ, not for the sake of suffering, but for opening ourselves to receive and give God’s infinite compassion and mercy. This is not an easy task. Ignatius, realizing that we as humans have a resistance to entering into suffering, suggests that we pray for the gift to desire to experience Jesus’ passion. [SE199]

How can Christian Life Community groups do this?

At the beginning of the Second Week of the Exercises [101-109], Ignatius presents us with a wonderful model for contemplating the Wounds of Christ. He has us imagine the Trinity hovering above the earth and observing the reality of the human condition, both the life-giving moments and those leading to destruction and confusion. [106] Then with a compassionate gaze God, God being true to God’s Self, decides to become Word Incarnate to reveal the fullness of God’s Love. God then invites a young woman to be the instrument of this plan. God observed, discerned, then acted.

This is basically the flow of “See, Judge, Act” that has been used by many social justice groups and has become a core process of Catholic Social Teaching. Pope John XXIII refers to this process in Mater et Magistra as a way to read and respond to the signs of the times.

In the 1980s Joe Holland, Pete Henriot and others expanded this into a process they called the Pastoral Circle. Jim Hug, S.J., prefers to call it a Pastoral Spiral, since each time a community uses the process it should be starting at a different level than previously. Each experience deepens and broadens the previous one. The Pastoral Spiral uses four steps: 1. Experience (Seeing); 2. Social Analysis (Judging); 3. Theological Reflection (Judging); 4. Action and Evaluation.

While the steps of the process seem simple, they each call for a significant amount of effort and prayer to do well. They also demand personal and communal transformation as we move through each of these steps. A preliminary step is to name what is happening that causes you concern. As your community is together over time, there may be a particular issue that people are drawn to in some way. Or perhaps your community finds itself drawn into an issue quite unexpectedly. Once an area of concern is identified, the community can begin the process. I have included a list of resources.
that will go into the process in more detail, but I will give a brief look at each step.

1. **Experience or Immersion: What is happening?**
   This step resembles the activity of the Trinity hovering over the earth. They are not simply observing but entering into the experience of people on earth. They include everyone. An important part of this step is to get first-hand experience, as much as possible, of the situation. Talk directly to those involved and (this is where it gets difficult) even those whom you may feel are the oppressors or the cause of the problem. As in any discernment process, an attitude of Ignatian indifference is necessary. Listening with an open heart does not mean you agree with what is being said. It is simply trying to understand the world view of the other. This is an exercise in a culture of encounter.

2. **Social Analysis: Why is it happening?**
   In this step we look at the social and historical dynamics which are shaping the experience we are examining. Again we need to approach this with openness. If we do this well, we will often become aware of our own cultural biases.

3. **Theological Reflection: What does it mean?**
   We now look at the situation with God’s contemplative, compassionate gaze. How is God’s kingdom reflected in this situation? Are persons and creatures treated with the dignity God endowed them or are they used and manipulated for the benefit of the few? How are the principles of Catholic Social Teaching being applied? Again, we need to be careful of our own cultural biases. Much injustice has been and continues to be done in God’s name by those who have interpreted scripture through their own personal lens rather than God’s loving gaze. Keeping the Catholic Social Justice principle of a preferential option for the poor before us as we enter this process is also informative to our discernment. Application of the Two Standards might be a helpful method to enable us to become aware of the strategies being used by the various people and entities involved. Are the means they are using leading to greater unity, compassion and mercy, or are they leading to polarization, scapegoating, manipulation and deceit?

4. **Response or Action: How should we respond?**
   Holding all of the above in our hearts, how do we respond? How is the Spirit calling us to engage in this situation? How is God calling us to build the Peaceable Kingdom? This step involves planning, action and evaluation similar to our DSSE process (Discern, Send, Support, Evaluate). Although not explicitly mentioned as a separate step, the evaluation of any action is a necessary step. Not only are actions evaluated, but again a check needs to be made on the attitudes and biases we still have as we approach this work. It also helps us to prepare for the next Pastoral Spiral.

   How might a CLC group incorporate this process into its community life? One resource that might give a community a taste of this process is the preparatory document for the Synod of Bishops for the Special Assembly for the Pan-Amazon Region, “Amazonia: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology.” This offers a way of becoming familiar with the Pastoral Spiral since the flow of this document uses the See, Discern, Act process. Since the preparatory work is already done, a community can focus on how the content was gathered and reflected upon and use it as the content for their meetings.

   My Discipleship CLC used this as the reflection material for four of our meetings. Since we are an online community of diaspora members, this document helped us tap into similar issues in our various locales while still reflecting together on the material. There are four parts to the document beginning with the Preamble and sections on See, Discern and Act. We used each part of the document as reflection material for a meeting and then shared those reflections using the three rounds process. Resources for engaging in a full Pastoral Spiral process can be found at the [http://www.engagedmystic.org](http://www.engagedmystic.org) web site.

