National Assembly 2019 -

From the New York Islands to the Redwood Forest

This July 18-21, our national CLC community will gather at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh for our National Assembly. This happens every five years. Our theme is, “CLC-CVX: A gift for the Church and for the world.”

We gather to pray, share our experiences, and have some fun! When I attended in 2014, I found it to be a powerful experience to gather with others that have been touched deeply by Ignatian Spirituality. Meeting others, especially from our varied cultural groups, made for some rewarding conversations. So, please check your schedules and consider joining us for this Spirit-filled time!

-Michael Dante

Reflection: The Always New Offers Insights on Trusting God

The Omaha Cluster of Christian Life Communities and the Ignatian Volunteer Corps held an Advent Morning of Reflection on Dec. 1. The Rev. Luis Rodriguez, SJ, facilitated the reflection, entitled “The Always New.”

Fr. Luis said during the season of “lights, ‘stuff,’ and the clamor of the Christmas season as a business,” God’s desire for us is to listen to his beloved Son.

God revealed himself to us then through sight, word and deed. Although we do not see Jesus today, we can hear him and reflect upon his deeds and what he does through the gospels. Advent is the beginning of God’s deed of Redemption. He used Mary’s pregnancy to emphasize God’s gift to us of his incarnation, gestation and nativity to emphasize God’s desire to be close to us and to shower us with great love.

Through this process, he elaborated upon God’s real connection to humanity. We as humans have the choice to continue to be near to God or to draw away. God has been, and will always be, with us; it is us who need to make clear our desire to remain close to the Lord.

Mary and Joseph each accepted God’s call willingly. Their acceptance came without having full understanding of God’s call. Their acceptance of the call could, and sometimes did, come with significant repercussions.

For us, God’s call at times may put us in uncomfortable positions, and require that we not need understand the fullness of the call, but simply trust the Lord to do good things for us.

Fr. Luis offered a novel approach to thinking of our own deaths. He suggested that our deaths are a “reverse Christmas” wherein we come to our God. Our deaths then are a birth to new life and unlimited life.

If you are interested in a complete offering of The Always New, please contact Ken Keefner at kkkclc@gmail.com or see Fr. Luis’ column on page 3 for a link.
Consolations, Desolations and Dreams

By Ken Keefner, North Central Regional Promoter

At the January meeting of the Regional CLC Executive Committee (ExCo), convener Michael Dante asked the committee members to recount the “Consolations and Desolations” of the last year. In addition, he asked for our “Dreams for 2019.” As promoter of this committee, I was taken by the offerings generated. I offer them here, as a matter of interest and information to the members of all North Central CLC communities.

If you have a particular interest in finding out about any one of these items, please contact any members of the ExCo for further clarification.

CONSOLATIONS:

• Michael Dante: Accepting the call as convener of the North Central CLC Region
• The imminent wedding of a Remnant CLC Couple, Kristy Brandon and Peter Keefner
• The inclusion of the Davenport CLC Communities to the North Central Region being mentored and formed by Marie-Catherine and Pierre Guyot. Two communities are in formation.
• Offering an Advent Morning of Reflection on Dec. 1.
• Offering a very successful Biennial Retreat in Cedar Falls in October, facilitated by Fr. Kevin Schneider, SJ.
• The new national and regional website was uploaded.
• A new CLC brochure offering program and contact information was created. A specific brochure will be created specifically for the North Central region.
• Cindy McMahon agreeing to become the editor of our newsletter, replacing Dr. David Haberman who retired to the Northwest USA with his family.
• Reaffirmation of the regional retreat and the rising interest of CLCers attending.
• Apostolic Advocacy in Action committee creating regional interest in helping hurricane ravaged people in Puerto Rico with water pumps and lantern lights.
• The Ithaca Community recommitting themselves as a CLC Community by redoing the initial Pre-Community Program created by Fr. Jack Zuercher (7 sessions) for beginning communities. This was then followed up by a commitment ceremony.

• National re-inviting North Central guide participation
• A reconnection of CLC persons in the Twin Cities region, having Bonnie Haugeback attending the national guides program in St Louis in June.
• Continued connection with the Sun Prairie community through Jeanne DeSimone Sieger

DESOlATIONS:

• The effort dedicated to attract more CLC members and communities to the NC Region.
• No Spiritual Exercises offered in the region this year.
• There are concerns over the best way to use our resources, and the fact that not all members of CLC contribute membership fees.
• Regionally, our limited reserve funds have been used to partially fund individuals to attend national meetings. At present, we spend more that we take in.
• Efforts to generate interest and desire (and, in turn, the responses) to serve in a leadership capacity in CLC Ex-Co and region in general have been poor.

