Preparing for the Assembly

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
CLC-USA

A gift for the Church and for the world
Pittsburgh 2019
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Editorial Foreword

CLC as Gift

The theme of the World CVX/CLC Assembly in Buenos Aires in 2018 and our upcoming CLC-USA National Assembly is “CLC, A Gift for the Church and the World.”

Before I could reflect on that, I needed to search my own history and take note of how Christian Life Community was/is gift to me. I once described my initiation into Sodality/CLC as a “conversion” experience. I began a new way of living my faith, a new way of being community and a new challenge to participate in the mission begun by Jesus himself. One of the earliest gifts was the realization that I was not alone on this journey. My first spiritual guide and mentor was Father Francis Drolet, S.J. He, along with members of the New York Professional Sodality/Loyola CLC, were a strong support as I grew in knowledge and practice of Ignatian spirituality. My most precious gift was the meeting and marrying of my beloved husband, Ray. Together we were blessed to share the CLC way of life, our vocation in the Church, for the fifty-two years of our marriage. Ray used to say, “I am husband. I am father. I am dentist. I am CLC.” He felt and tried to live that intimate identity every day of his life.

When Ray and I started out in CLC, our community met in New York City. When our children began to arrive, the logistics needed to change if we wanted to remain active in CLC. Early in our formation we were told that if you move to a place that has no CLC, you start one. Without saying so, we were being asked to share the gift. After prayer, discussion and discernment, we found a way to bring CLC to our area of Long Island. Some forty-seven years ago, Locust Valley CLC was born, and it continues to this day. Although the Community has only four members, we are committed to the principles of our early formation, and we serve as best we can the local, regional, national and world community.

Among the precious gifts we have received are the friendships we have made and the sense of community we have shared. Both Ray and I were Presidents of CLC-USA and both were delegates to world meetings. Our home was a gathering place for CLCers from around the world. What a blessing that has been!

Let the rest of the truth be told. Not all has gone by without disappointments. Some of those with whom we tried sharing the gift of CLC, tried it for awhile and then left without giving reasons. Others tried to fashion CLC to their vision, not that of a community as envisioned by the General Principles. We never felt anyone went away empty. Seeds were sown - the rest was in God’s hands.

As we prepare for the Assembly in Pittsburgh this summer, we are asked to pray over our graced history in CLC, both personally and communally. In a recent article by Sister Joan Chittister, OSB, I came across some prophetic insights that I believe can be fruitful for us as CLCers. Sr. Joan wrote:

Tradition is clearly not about holding on to past forms....It is about holding on to the roots of a common purpose while we prune some of the dead limbs....It is about listening again to the hard-won wisdom of the generations before us and making it real in our own time....It is about bringing new fire to light from old coals...a sense of history becomes a kind of angelic guide through a tsunami of possibilities. Every spiritual community needs a community memory to help it trace the values and purpose that drove the high and low points of its development.


WITHIN THIS ISSUE:

In the President’s Corner, Ady Viera reflects on her journey in CLC, especially her service as part of the National ExCo. She tells of her gratitude for those who accompanied her along the way.

In his article, “CLC, a Gift for the Church and the World,” Father John Lan Tran, S.J. focuses on the meaning and implications of “gift.” He relates it to the Gospel of John and connects CLC as gift with the God who loves us.

For many in CLC, the World Community is not experienced or understood. Lois Campbell addresses this in “How the World Works.” Lois’ long and active service...
in CLC will help clarify some of the questions that arise in our discussions about World CLC and should help us better understand the sense of one community.

“engagedmystic: My Ignatian Journey” by Pat Carter Anderson is a comprehensive telling of Pat’s experiences and growth in Ignatian spirituality through the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, Sodality and CLC. As she was growing, so was CLC, especially as it became a more visible discerning faith community as well as a place for experiencing the Spiritual Exercises in new ways.

Marilyn and Ed Bourguignon, Sodalists and CLCers from the beginning, tell of their roots and ongoing CLC identity in “CLC, A Gift and Blessing for Its Members.” Their service throughout the years is a testimony to the commitment they made and the gifts they received.

In “The Spiritual Exercises by Grace,” Youngock Lee (Maria) relates encounters with her granddaughter and how the child expresses her spirituality. Maria has been led to reflect on the Spiritual Exercises, a gift of CLC, as a result of her granddaughter’s way of experiencing God.

Maria H. Martinez tells of the gift that CVX/CLC has been to her personally and to the members of her community, Companeras de Jesus. “Christian Life Community: Comunidad de Vida Cristiana” explains the makeup of the community, the gifts the members are to each other and the mission activities in which they participate.

In “Healing Our Broken World, Collaborating as One Body” Beti Leone reminds us of many areas of brokenness in our world. She urges and encourages us to use the CLC gift of one body to work for change, to heal the brokenness. She includes a chart and many resources to help each of us move forward in mission.