   Entering fully into this process not only helps us discern actions for justice, it is a transformational experience for the individuals and the community. I would like to close with a quote by Dean Brackley from his book, *The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times*:

   **The grace of the Third Week is to share God’s grief over the wounded world. We see this grief and pain most plainly in Jesus’ suffering and death. We ask to empathize with him. The focus is not on pain but on being with the one who suffers. For two thousand years, contemplating his passion has helped his followers bear others’ burdens. It has helped them overcome their fears and strengthened them for the trials that all who respond to suffering must face.**

   Continued on page 17
Hope Springs Along the Border

Karina Barrios

The border fence is within walking distance of my house. When people arrive to volunteer from other parts of the United States, they have indicated that they had pictured miles of desert, a completely foreign place far from here. I think the concept of “foreign” scares people. It’s new and different. To quote Fr. Thomas, “As soon as you make a genuine contact with the poor you’re going to have a conversion; unless you are extremely hard-hearted, you will see that they are the same as you.” By sharing the stories happening here at the border, I hope readers see “them” along with “us” as the body of Christ.

In addition to the lack of material things, I have found that arriving refugees have a unique kind of poverty. They have a poverty of community and a poverty of dignity. Annunciation House is an organization that tries to alleviate those needs. It includes several shelter sites throughout El Paso, using several rented motels and Catholic churches. They serve through hospitality.

This past December during Christmas week, 200 people were released to the street and Annunciation House opened up extra emergency shelters. This week 500-600 people a day have been hosted. People are arriving with feet bloody from walking barefoot, no coats or warm clothes in the dead of winter, no food, no money and no family. Jose asked to hold my son one day, “Please, can I hold your son? I have a daughter in Guatemala the same age.” He wept as he held him.

When the refugees arrive volunteers help them with their ICE paper work, to arrange their continued court dates for asylum. Although there is a place to write down medical needs, many like Yessica have gone without access to care. She had untreated open sores that were infected. We all have dignity and we should not be denied care for our bodies. These are the hands of Christ! Whoever can’t be treated with over-the-counter medicine is taken to a doctor paid for by Annunciation House or seen by the doctors who volunteer. They are then shown around by other volunteers, taken to get a change of clothes, a hot shower, a meal and a place to stay. The dignity of the person means not being seen as a number or object. Many of the refugees say it feels so good to be treated as persons.

There has been so much suffering, but I see Christ offering the hope of healing together as a community. Annunciation House is a non-profit. You can find more about its mission and how to donate time or money. https://www.annunciationhouse.org

Karina Barrios lives in El Paso, Texas. She is married and has three children. She is part of a Catholic community called Our Lady’s Youth Center Later (las alas) which was founded by the Jesuit priest, Father Richard Thomas. She hopes this article will draw attention to the person of Jesus in the migrants arriving at the border and also connect people with a way to serve Him.
CLC, Opening the Door by Welcoming a Syrian Refugee Family

Gilles Michaud

In 2016 I wrote an article for *Harvest* about a Syrian family living as refugees in Lebanon. They had expressed a desire to come to Canada. Rita El Rami from CLC Lebanon asked if we could help.

In consultation with Ann Marie Brennan, CLC World ExCo Link for North America, I contacted Najat Sayegh, the World ExCo member from Lebanon. As it turned out, Najat knew the family and sent me their email address. I proceeded to make contact with the family receiving the following email in response.

*We left Aleppo-Syria more than three years ago, because we lost everything. I lost my job in a private store of small commerce located in the old part of Aleppo where the area was taken by the rebels and burned down since the 23rd of July. Also my wife had lost her engineering office in Sheikh Maksood. Our house in Jalaa street is not safe because it is located on the border line. A big bomb fragment entered our house and we were victims of two armed attacks from terrorist Islamists in our street during the day. So we decided we should leave. We hope to have the chance to come to Canada, because there is no more possibility to live in Aleppo for now. It has become very dangerous for our lives and it is a chaos and there are no more rules. We refuse violence and racism. Our values and education are completely different from the current situation it is turning into. So we are looking forward to re-establishing a new peaceful life in Canada. Sincerely in Christ: Lina and Abboud Charabati.*

At a teleconference meeting held on March 2016, I shared this information with the CLC North American Continental Regional Team (NAR). A decision was made to send the family photo to all four CLC NA National Councils, informing them of the CLC Syrian family’s request, along with the following question, “HOW CAN CLC HELP THIS FAMILY?”

What followed was a clear sign of a generous response of CLC members in the North American Region. The fundraising resulted in raising $12,000 CAD. Much of the administrative work in researching the cost of an apartment and other needs for a refugee family was undertaken by Marie Gabrielle Valet and other members of the CLC National Council of French Canada. Antoine and Rima Taoutel, originally from Syria and former President of CVX Syria now living in Montreal, put together a Task Group that would take on preparing for the arrival of the family. We also worked very closely with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) which was instrumental in providing us with a link to the Department of Immigration (MIDI) in Montreal.

With the planning in place, we waited for the notice of approval from the Canadian Government. Finally, on October 12, 2018, we were delighted with the notification that the Charabati family’s request had been approved and they were to arrive in Montreal, Canada. The CVX Task Group in Montreal went into action and found a suitable apartment for a family of five situated in the suburbs of Montreal, adjacent to a large shopping mall. Public transportation was close by and easily accessible. Within a short time, much of the furniture needed to furnish the apartment was donated by the CVX members. The purchasing of mattresses, linen and towels plus groceries would meet the immediate needs of the family on arrival. Antoine and Rima took on the responsibility...
for paying $3,000 for the expenses. They were quickly reimbursed from our accumulated funds.