DREAMS FOR 2019

• Complete a regional flyer
• Try to include a picture of a community in each issue of the newsletter.
• New Quad Cities: an ExCo desire to lay the ground work to integrate new people into existing CLC communities and create new CLC communities. What can we do as an ExCo and region to stimulate growth through a Pre-CLC Community Program in 2019?
• Review and possibly use Boston College’s Faculty and Pre-CLC formation materials
• A set program for Ignatian Spirituality and Guides.
• Have a common concern or area of goal of action for the regional communities. For example, the NY Metro Region CLCs have a common desire to make all persons sensitive to the environment. They work collectively rather than individually (as a community) to do this.

North Central Region Directory

Coordinating council co-convener and national representative: Michael Dante
Iowa cluster promoter: Amy Hoover; Minnesota cluster promoter: Linda Bennett;
Omaha cluster promoter: Ken Keefner; Wisconsin cluster promoter: Jeanne Sieger; Treasurer: Bob Smith;
Bookkeeper: Mary Kuhlman; Ecclesial assistant: Father Luis Rodriguez, S.J.
Newsletter editors: Cindy McMahon (CindyMcMahon@creighton.edu); Deb Herink
From our Ecclesial Assistant—

Winter is for me the most tranquil time of the year. For one thing, I avoid traveling, especially at Christmas time. Staying at home during Christmas resulted in some truly quiet and peaceful time in our half of the building, where I was the only occupant for several days.

It provided plenty of time for reading, listening to music and taking some walks, weather permitting, while continuing my limited pastoral work. Of course, I was happy to see the rest of my sub-community return, since being alone is fine only for a while. Besides all that, not being caught in the shopping craze allowed me to remain focused on the reason for the season.

The day before the Advent season began, we offered a morning of reflection for our Omaha CLC members and the local IVC (Ignatian Volunteer Corps) group. In spite of the weather being rainy and cold, a good group got together and they very much invested themselves in that time of prayerful reflection.

This year it was my turn to lead the morning of reflection and I was pleased with the experience. Although I give my homilies and talks following an outline, not a written text, at the request of some CLC members I took time to type down a readable text of my talks and made it available to all members of our CLC region. That text is now also available on the Creighton web page at http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Advent/AlwaysNewRetreat.pdf

By the time you receive this issue of the newsletter, I will have completed 86 years of life and started my 87th year. Thank God, I am still in reasonably good health, but I cannot take for granted my being able to continue as your regional assistant indefinitely. Nevertheless, as long as I am able to do it, I will continue “assisting” you.

—Fr. Luis

Prayer Request

Please pray for Mary Kathryn Hanneman, recently deceased. She is the sister of Ruth McShane of the Gesu Companions in Milwaukee. Mary Kathryn was in CLC in France.

Recommendation from Apostolic Advocacy and Action

The office of Apostolic Action and Advocacy’s (AAA) role is to identify, foster, support and communicate CLC’s mission of apostolic initiatives and ministries. AAA recommends Sustainability Pioneers, at sustainabilitypioneers.com, for ideas for collective and individual climate action.

SAVE THE DATE

Lenten Morning of Reflection

Co-sponsored by the Ignatian Volunteer Corps and the North Central CLC Region

A flyer will follow shortly with more details

March 23, 9-11:30 a.m.

Presented by Fathers Larry Gillick and Greg Carlson, SJ

Location: Mercy High School in Omaha
A Little Humor—

*Remembering this story with joy and laughter, from the 2018 fall retreat, "Our Holy Journey," in Cedar Falls.*

**The Collar**

A priest was walking along the corridor of the parochial school near the preschool wing when a group of little ones were trotting by on the way to the cafeteria. One little lad of about 3 or 4 stopped and looked at him in his clerical clothes and asked, "Why do you dress funny?" He told him he was a priest and this is the uniform priests wear.

Then the boy pointed to the priest’s plastic collar tab and asked, "Do you have an owie?"

The priest was perplexed until he realized that to the boy the collar tab looked like a band-aid. So, the priest took it out and handed it to the boy to show him. On the back of the tab are raised letters giving the name of the manufacturer.

The little guy felt the letters, and the priest asked, "Do you know what those words say?"

"Yes, I do," said the lad, who was not old enough to read. Peering intently at the letters he said, "Kills ticks and fleas up to six months!"