Buu Tran in “How CLC Has Impacted My Life” shares briefly his experience of being welcomed by Dong Hanh CLC when he came to the USA from England. The Con Ca group continues to help him grow in his relationship to God.

Joan Woods represents CLC as an NGO at the United Nations. In her Report, Joan shares recent events related to Climate Change, Integral Ecology (especially that related to the Amazon), the crises among indigenous peoples and women’s issues. Read the report to be informed and also to recognize CLC in a world context.

Please check out the book review of Fleeting Moments: Praying When You Are too Busy, Small Group Edition by Loretta Pehanich, a CLCer from California.

ASSEMBLY PREPARATION:

The remainder of this issue of Harvest is given over to several documents for each of us and our communities to use as we get ready for the July National Assembly:

- You’re Invited!
- Overview
- Prayer Exercise on Our CLC History
- Meeting Format: CLC-USA Assembly Pre-Work
- Lent, Earthy Day and the National Assembly: Sharing Our Stories - Water Is Life!
- Friday Evening Meal: CLC on Mission, Conversations and Explorations

Plan for the Assembly.
Do the pre-work with your community.
Make your reservations now.

With gratitude to our loving Lord,

Dorothy M. Zambito
Blessed be our CLC-USA National Assembly as we come together in One Body. This One Body is bonded together as a family in our shared friendship in Christ through our Ignatian spirituality and in common mission.

Thy Will Be Done

From the very beginning of my service as President-elect, the Holy Spirit sent and guided me. In this same way the Spirit chose and led me in 1963 when as a young student I joined a Marian Congregation. The Spirit journeyed with me in 1992 as I joined the CVX-CLC South Florida Region. This same Spirit has been with me until today as through CLC-USA I have served in various ministries and on committees.

Deepen, Share, Go Forth

Deepen

We nurture and deepen our experiences of God as we discern and grow in the intensity of the Spirit. Ignatian tools like the Examen and evaluations help decrease and eliminate our paralyses and dysfunctions. They bring us out of the dark into the light as we strive to bring this light to others. We become salt giving more flavor to the Kingdom here and now. In all this the Lord is compassionate. Jesus is present and despite our shortcomings He loves us.

Share

My mission as President was to join, share and participate in the richness of CLC-USA’s different groups like Dong Hanh CLC, Polish CLC and South Florida CLC, culminating in the unforgettable experience of the CLC World Assembly last summer in Buenos Aires. These encounters not only helped me to know CLC better, but also allowed me to grasp the immensity of the graces that the Lord has bestowed on us as its members with the entailing responsibilities.

Go Forth

It’s impossible to thank everyone who has been with me through this journey as CLC-USA President. In gratitude and humility I thank the Spirit that has never been far from me these past three years. I am also full of gratitude for ExCo and NCC members who have supported and reinforced my belief that the CLC way of life is a gift to be shared.

Now we go forth and continue to bring this gift to the many others that are waiting for it. We reinforce our commitment to our members, to our Church and to our world.
Recently I saw one man trying to give another man a tangerine, but the second man obstinately declined to accept it, saying that he did not eat tangerines. The giver persisted, saying different things to cajole the other man to accept it. Eventually, the giver even gave a small lecture on how one should accept gifts from others as a sign of gratitude.

This was when I walked away, feeling irritated with the giver. I strongly believe that a gift cannot be imposed on others. So seeing one man trying to manipulate the other to accept his gift was just too much.

As we reflect on CLC as a gift for the Church and the World, I want to invite you to reflect on the meaning of being a gift through John 3:16: God so loves the world that He gives his only Son.

In the Gospel of John, the word love is often associated with the word abide, to stay with, to participate in or to become part of. In other words, to love some one is to be with the person, to share your life with him and to become one. A good example of this is in John 1:14: And the Word became flesh and lived among us, which literally meant “pitching a tent among us.” In this context, a gift is an expression of love that involves both giving and receiving.

At the basic level, giving involves having the courage and honesty to share with others one’s very self. Take the Spiritual Exercises, for example. Giving them means not only that we organize retreats to help people to find God, but also that we share with them how God has worked in our lives through the Spiritual Exercises.

More profoundly, giving means becoming transparent, being vulnerable to each other, that is, sharing about things that really matter. In the Gospel of John, the highest form of love is the giving of one’s life for the beloved.

I know of a young man who lives a double life, struggling to hide his drug addiction. Yet, after a long period of soul-searching, he finally worked up the courage to tell his fiancé about his addiction. This was the hardest thing that he has done. Yet, I think this is what giving means: to let your loved ones into the deepest levels of your life.