The Charabati family arrived at the Laval Airport in Montreal. Although tired from the long flight, they were elated to see so many friends greeting them as they entered the terminal. As it is for all refugees coming to a new country, it was somewhat daunting for the Charabati family to familiarize themselves with Montreal, one of the largest cities in Canada. To ease them through this transition, members of the Task Group devoted themselves to taking them on daily excursions. They had to learn how to use public transportation, how and where to shop for food, household and personal items, and how best to deal with the sometimes harsh Canadian winter. Occasionally, the members of the Task Group gathered with the Charabati family to celebrate and share a meal in their new home, much in the same manner they were accustomed to in Syria.

All my communication regarding the family was through Antoine and Rima Taoutel. On January 29, 2019, Lina Charabati contacted me by email. This was such a joy to read how grateful they were to CVX/CLC for this life-giving opportunity to start a new life in Montreal. The following is Lina’s email (translated from French):

We would like to thank CLC wholeheartedly for all that was done for us to come to Canada and for all the efforts to make life easier for us in Montreal. It has already been three and a half months since our arrival in our new home and we are very happy and grateful. We were very well received by everyone and, as we all speak French, we are adapting very well. Abboud is busy taking lessons to become more familiar with French. Georges, our eldest son (26 years old), has started working in the supermarket opposite us while waiting for the equivalency of his diploma in English literature. He is to see a counselor to help him look at what he will do in the future. Christa, (24 years old), arrived a month ago and started working in a company, and Joanna, (20 years old) is improving her French in preparation to go to university in September.

I had the opportunity to exhibit my paintings at the Museum of Masters and Craftsmen of Quebec. It was a very rewarding experience. And for the moment I am taking a course on “The Launching of a Business” with the goal of starting my own business by giving painting and drawing lessons.

We thank God for all the graces that we have received from CVX/CLC, for the Jesuit Refugee Service and for our friends in Montreal.

Sincerely, Charabati family

Pope Francis is asking us to keep the door open for refugees. As a CVX/CLC North American Region, we heard the cry of a refugee family and opened the door to our North American home. It was a challenge but it was much more a privilege to respond in the light of our CLC spirituality as expressed in our General Principle #8:

As members of the pilgrim People of God, we have received from Christ the mission of being his witnesses before all people by our attitudes, words and actions, becoming identified with his mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, setting the downtrodden free and proclaiming the Lord’s year of favour…. Each of us receives from God a call to make Christ and his saving action present to our surroundings. This personal apostolate is indispensable for extending the Gospel in a lasting and penetrating way among the great diversity of persons, places and situations.

AMDG
Before we ask God this question, let’s ask ourselves first: Why do we want to make sure that God is working? The reasons for raising such a question are multiple and the answers may vary accordingly. Our motivation may be despair, the violent and painful reality of human existence created by us. Therefore we need a supernatural power, God, who can correct it easily. Despite the wickedness of man, our motivation can also be tempting God as the tempter did with Jesus. In this case the essence of our question becomes: “If you are truly The God, show us your work!” , or as Christ was provoked on the Cross: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” (Luke 23:39) These questions are rooted in a kind of human concern and suspicion, but surely not inspired by faith. They are concerned with God addressing His extraordinary ability to act independently of human beings and separated from them.

Perhaps we can hear God’s answers to our questions through Jesus’ saying to the Pharisees who came to provoke him (Matthew 16:4): “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign given unto it, but the sign of Jonah.” But what happened to the prophet Jonah? Jonah was called by God to act for the salvation of others, but he refused. He was invited to be a partner in God’s plan, but he refused this invitation. He opposed the Spirit of God. Jonah ended up in a storm because he had betrayed his vocation. The Bible also tells us that Jesus in Nazareth was not able to carry out any miracle because its people lacked faith. (Mark 6:5) It is clear from the Bible that God awaits an answer from Man to complete His work. The answer must be the same “yes” to faith as declared by the Virgin Mary. The difference between the work of God and magic is that the work of God can evolve in partnership with man and through his saying “yes” to God’s call. God will not exceed our freedom of work at any cost, because losing freedom in interacting with God is contrary to the essence of humaneness – which would turn us into puppets.

However, in this sense, our freedom becomes the cross of God. In other words, God has tied His work to our freedom. We can freely reject God’s fundamental gift of love. We can deny it. We can betray, we can crucify Him. We can become an “evil generation” and God will not force us to be otherwise. The people of the Old Testament have asked God the same questions many times: Where are you our God of Exodus, the God of our Fathers, the God of our Covenant?! The prophets have responded repeatedly: Where is your faith, people of God? Where is your devotion? What is the God you worship? Is it really the only God or an idol?

In depth, every tragedy of exile, displacements and wars served to call the people of God in the Old Testament to review their faith and their image of God and the history of their relationship with Him, to develop their spiritual experience, to be freed from images of God that proved to be misleading, and to go forth with a wider perspective regarding God’s working. All this happened to enable the people of the Old Testament to understand and desire God’s presence without being restricted to the old concepts. Little by little the people of the Old Testament realized that God was not waiting for a sacrifice of flesh, but rather a spirit of affliction, and that Christ might be nothing but a righteous and suffering servant.

I am from the city of Homs in war-stricken Syria, a city where the poisonous winds of human iniquity and violence have blustered. I have witnessed and experienced how the city was suffocated by the haze of hatred and the smell of murder, how its
They contemplated the Gospel with us, shared their practice a deeper vision of life and of themselves. As if they were vaccinated against the poison of war, they mindedness and unconditional openness towards others.

The Gospel of Birth tells us that when God is born, He is born in the gloomy shadow, declaring with faint voice a free and open love to all people. Therefore, it is difficult to see God in an act of charity that helps people and then boasts about it or mixes up aid with corruption or among those who profess their Christ but deny the ethics of the Gospel. God cannot find a place to get born in the heart of a man who is immersed in his wounds or evil or carelessness. Fear of the other hinders the work of the Spirit. The media hinders the work of the Spirit as it conveys daily disheartening news about a hopeless world where God cannot be born.

Despite the dark night of my city, there is certainly a star that shows me the work of God. I see it mainly in the spirit of young people who have lived their adolescence amidst the peak of the war and its horrors. I work with the Jesuit Fathers in providing spiritual care to the generation of university students. The activities are called spiritual retreats for university students, and it is really amazing to contemplate how God saved these young souls from being poisoned by the hatred of war. I am continuously exposed to the narratives of young people about their experience in the war. However, with all the difficulties, the wounds and the instability, I see a generation that promises profound depth, spiritual sensitivity, early maturity, open-mindedness and unconditional openness towards others. As if they were vaccinated against the poison of war, they do not speak about politics, but they are looking for how to practice a deeper vision of life and of themselves.

Muslims also participated in our spiritual retreats. They contemplated the Gospel with us, shared their experience and discovered how to form a creative space with our different identities in the freedom of love. We discovered God who wants to unite us despite our differences. These young people started apostolic initiatives. They have been participating for two years in an initiative called “Your Birth Is Peace,” which aims to bring back smiles on the faces of poor Muslim children. This year they involved these children in the celebration of Christmas, children who never before thought that the feast could mean anything to them.

This activity is the legacy of Father Frans van der Lugt, S.J., who had started it thirty years prior to the war and continued until the beginning of the siege of Homs in which he was martyred. Father Frans starved in the siege with the hungry and shared the little food that may have been nothing more than grass. Father Frans was faithful to his call to love and merited the blessing of Jesus till the end. He was “salt of the earth” and a lamp not hidden under the bowl. Now we can see with clarity God working in the spirit of Father Frans.

The Jesuit monastery that continued its mission, especially in the relief of refugees and the care of the poor, was faithful to its attachment to Jesus, as well as to all those of good faith from all denominations who offered silently and did much good, preferring to remain anonymous in the shadow with Jesus.

St. Ignatius of Loyola, in his Spiritual Exercises, offers us a beautiful and unique text, the parable of “the eternal and the temporal kings.” In this text, the image of God is completely opposite to the Wizard God who changes the reality with a whisk of his stick. On the contrary, God, in line with the king’s vocation, is The God who toils in order to win the world and accomplish the plan of salvation. We can contemplate what the word “toil” means, a combination of fatigue, patience and determination to achieve the goal no matter what the difficulties are. And God here invites us (in accordance with the vocation of the King) to be partners in His toil.

We may wonder if it is reasonable that God is facing obstacles in His work. Yes, since our freedom allows us to say “no” to His will. This “no” that we answer to God becomes the barren rocks of the earth, the thorns, and birds of the sky that pick up the seeds averting the word of God from blooming and bringing fruits. Where can we discover the steps of God? Maybe first we should stay silent in order to hear Him knocking on the door. And once we have decided to open the door of our heart, we can hear His steps walking inside and share the food of partnership with Him.
During my twenty-second month of retirement, I found myself painting a house in a village under the hot sun, and being hugged affectionately by a boy with a big smile as he struggled to talk. Comforting a teenage mom breastfeeding her fifteen month old baby; feeding a helpless wheelchair-bound boy; coloring with a five-year old infected with HIV; singing nursery rhymes to a blind seven-year old boy so tiny he looked like he was only two: this is what happened in a Mustard Seed Community (MSC) - and much more!

Fate would have it that there would be thirteen missionaries from St. Francis Xavier Parish in NYC, all first-timers except for our team leader Andrew. It all began when an announcement in our church bulletin about a mission trip to Kingston, Jamaica caught my eye. I googled Mustard Seed Jamaica and was sold on making the trip. After a series of meetings and fundraising events, we took a 5am flight to Kingston on November 10, 2018.

Not knowing what to expect, we were all shocked at what greeted us, me included, even though as a physician I had seen many disabled and sick patients in my practice. Our first encounter was at Sophie’s Place, a residence for children with severe physical and mental disabilities. They are housed in small colorful houses with neatly lined beds, a bathroom and a feeding area. Their caretakers who are called “Aunties” took us on a tour and introduced each one by name, age and disability. Most of the children have cerebral palsy and are non-ambulatory. Others have genetic abnormalities, a few are blind or deaf and most are non-verbal.

The Mustard Seed was started in 1978 by Msgr. Gregory Ramkissoon who hails from Trinidad. What started in a small house that took in disabled children who were abandoned in the streets of Kingston has expanded to other large communities not only in Jamaica but also in Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Dominican Republic and Malawi. Their mission is to serve the most vulnerable. Their motto is “No one should be abandoned twice.” Our week-long stay allowed us to visit only six of the fourteen apostolates in Jamaica: Sophie’s Place, Matthew 40:25, My Father’s House, Jerusalem, Mary’s Child and Jacob’s Ladder.

Sophie’s Place was our home base where we assisted with feeding and interacting with the children. Time was spent reading books, telling stories, wheeling the children around and washing wheelchairs. Mostly we held hands and caressed their faces. Simply being present made them aware that they are loved.