Sometimes I associate “being a gift to the world” with the promotion of our charism, with marketing, or recruitment. Somehow we have this “thing” called “gift” that we need to give to non-members to bring them to CLC. Lately, however, I look at our charism as a gift that attracts (pulls) rather than promotes (pushes). We don’t sell our gift, but share it. It is through the way we live our lives that we share our gifts.

The second aspect of a gift is receiving. In terms of abiding love in the Gospel of John, receiving a gift involves humility, courage and openness. An example is Peter in the washing of the feet in John 13. Peter initially refused to have his feet washed by Jesus, only to be told that he won’t be allowed to participate in the divine unity if he is not willing to be served.

For many of us, receiving a gift may sound easy, but that is not necessarily so. We are used to being in control and used to giving. For example, take listening, the receiving of someone’s thoughts or feelings. Much of the time we don’t listen well because we are very adept at “mind-reading.” We think we can read other people’s minds without actually listening to them. We have selective hearing, only listening to certain things. We over-generalize, simplify things and end up not receiving the gift.

At a deeper level, receiving requires a deep care, respect and empathy. This can be seen when people fall in love. I think the best things about falling in love are: recognizing that someone truly cares about you; that this person is willing to listen to you; and that the person understands you and is willing to give you the benefit of the doubt. It is about being known. Ultimately, that is what receiving is about.

In summary, I have talked about the meaning of a gift following the abiding love in the Gospel of John. In giving and receiving a gift, we CLC members grow into one. Our gift is rooted in God’s love: God so loves humanity that he sends Christ, the Word, to become one of us, to come to live with us, so that we may have life and have it in abundance.
How the World Works

Lois Campbell

One of the greatest blessings of my very blessed life is God’s gift of CLC. For 45 years, it has been a primary vehicle of my spiritual growth and has given me the opportunity to serve in regional, national and world contexts. My life is so very much richer because of these experiences. Through CLC, I am graced to be in relationship with and learn from people across many cultures and life experiences. My local community is a place of support, accountability and discernment. World CLC is as real to me as my local community. It, like my local community, has a face—many faces and many stories.

It can be challenging though to make the experience of World CLC or even CLC-USA real and meaningful to those in local communities who might never meet CLC members from other places or experience a larger CLC event. Our technology i.e. Facebook, FaceTime, Zoom, Skype make it possible—even relatively easy—to connect across the country or world. Most of us don’t. We don’t have the time, don’t know where to start, don’t see it as a priority in our full lives. And CLC formation has not always included the awareness and experience of the larger CLC. Communities were formed simply as local groups.

That said, when we say we are in a CLC, we claim membership in a worldwide community, not simply a local group. When we make a commitment to CLC, we become members of that worldwide association of lay Christians, committed to a life of everyday discernment for mission within a local community.

I was fortunate. My first experience of CLC was at a National Assembly, not in a local community. God’s providence brought me to the 1973 Convention of the National Federation of Christian Life Communities in Iowa City. I had just moved to Iowa and knew nothing of CLC but had just completed the Spiritual Exercises. Bishop Maurice Dingman of Des Moines planned to attend the meeting but needed a driver. I was available and the rest is history. The participants were Ignatian, focused on mission and sharing faith. They were clearly a community. I felt at home. Six months later, my work took me to Council Bluffs, Iowa, just across the Missouri River from Omaha and I was invited to join the Quest for Metanoia Community. I have moved five times since then and have been in five wonderful local communities. If I moved again, I would find CLC or start one. This is my way of being in the Church and world. World CLC and CLC-USA are home.

I am grateful that my introduction to CLC was to the larger community. Because of it, CLC has always been a global reality for me. Only three or four members of CLC-USA get to participate in a World Assembly which happens only every five years. Even our National Assemblies, once held every other year, are now five years apart. Without clarity and investment in a world community, time spent on regional, national or world CLC issues can feel like an intrusion on precious time in the local group.

Whether a CLC member ever attends a national or world meeting or even gets an opportunity to get to know people from other CLC groups, we are still joined to each other. Our shared commitment to this way of being in the Church and the world as a lay, Ignatian community on mission unites us. And we share the process of discernment, especially communal discernment. Not only do small communities all over the world discern as we do, but discernment is the normal decision-making process at each World Assembly and the World ExCo.
I like to think about World CLC engaging in an ongoing dialogue and communal discernment that includes all of its members over the entire 50-year life of CLC. The World Assemblies are the primary places for discerning our broad direction. Delegates come together from each member country to discern some aspect of our life or apostolic mission. In some form, at each assembly, delegates ask and answer: What have we done for Christ? What are we doing for Christ? What will we do for Christ? As Ignatian people, these are also the fundamental questions we ask in our own lives. They are the questions each local community asks when it meets. And they are also the questions asked by each CLC World Assembly.