Matthew 25:40 housed boys with HIV, most of whom were otherwise healthy and active. Their disease is controlled with medications and most of them attend regular school. Some played ball, some played board games and others engaged in meaningful conversations including plans for the future.

My Father’s House is located in the main headquarters of the Mustard Seed Communities.
communities in Jamaica. It is the home for adults with severe physical and/or other disabilities. As in Sophie’s Place, the residents were mostly wheelchair bound with a few even bedbound. Led by the Aunts, we spent time singing along and touring the place. We visited the MSC radio station, Roots 96.1 FM, where three members of our team were interviewed about our mission trip. This station serves to educate the local community about public health issues with emphasis on physical and mental disabilities and HIV/AIDS. We visited the pottery shop where ornaments, vases and bowls are crafted. These are sold and are a source of income that helps support the community.

Jerusalem is a conglomerate consisting of a village for disabled teens and young adults, mostly with cerebral palsy. Martha’s House is for HIV children aged 2-18. Dare to Care is for older girls with HIV. In addition to the residential areas, Jerusalem has a farm. There are two tilapia ponds, vegetable gardens and 3000 chickens that supply eggs. The products are for consumption by the communities and also for sale. The proceeds from these sales allow the MSC communities to be self-sufficient and income producing. The team spent two days there painting the outside of two houses and a gazebo.

Mary’s Child is a house for young pregnant mothers many of whom stay until their babies are two years old. The mothers go to school and are taught skills in order to be able to take care of their babies and earn a living that eventually would allow them to go on their own.

Areawise, the largest apostolate is Jacob’s Ladder (connects earth to heaven). It is aptly named because it is meant to be the lifelong home for residents from all MSC apostolates who reach the age of 18 and are not severely disabled yet unable to live independently. The property is comprised of 150 acres of hilly land. There is adequate space for agriculture (corn, fruit trees, vegetable gardens) and husbandry (pigs, sheep, goats, rabbits). These main sources of food and commerce enable MSC to be self-sufficient. The leaders continue to build and expand with the goal of increasing their present population of 95 to 500. This goes with their motto that no one should be abandoned a second time.

All MSC apostolates are efficiently run by Aunts, many of whom have worked in the same place for years. It is heartwarming and inspiring to see them take care of the residents, each one called by name and attended to for his/her specific need. Aunts nurture the residents not only physically but also spiritually. The day starts with opening prayer in a chapel - prayers of praise and thanksgiving are always accompanied with songs sung Jamaican style. It is amazing how they emphasize gratitude - in spite of what many would consider misfortunes and having to live under austere conditions. Everywhere (chapels, houses, rooms, even the van we used), we were greeted with signs that read, “Him deh yah” (He is here) and “ Tank yuh Lawd” (Thank you, Lord).

Our team, tired as we were, ended our days with reflection-sharing snapshots, moments of consolation and desolation, lessons learned! Thirteen individuals of diverse backgrounds found many commonalities, the main one being the desire to serve especially the most vulnerable. That we did. In Jamaica we saw God everywhere and we found Love!

Please visit our blog at: https://xavierinjamaica.blogspot.com
Though harshly treated, he submitted and did not open his mouth. Like a lamb led to slaughter or a sheep silent before shearsers, he did not open his mouth. (Isaiah 53:7)

Isaiah 53 is proclaimed each year at the Good Friday liturgy. I have found evidence of the continued suffering of the Body of Christ in the intractable war in Yemen.

Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the Middle East, strategically located at the southern end of the Arabian peninsula, bordering Saudi Arabia and Oman. The modern state of Yemen was formed in 1990 after centuries of conflict. The Houti (Zaydi Shia Muslims) ruled northern Yemen for a thousand years. In 2004 violence and periodic clashes occurred between the Houtis (Shia) and the government troops (Sunnis). The conflict escalated in 2010 with the Saudis aiding the Yemen government in their dispute with the Shia (Houthis Insurgents). The U.S. got involved in response to terrorist (Al-Qaeda) attacks on Yemeni citizens. By 2015, what began as a civil war took on an international dimension with the missiles supplied by the U.S. and U.K. to Saudi Arabia, an ally of the Yemen government. Saudi Arabia and its coalition of eight countries attacked many funerals, schools, hospitals, businesses and religious sites, as well as strategic targets. The increased bombing of civilian areas and blockades of ports led to the present humanitarian crisis. With the death of the reporter, Jamal Khashoggi, in October 2018, Secretary of State Pompeo called for an end to air strikes. Both sides went to the bargaining table in Sweden in November. A temporary and fragile ceasefire was negotiated by the UN in December 2018. Peace talks will resume in late January, and Pope Francis’ visit to the United Arab Emirates in early February will add pressure for a united and democratic Yemen.

The decision to support the government forces with missiles was considered necessary because of the terrorist presence in Yemen. However, the Saudis seem to have put aside the Rules of War in their targeting of civilian locations. Like all wars, there are no winners in this conflict. Here are some of the losers:

• Loss of life: 50,000 children, 10,000 adults
• Infrastructure: Bridges, schools, airport destroyed
• Economic system: Money de-valued—cost of food, water and fuel skyrocketed
• Disruption of education: Schools destroyed, computers and textbooks stolen
• Medical: Supplies scarce and not getting to those in need, doctors unable to operate
• Disease: Outbreak of cholera, malnutrition of 2 million children with accompanying brain damage or death
• Conscription of male children into army
• Trafficking of women and children
• Corruption: Aid supplies stolen and unable to be delivered to those in need due to the damaged infrastructure
• Influence of ISIL and Al-Qaeda: spread due to the chaos in Yemen
Every child is precious: newborn, unborn, immigrant, refugee. Each is made in the image of our Creator. Photos of the starving Yemeni children haunted me in December, as I went about shopping for my grandchildren. The excess of holiday commercialism certainly gave me pause in contrast to the Yemeni suffering. Donations to groups in Yemen (UNHCR, Doctors without Borders, Mercy Corps) were well received. Letters to representatives in Congress were obliquely acknowledged. After these meager efforts to soothe my conscience, I realized the suffering from the trauma these people experienced will continue for years. Christ’s body was placed in a tomb, and he rose on the third day. Resurrection for the Yemeni will not come in three days. But hopefully, it will come.

In his encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis reminds us the ‘environment is on loan to each generation.’ The war in Yemen was also about safeguarding oil reserves and delivery through the Gulf of Aden. Would there even have been a war, if we and other western nations were not so dependent on fossil fuel, and instead put more resources into solar and wind energy, and food production in poor nations?

It is true that there was malnutrition in Yemen before 2015, but not to the same degree as today. Every child deserves adequate food, medical treatment and an education. Without these the child has no meaningful future. As we celebrate the new life of the Lenten/Easter season, can we contemplate the suffering in Yemen and pray that there be reconciliation within that country and its allies? Can we advocate for resources to build up Yemen and its people, and no longer supply bombs and missiles to destroy them?

1. What response does the suffering in Yemen call forth in you?
2. Do you see the face of Christ in the poor and outcast?

### Resources

- **engagedmystic.org**: There is a link on the home page of this site to the Amazonia document as well as materials used by our CLC to reflect on this. There is also a link to more resources of doing the Pastoral Spiral process or theological reflection within a community.

- **Ignatian Solidarity Network**: https://ignatiansolidarity.net/immersion/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2012/08/pastoral_circle.pdf. This page has a downloadable PDF that is a good basic explanation of the Pastoral Spiral.


- **Amazonia: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology**: http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino pubblico/2018/06/08/180608a.html. Mauricio López (former World CLC President) is a member of the committee preparing the Amazon Synod. In addition to being on World ExCo, Ann Marie Brennan is also on the steering committee of the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) of which CLC is a member organization. As part of her work with GCCM, Ann Marie has been preparing prayer sheets to help “Laudato Si’ Circles” (faith sharing groups) pray with the Preparatory document for the Amazon Synod. You can contact her if you are interested in exploring this document.

- **The Pastoral Circle Revisited**: Edited by Frans Wijsen, Peter Henriot, Rodrigo Mejia. This is a collection of articles on the use of the Pastoral Circle in various situations. I found the article by Jim Hug, S.J., “Redeeming Social Analysis” to be especially helpful. (pp 196-210)

- **The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times** by Dean Brackley. Subtitled New Perspectives on the Transformative Wisdom of Ignatius of Loyola, this book leads the reader through the Exercises with a way of responding to the need in our times to use Christian spirituality to shape a creative and faith-filled response to our crucified world.

**Contemplating the Wounds of Christ** by Pat Carter Anderson

*Continued*
Once, a long time ago, I visited the Oklahoma City National Memorial. It honors those victims of a terrorist attack by an American who killed 168 and injured 680 men, women and children. As I turned from the solemn, heartbreaking sight my eyes were drawn across the street to Saint Joseph Old Cathedral and a statue that took my breath away. The statue is titled “And Jesus Wept.” It depicts Jesus holding his hand to his eyes as He weeps in sorrow. I think often of the beautiful statue depicting the broken heart of God as I read what is going on in our world, in our country and in our Church today.

We have all read of the atrocities done to innocents in the Catholic Church by pedophile priests and those bishops and archbishops who hid what was happening, protecting those priests by moving them to other parishes where they continued to abuse children. Some in our church hierarchy went even further, using whips and chains as they made pornographic videos. How God must be weeping over these tragedies to His people!

When women came over our border searching for a better life and for safety for their children, many were separated from their children and locked in cold cells with very little food or water. As they begged to see their children, they were taunted and belittled by guards. As God saw their treatment I believe He wept.

When I hear people say that they are Christian and then see and hear how they turn against others because those other people are of another race, religion, nationality or sexual orientation, I believe those Christians have forgotten that Jesus came to tell us that we are all made in God’s image. God loves all of us equally. They are the people who have forgotten that we are asked to love one another without judgment. I know God weeps as He sees how innocent people are treated by some Christians.

When a person physically or emotionally abuses a spouse or children, God weeps. When our world leaders use hatred and exclusion instilling fear towards their own people and people of the world, God is weeping.

There are parishes where the people are excited about doing God’s work and are building a loving, Christian community. A newly transferred priest may tear apart the structure without seeing the good because he feels differently. He may not be a guide to his flock but uses his power to instill his will on the people. And God weeps.

There are many priests, Christians, Americans and world citizens who work for peace, for respect for others, for church, for country and for a world that is filled with love and peace for everyone. These people weep as they see what arrogance and power have done.