From the 1967 Assembly when CLC was born to Buenos Aires last August, CLC members (delegates) come together from each national community to listen to each other and share how God has moved in the life of our communities over the previous few years. The Assembly then prays and dialogues about how God might be calling us now and sets the direction for the next years. The Assembly always ends with both an agreement on a way forward (Assembly document) and the selection of leadership (World ExCo) to help the world community do what God is calling us to do. Over its tenure, the World ExCo listens to the dynamic (movements of the Spirit) in the national communities and the realities of our larger world. It identifies the content and theme for the next Assembly. Thus, they identify the topic of the next communal discernment.

Over our 50-year history, if we step back and look at the broad movement of the Spirit, two major threads of discernment are visible. First, the World Community has explored apostolic mission, our call as Christians to build the reign of God and our specific call as CLC. We moved from a federation of national communities to one world community. We moved from clarity about concern for the poor to four Frontiers for our apostolic mission. We moved from clarity that we are called to mission to seeing ourselves as an Apostolic Body on mission. Each of these took place over several Assemblies. The Spirit helps us get clearer and deeper over time, just as it happens in our own life of faith.

Assemblies also discerned how we were called to deepen and grow as a community and in our relationships with the Jesuits and the Church. Assemblies called for better formation, greater access to the Spiritual Exercises, leadership development opportunities, guide formation, revisiting the General Principles. In every case, the process was the same communal discernment we use in our local community.

The CLC-USA National Assembly is taking place this summer in Pittsburgh from July 18 – 21. It is a mini-experience of World CLC. CLC-USA uses five different languages, is spread across this big country and is diverse in many ways. I have attended nearly every National Assembly since I came to CLC in 1973. Now that they happen only every five years, we have too few opportunities to gather as one CLC-USA.

The Assembly itself promises to be a rich experience of learning, sharing, prayer and discernment and a time to be with old friends and meet new ones. People I know from CLC-USA continue to help me grow spiritually and as a human being, and the assemblies have always been key moments for growth. I want that blessing for more of our national community. Please join us in Pittsburgh. With all of us, CLC-USA and World CLC become more able to build the reign of God as more of our members engage beyond their local community.
“Where is God? God is everywhere.” This question and answer memorized from the Baltimore Catechism in first or second grade resonated in my young soul and was the source of a budding awareness of what I would now call the Cosmic Body of Christ. Long before I knew anything about Ignatian spirituality, I was beginning to find God in all things.

In praying over my graced history, I can see that this awareness was nurtured and grew into a world view that I call engagedmystic. Seeds have been planted and tended that helped my world view to include not only my personal relationship with God, but also the necessity of action for justice within the context of a discerning faith community.

Spirituality — World View

When I think of the word, “spirituality,” it is more than just how I pray. To me it gives a context for how I perceive and relate to the world, the cosmos. Growing into a deeper awareness of God’s presence in the world as the Body of Christ is a transformational experience. I can see how God placed so many people and groups in my life that have helped me to widen my understanding of who God is. Even in grade school I can remember getting our little Catholic magazine with pictures of statues of Jesus from different cultures. I was awed at the depictions of Jesus as not only white, but also black, brown, yellow, red. I began to understand that Jesus was not limited to any one culture. Our parish was considered liturgically progressive in the 1950s and was chosen to be an experimental one in which English was used at Mass long before Vatican II. Through this I learned to value adapting to the signs of the times while still holding on to deeper realities. God is not limited to a certain language and becomes more accessible.

In high school, I was invited into Sodality. Since this was before Sodality became CLC, the spirituality was not specifically Ignatian, but it did introduce me to meditation and other spiritual practices as well as a type of faith-sharing and leadership skills. After high school, I entered the order of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood. The sisters had been my teachers through grade school and high school. Along with learning various forms of prayer and meaningful liturgies, our lessons in the novitiate were on the documents of Vatican II, given to us by the community’s chaplain who was progressive in his thinking. I was also taught by women theologians who were members of the community. I am most grateful for this opportunity to be grounded in the theology that flowed from Vatican II, and to be exposed to other ways of experiencing God. I also could see the tensions it caused in the community as some eagerly embraced the changes and others clung to their familiar patterns. I recognized the need for compassionate understanding on both sides.

In college, I was introduced to the spirituality of Teilhard de Chardin and I was able to begin to put a name to the relationship that I was experiencing with God. It expanded my understanding of the Cosmic Christ to all created matter.

During this time I was still in formation with the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, but I was also watching my own sister who was married and had a family. She became more active in her parish community and a leader in the Search program, a retreat for older teens. I began to realize that committing myself to a religious community was not the only way or even the best way for me to serve God. I left the...
community and soon after was invited to join a Sodality group composed of others who had been in my high school Sodality. About this time, Sodality was being transformed into Christian Life Community and the Spiritual Exercises became “the specific source of and the characteristic instrument of our spirituality.” (General Principle 5)

Community — Discerning Faith Companions

From this time on, CLC became a major formative experience for me. I often refer to this time as “growing up with CLC.” CLC, both my local community and the national, supported me through marriage, rearing a child, divorce, single motherhood, remarriage and moving to Iowa. It also seemed that the Spirit was leading me through the growth process that CLC was also going through during these years. The themes of the national and world assemblies all seemed to speak to me at this stage of my life. As Ignatian spirituality became more integrated into our CLC way of life, deliberations — pre-discernment gathering of facts and discussions — and discernments became a more intentional part of community life.

During some of this time CLC-USA had a live-in community in St. Louis that was housed in a building that also served as the national headquarters. This added much life and vitality to our St. Louis CLC as well as offering opportunities to meet CLCers from other parts of CLC-USA and around the world. The concept of World Community was very alive for me during this time.

I attended several eight-day retreats sponsored by CLC that were led by teams of lay people and Jesuits. These retreats usually included a workshop on Ignatian spirituality or an insertion experience. A most memorable one for me was held in Washington, DC. One experience included spending several days visiting a migrant camp and several more visiting a women’s prison. While visiting the migrant camp we stayed in a nearby town. Since we had a Jesuit with us, and the people in town didn’t have liturgy very often, they asked us to celebrate Mass with them. What struck me in conversations with the group after Mass was that they seemed to have little knowledge of the migrant camp a few miles from them. One of the sisters who worked with the migrants told us that one of the members of the community celebrating with us was a dust cropper who flew an airplane that dropped pesticide and herbicide on the fields. He was being sued because he had not turned off the chemicals as he flew over the migrant camp. I was struck that someone who was a faithful Catholic could be so unaware and even dismissive of the migrants; that there could be such a disconnect between love for God and love for the poor.

Through CLC I was also invited to be part of the Bridges Program in St. Louis (19th Annotation of the Spiritual Exercises). This was another wonderful experience of lay and Jesuit collaboration. Through Bridges I experienced the Exercises twice with women directors, one a religious and the other a married woman. I was also exposed to a wealth of Ignatian experience from laity, religious and Jesuits. The interchange was grace-filled. I eventually became a director, mentor, and then president of the organization.

National Assemblies also became an important part of my journey, and my involvement in CLC included leadership on the regional and national levels. It was a joy to see our national meetings move from a Roberts Rules format to one that incorporated communal deliberation and discernment. As President of both Bridges and CLC-USA, I tried to incorporate a discerning style of working together in the respective groups.

Mission — Action for Justice — Developing Right Relationships

Ignatius stresses the need for right relationships among ourselves and God, our neighbors and all of creation. The biblical word for right relationships is “justice.” If my spirituality, my world view, is centered on the Cosmic Christ, then living in ways that would help bring that body into wholeness is a natural response. (What am I doing for [the Body of Christ?] Throughout my growth in CLC, acting for justice was a key component both within CLC and with other groups. Within CLC I was part of the National Social Justice Commission and attended a march against nuclear weapons in New York City near the UN. This incorporated reflection, prayer and education. After the World Assembly in Manila, there was much interest in moving CLC into a more active participation in social justice. I also had the opportunity to absorb the wisdom of laity and Jesuits who shared a vision of the Cosmic Christ.

My involvement in justice issues was also expressed through connections with the social justice community in St. Louis. Along with taking part in protests and vigils, I was part owner of Peace Institute Printing which served the graphic needs of many of the social justice organizations in the area and which was an employee-owned, cooperatively run business. Before I left St. Louis I was involved working with the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, a religious order of women whose charism is reconciliation. I was a pastoral associate at a parish designated as a social justice parish for the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Along with our parishioners being involved in justice issues, part of the former parish school building served the people in the low-income neighborhood where our church was located.

A lesson I learned during my social justice activity was that work for justice needs to be done justly.
Activism, fueled by anger and self-righteousness or using violent means, is at best counterproductive and can lead to increased pain and suffering. It does not reflect the nonviolent lifestyle of Jesus. Personal transformation is a necessary part of social transformation. Participation in a discerning faith community is an essential component of doing justice.

**engagedmystic**

The term “contemplatives in action” is often used to describe those in the Ignatian family. While I embraced this term for many years, I have come to a point where it does not seem to reflect fully what I feel called to be. The writings of Richard Rohr and others have attuned me to the mystical tradition that has largely been overlooked in our western Christian practices. It is precisely this mystical experience that Ignatius is referring to in the Exercises in the Principal and Foundation, the Incarnation meditation with the Trinity gazing at the world, and the Contemplation on Divine Love. Pope Francis called Ignatius a mystic. Being a mystic means being aware of God’s loving presence in all created matter, that all of creation is part of the Body of Christ and so is interconnected, and our response should be to choose always that which will build this kingdom of God — what Ignatius calls the greater good. Pope Francis’ call for a culture of encounter invites us to engage with the people and structures around us for our own personal transformation and that of society. Our faith communities help to interweave this work for justice and personal transformation. Fred Kammer, S.J., in his book, *Salted with Fire* calls this Triadic Insight. He depicts it as a triangle, but I think a more dynamic model would be a spiral. This dynamic is something I try to incorporate into all the gatherings I am involved in whether president of a board, giving a retreat, preaching, designing calendars or leading a bible study group.