It is up to each of us to look around and see how we can change ourselves and in that change bring peace to God’s people. It is up to each of us to see what brings God to tears and stand up and say something so that God will not weep, but rejoice in us.
In Pope Francis’ “On Care for Our Common Home” (Laudato Si’), he states that “The earth is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor.” Even prior to this publication, every November, the NY Korean Apostolic Advocacy Action Team held workshops that focused on ecology and emphasized the importance of protecting the environment.

During the NY KAAA workshops, we provided information about various subjects with the members. Subject matters ranged from discussions about the environment, ways to use EM (Effective Microorganism) products, health care matters such as discussions on oncology and the members’ daily apostolic activities.

In late September 2018, rather than holding our regularly scheduled workshop we decided to have a picnic. There are numerous members among the 15 local Korean Christian Life Community groups in NY and NJ. Although we felt that our usual lectures and discussions were important, we decided that it would be more important to mingle and get to know one another better.

During the picnic, we were blessed with bright, sunny weather. We were also grateful that 60 members and their families from New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania were able to attend. Each community introduced its members and shared their apostolic activities through posters and skit presentations. We sang songs and played games that had environmental and nature themes. We also participated in scavenger hunts in which members had been challenged to answer questions about the environment. Everyone was eager to participate.

We distributed prizes and reusable bags. Everyone learned about critical environmental issues in a fun and interactive way while getting to know one another. We also raised $1600 in donations, which we sent to St. Aloysius in Kenya, Angels’ House in Guatemala and the soup kitchen run by Sisters of Charity in Newark, NJ, founded by Mother Teresa in 1950.

For the past ten years, during the Christmas holiday season, our members have volunteered at the soup kitchen in Newark. At times, there were so many volunteers that we would have to dissuade some old members from participating. Two years ago, we hired a classical violinist to help boost the morale of our guests and spread holiday spirit. She played short pieces of classical music and Christmas carols. We also distributed thermos vacuum bottles to our guests.

This past Christmas, NY KCLCers donated about $1,000 to help run the soup kitchen. Although we had volunteered for many years, last Christmas was the first time we told the sister in charge of the program that we were Korean CLC members. The sisters were more concerned with the salvation of the poor people, rather than their hunger. She suggested that we interact with the guests, listen to their stories and spread the word of Christ to them. I experienced a deep sense of God’s presence while praying the rosary together with the guests, and was deeply touched when we sang Amazing Grace together, rather loudly. The sisters invited us to serve in their Manhattan and Bronx locations. We will discuss this in detail in the future.

We will continue to help improve the environment of the earth and its people near and far. By working to heal the marginalized, we are helping to heal the wounds of Christ.
The red cover of the booklet popped out of the storage box. The title reads *A Series of Reflections on the Anima Christi*, by Reverend Henry F. Birkenhauer, S.J. Opening to the first page I find the prayer:

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.  
Body of Christ, save me.  
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.  
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.  
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.  
O good Jesus, hear me;  
Within Thy wounds hide me and permit me not  
To be separated from Thee.  
From the Wicked Foe defend me.  
At the hour of death call me,  
And bid me come to Thee,  
That with Thy Saints I may praise Thee  
For ever and ever. Amen  

Glancing through the pages, I find Father Birkenhauer’s reflections on Within Thy Wounds Hide Me. He writes, “We need such a place: none better can be found than in the wounds of Jesus….No better place can be found than in the wounds of His hands, strong, gentle hands for soothing, washing feet, drying tears, stroking the hair of the penitent.” Father Birkenhauer goes on to say, “The wound in His side is a door leading to His heart, a safe refuge.” He adds, “We enter not only to hide but also to console.” He further states that we offer our own heart in sorrow and in reparation. Father concludes his reflections on the *Anima Christi* by writing about being called by God and by saying “Here I am Lord.”

These words brought back memories of being on retreat during Holy Week. I left the retreat center with Father Birkenhauer to go to the West Side Catholic Center in Cleveland. Father, while committing to directing retreatants at the Jesuit Retreat House in Cleveland, also needed to fulfill a Good Friday commitment he had made to volunteer at the West Side Catholic Center. The center offers lunches and access to donated items such as clothing and small household goods. Many who come are homeless.

Father’s volunteer job at the center was to repackage donated bread so that visitors could take extra bread home with them. In watching Father repackage the bread, I felt he completed the task with both focus and thoughtfulness. I am convinced that he took his volunteer job as seriously as he had any full time work. After lunch, Father led the Good Friday service, which consisted of reading the Passion and Death of Christ. The room was filled with people, more men than women, who paused from focusing on their own life circumstances and homelessness, to join in remembering that Christ suffered and died on the cross. The folks in the room actively participated in the service, singing and volunteering to help with the readings as well as praying together and offering prayer intentions. They shared their own reflections. There were themes of sorrow and hope.

As I think back to that Good Friday, I acknowledge that it was one of my more memorable ones, both because of being on retreat during Holy Week, as well as accompanying Father Birkenhauer to the Catholic Center.

**Remembering**

*Barb Rudolph*

Barb Rudolph is a member of the Rieman Great Lakes Region which encompasses Michigan and Ohio. She has served as the Regional Chair and is transitioning out of that role. She is the President-elect for CLC-USA and is serving as the Executive Secretary. Barb is a member of the Potter’s Clay CLC, a group that formed in the early 1990’s. She lives in South Euclid, a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio. Barb has worked as a master’s prepared social worker, primarily with people with mental health issues, and also people with developmental disabilities. She belongs to a pottery co-op and volunteers as a pottery instructor for both children and adult pottery classes. Barb finds that many people enjoy working with clay because it can be a meditative experience.