The difference for me between contemplative in action and **engagedmystic** is similar to the difference between thinking about God while serving soup and encountering Christ in the serving and in the people being served. As St. Paul says, “I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20)

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**How CLC Has Impacted My Life**

*Buu Tran*

I grew up in England as a cradle Catholic, attending Holy Mass every Sunday with an ever diminishing congregation. God was compartmentalized to Sundays and the occasions when I needed help with something. But somehow I always felt that there was more to be found in my relationship. However, it was always a struggle to nourish my faith as there were not many Catholics that I knew, let alone any who were close to my age. After graduating from college, I got a job in the US and made the move across the Atlantic to work. It was here that I was introduced to the Dong Hanh CLC in Virginia.

I joined the Con Ca young adult group and immediately found myself in the company of young Catholics with whom I was able to journey. I was introduced to Ignatian spirituality which gave me the means to desire to know God and to deepen my relationship with Christ. Through my small group I was able to know the larger Dong Hanh community and in turn CLC. The gift of community, and in particular the second round of sharing practiced in CLC has really helped me to hear God’s voice through others, and to discern better God’s will for my life. This has been the proverbial hidden treasure in the field for me and has helped me to respond better to God’s invitation to me through missioning with the community.

*Buu Tran* was born in Saigon, Vietnam in 1981 and moved to the UK when he was 3 years old. He lived there until the end of 2005 when he moved to the US to work as a software developer. He has been a member of the Con Ca group and part of the Dong Hanh CLC in North Virginia since 2006. *Buu* has been active in a number of ministries within the community, including Lightworks and S.E.E.D Retreats.
If CLC is a gift for the Church and the world, how much more is it a gift for its own members who live this Ignatian way of life every day? When I was a freshman at Notre Dame College, the Prefect of the Sodality came to an orientation meeting to tell us about her group. This was in the 1950s when Sodality (CLC) was rediscovering its Ignatian roots and becoming a way of life and not just a club one could join. I remember thinking that this seemed like just what I wanted. Ed was at John Carroll, a Jesuit University, and was told by his brother to check out the Sodality. He did, and he was hooked. Now, years later, CLC is still what we want and we are still hooked. Being CLC has been gift and blessing to us in so many ways and we are grateful. We counted the blessings on our fingers and ran out of fingers. Then we found one that surprised us. Years ago we asked Father Nick Rieman, S.J. to help us on a project for CLC. It required a lot of time and work. Nick answered, “I love CLC and I will do anything I can.” His response has become a mantra for us. We learned to discern and accept, when we could, any invitation to serve CLC. We became servant leaders and that has been such a lovely blessing for us. We have met and worked for and with the most wonderful people who became our teachers and our friends.

We started out small. The Cleveland CLCs wanted to celebrate World CLC Day together. We volunteered and learned to delegate jobs and responsibilities. All the CLCs liked the idea of getting to know each other better and of sharing what it means to be CLC. We repeated the event yearly. It was a graced time for us and for those who attended.

Another blessing in Cleveland wasn’t as much an invitation to us, as a need which we saw. We needed more CLCs. It is such a good way to live that we wanted to share it. This was a little scary. What if we ended up with a really nice prayer group, but not a CLC? However, we had been well formed in CLC. We worked with Father Rieman, and Ed took the Guides course. We bravely began. Some groups lasted and are still active today. Others did not, but perhaps the members found a deeper relationship with Jesus. We found that the experience of sharing what we love was a gift and blessing to us.

When our region needed a new person to represent us to the National CLC, we were asked to discern this call. Our children were still young so we couldn’t do this together. We decided that I would be the representative and Ed would keep an eye on things at home when I had to travel to Saint Louis. We were both blessed by my experience. It was so good to be a part of National, to meet the national leaders and the representatives from other regions. Being the bridge between the Region and National gave me a broader and deeper appreciation of what CLC is and can be.

When CLC needed a new president, we were again asked to discern. This was a big decision. It required a four year commitment. Our children were now old enough that we could do this together. We asked our CLC to discern with us. When the answer was yes, our Family Life CLC chose as their mission for the next four years to support us in our role as Co-Presidents of National CLC. These were some difficult years for CLC-USA. Some hard and unpopular decisions had to be made. Yet our memories are only of graced times. It was the people of CLC, the Jesuits, the other adult members and the youth who were blessing to us.
It was an unusual and unfamiliar message from Allie, our 7-year old granddaughter in New York. She is usually chatty, talks fast without pauses, and sounds bright and cheerful. The recorded message was none of it. It was short, had long pauses between words, and the voice was, well, almost solemn.

“Hi Halmony (Korean for grandma) …… today I made reconciliation …… I was scared …… at first.”

I called back her mom, our daughter, right away. Allie had her first reconciliation that evening (as a preparation for the first Eucharist). I congratulated Allie on her first reconciliation, and added it was the most important step to loving God. “No, Communion is more important!” Allie corrected me.

I listen to Allie’s short recorded message almost every day. Each time I am flooded with a sense of reverence. Reverence in her voice, in how she said it, and in what she said. It puts me in a state of awe and my eyes well up.

Reflecting on this, it dawned on me that perhaps Allie has been doing a version of the Spiritual Exercises in essence: being escorted through mystical contact with her soul’s deepest yearnings and thus with God.

St. Ignatius considered many possible situations in our lives and developed a program for those who could not go away on a 30-day retreat for the Exercises. This is called a “19th Annotation Retreat.” Through this program, the Exercises can be completed without withdrawal from jobs or other obligations, by carrying it out over 30 weeks instead of 30 days. In fact, this made it possible for my initial completion of the Spiritual Exercises 15 years ago.

As a teacher of human development, I know that our development —whether physical, emotional or cognitive— is gradual and orderly. Spiritual development is no exception. St. Ignatius realized it required persistent effort, and therefore wrote a practical manual for us based on his experience.

Since I heard that message from Allie in March, I have been taken back to it during my daily evening reflections. Perhaps we start our spiritual exercises the day we are baptized (or the day we are born?). Perhaps God patiently and lovingly guides us through these exercises, helping us develop various spiritual muscles such as the mealtime prayer Allie used to recite: “Thank you God for the food. Thank you God for everything. (pause) Did you know that God is our Father? Yes or No?” It was not until everyone at the table proclaimed God as our Father that we could eat. Isn’t that the essence of the second week of the Spiritual Exercises?

Of course, Allie does not realize that she began the spiritual exercises the day she was baptized. Compared to the formal Spiritual Exercises conducted step-by-step over four weeks, Allie started the exercises in the most natural setting—surrounded by those who love her, doing what she enjoys (although she might say “not always!”). What is most remarkable about her exercises is that she is led by the most qualified leader, God himself.

Pascal wrote in The Pensées, “The conduct of God, who disposes all things kindly, is to put religion into the mind by reason and into the heart by grace.” Yes, it is by grace.

Youngock Lee teaches psychology at Oakton Community College and writes regularly for Korean newspapers and radio. She was a youth group director and taught religious education classes for many years. She has two grown children and two grandchildren. She and her husband live in Northbrook, Illinois. They served as Eucharistic Ministers at Our Lady of the Brook in Northbrook, and now sing in the choir of St. Paul Chong Ha Sang Catholic Mission in Des Plaines. She is a member of the Chicago Chapter of Korean CLC.

We heard a keynote speaker at a national assembly say that, “CLC is infinitely capacitated for the future.” The future of CLC is close to our hearts. Just as we learned how to be servant leaders from those who went before us in CLC, we share our experience with you who will be the servant leaders of the future. Serving Christian Life Community is gift, grace and blessing.
My community, Compañeras de Jesus (Jesus’ Companions), is made up of nine women coming from different Hispanic countries who decided one day, after finishing the Spiritual Exercises, to continue meeting as a group. The idea to become CLC/CVX came after a workshop given by Father Manuel Maza, S.J., at Miami’s Ignatian Spirituality Center. At this workshop he explained the meaning of CLC and we decided to form our community.

The first goal was to know the life of Jesus, to follow His path, and to serve others as He did as part of a community. Even though our roots are Hispanic, each of us has a different background and a unique personality, but this was not an obstacle. On the contrary, being different took us to a higher level to try to know each member better. My community has been together for eight years and we love, pray and take care of each other and are still growing in knowledge of God and ourselves.

CLC/CVX has brought us many gifts. First, we now have a deeper relationship with Jesus through prayer and our CLC formation. We pray as community and share some of our prayer reflections as they pertain to our own group. This has made our community stronger and also reinforced our common bond.

Service as one community is very important. Every single one of us has service as an important component of her life. These include jail ministry, spiritual companionship and coordinating the Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life. Some of our common services are helping the low-income school where I teach by providing uniforms and school supplies and helping at Encuentros Familiares (Family Encounters) by supporting the participating families and serving in the kitchen when needed.