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What are some of the reflections that come from this story?

First, the theme of breaking bread and Eucharist was very tangible in this experience. As we receive Eucharist, it strengthens us to go out to others and to bring Christ into our world. How does this happen for you in your life? What are some life experiences where you feel you can be Christ to others?

At the time that Father volunteered at the Catholic Center, he was nearing the end of his public ministry as a priest. As he dealt with declining health and aging, he was able to find ways to give back to others. At whatever our stage of life, are we able to find ways to be of service to others, to be compassionate, to be generous, and to acknowledge the blessings that we have received in our own lives?

Within our own woundedness and hurts, where do we find Jesus, and how do we open ourselves for healing and God’s graces?

As we participate in Holy Week services and at other times during the year, do we take time to reflect on both our own shortcomings as well as how we use our gifts and talents? How do we bring hope, and be sensitive to the needs of others? How do we work for justice?

And finally, do you have one or two experiences that best encompass or highlight the theme of Christ’s wounds, and our response to accepting God’s love by reaching out to those who are in need?

Note: Father Henry F. Birkenhauer, S.J., was born February 26, 1914 and died June 13, 2003. He was ordained a priest in 1945. He was President of John Carroll University in Cleveland from 1970-1980. Father gave numerous retreats and worked as a spiritual director. Having been stationed in Antarctica from 1957-1958, Father was informally known as the Polar Priest. Through the years, many people gave him stuffed animals, ceramic items, pictures etc. with a penguin theme. Father was also known for his love of the Spiritual Exercises. He carried a small copy of them in his shirt pocket. Father believed that the Exercises could be adapted to people’s needs. He was a member of Potter’s Clay CLC in Cleveland. He retired to Colombiere Center in Clarkston, Michigan, where he continued his ministry.

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CLC Caring for Creation

Less Plastic for Lent 2019!

In solidarity with CLC at UN Ocean Plastic Project, here are some other ideas for daily, prayerful action from Ash Wednesday to Palm Sunday: http://www.greenanglicans.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/FinalCalender.pdf?fbclid=IwAR247nV0wAjPmAUJfhlMextuKKr0RCKQZ7N4CY5_cFBxQcETmJdJFgQ

Earth Day April 22 to Mercy Sunday April 28!

A week of celebration and action running from EARTH DAY, which is also Easter Monday, to a global day of action on Mercy Sunday. This weeklong celebration will be the culmination of GCCM’s Lenten campaign and an opportunity for shared reflection in communities.

All CLC members—young and young at heart—are encouraged to prayerfully discern what the Lord is inviting you and/or your local CLC to do for EARTH DAY 2019! You’re invited to bring a photo, written reflection or some symbol of your Earth Day adventure to post on the EARTH DAY collage board in Pittsburgh this summer at CLC-USA’s NATIONAL ASSEMBLY! Where one of us is, we all are on this journey as One CLC Body: Deepening, Sharing, Going forth!

Other Earth Day Resources for Life-Giving Ideas:


*Franciscan action network https://franciscanaction.org/issues/care-for-justiceEarthday.org
https://www.earthday.org/2018/03/19/we-must-care-for-the-earth/

*REPAM- Panamazonian Ecclesial Network focuses on the Amazon and issues relating to forest destruction and climate change alongside the upcoming Synod on the Amazon. Pray with this video overview, discuss in your local CLC as we support our CLC brother Mauricio Lopez in his leadership role in this effort to save the lungs of the Earth and the indigenous peoples whose homes are increasingly threatened!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Paur6gY2Ode&fbclid=IwAR1iD53JpxxGxfLRXiWq9upxFxJF-1CPFmZBalVF1gL5KiupiFB8A

*Center for New Creation
www.centerfornewcreation.org

*Climate Caretakers
www.climatecaretakers.org

World CVX-CLC is a member organization of Global Catholic Climate Network (GCCM), a network of over 700 organizations with an exciting calendar of events in 2019, including Lenten Campaign and Earth Day!
https://catholicclimatemovement.global/plans-for-2019/

Lenten Campaign. March 6 – April 18.

Go Vegetarian!

A Lenten campaign focusing on reducing our meat intake—the number one cause of Amazon deforestation. We’re encouraged to commit to radical transformation in protecting the Amazon by eating vegetarian meals. Ranching is responsible for as much as 80% of Amazon deforestation, and meat production is a surprisingly strong driver of greenhouse gas emissions. GCCM encourages commitments to vegetarian meals from members of our network.

Other info on plant-based diet: https://the1a.org/shows/2019-01-07/planting-a-seed-the-vegan-diet-in2019?fbclid=IwAR3PZ7LY1OisZfzqZb7E5Sf-0LnBwvDV1i4r5MneP6wvHRA-OPzWulfGNpE
https://christianveg.org/resources.htm

“...for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.”

(Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ #4)
Getting Clear and Staying Curious!
This is an awesome opportunity to get to know other CLC members from around the country as we deepen our minds and hearts in becoming one diverse body of CLC, available for this Kairos moment!

Check the CLC-USA website for details!
https://clc-usa.org/assemblies

Please join us!
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...

For more information write us at

Christian Life Community®-USA
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St. Louis, MO 63108
www.clc-usa.org

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