Our individual CLC group has become an important part in our daily lives. We help each other, celebrate our joys together and share our pain. As part of the South Florida Region we participate in formation workshops and assemblies with other communities. As members of CLC-USA we work in the Community of CLC Guides. For World CLC Day, we study Projects that points us to the World CLC future. We celebrate together as one region and one world.

CLC is the main support in our spirituality and in our mission. Life has been transformed by CLC/CVX for the nine women in our community as we have been gifted in this very special way of following Jesus. We cannot imagine life without CLC/CVX.
In his talk to the World CVX/CLC Assembly in Buenos Aires, Fr. Arturo Sosa, S.J., World CLC Ecclesial Assistant, spoke about reconciliation. (1) He also constantly reminded us, that we are “gift to the Church and to the World.” How do we connect Sosa’s words with our National Assembly in Pittsburgh?

Pope Francis in Laudato Sí (2) and Fr. Sosa call us to collaborate with each other in healing the world: “Working for reconciliation, or the unity of the human family, is a necessity and a task to which we, Jesuits and CLC, feel called. From our particular experiences we feel the call to contribute to that mission. We are encouraged by the same spirituality and by having traveled a long way together ... let’s not hesitate to explore new forms of collaboration and deepen our joint service to the mission of Christ in the midst of this wounded world.” (1)

**Brokenness:** With so much brokenness in our world, we look at just five areas: 1) migration, 2) fossil fuels, 3) consumerism, 4) water/earth degradation and 5) individualism. All these issues are interrelated and all impact people and our common home. And it is quite clear that the poorest and most vulnerable are impacted far more seriously than those who have more, much more. All brokenness is interconnected. Climate change means floods, droughts, poverty and migration. War means killing, rape and trafficking. Individualism leads to over-consumption, pushing the poor onto the streets. Persons who are religiously or culturally different threaten our status quo, so we don’t speak up when we see injustice. We may be afraid, uncomfortable or disagree with the “preferential option for the poor.” Maybe we aren’t yet ready to be healed.

**Reconciliation:** Scripture and Church teachings guide us as we learn, pray and discern options for action and evaluate these actions. As CLC, we are called to be “contemplatives in action.” In reconciliation, this involves personal and communal prayer and action. Are we ready to heal, to be one body? What does Laudato Sí’ say about our brokenness? What personal and communal actions help, as we are called to heal, as one apostolic body? What questions can guide us? Can social analysis help? (2)

**“Healing Brokenness: Collaborating to Find God in the World”**

**Migration:** Do we ignore wars and migration, not understanding their root causes and complexities? (3) (4)

**Fossil fuels:** Extracting resources from our earth, polluting the planet and reaching a “plastics crisis!” Are we ready to move to renewable energy sources? Reduce single-use plastics? (5)

**Consumerism:** Our commitment is to a simple lifestyle. Do we know that our lifestyle harms the poorest of the poor and the earth? Do we know how? Are we aware of our over-consumption? (6)

**Water loss and degradation:** When we overuse, will there be enough for everyone? (7) (8) Are we ready for extreme climate, extreme poverty, extreme sickness, hunger, conflict?

**Individualism:** How do we forget our connection with each other? Why are we told to feel superior, as individuals, as a nation? (9) And humility? (10)

**Reconciliation and integral ecology:** One path to healing is “integral ecology,” seeing all as connected. As contemplatives in action, we pray, discern and act communally. Do we listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor? (LS: 49)
community and our unity sustain us and we are called to find God in the world. “Good living is the abundance of life and harmony between brothers and sisters. Finding the light inside each human being and exchanging ‘us’ for ‘I’…” this is what the indigenous leaders in the Amazon say. (11)

Sosa equates reconciliation with unity of the human family — reconciliation within each of us, with God, with each other and with the environment. Understanding deeply and desiring such reconciliation may be our most important first step at our 2019 National Assembly.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Migration</strong> Displaced due to war, trafficking, famine, job loss, poverty, climate change, political corruption</td>
<td>Isaiah 24: 4-6 Psalm 107: 33-34 LS: 23-25, 128, 159</td>
<td>Read re: deportation, slavery, human trafficking, wars Pace e Bene Ignatian Solidarity Network</td>
<td>Form Laudato Si’ prayer group. Listen to Greta’s 04/23/2019 full speech to Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Consumerism</strong> Over-consumption, energy use, buying new not used, mindless-throw-away culture</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 20: 19 Leviticus 25: 1-7 LS: 20-22, 50-52</td>
<td>Friends of the Earth The High Price of Materialism (Kasser)</td>
<td>Begin “simpler life” challenge in your group Take a quiz re your buying habits: food, clothing, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Individualism</strong> “We’re o.k.-on-our-own” — self, family, culture, soc-class, religion, race</td>
<td>1 Cor. 12: 12-27 LS: 14, 137 ff</td>
<td>Joanna Macy Joan Chittister Integral — social &amp; cultural ecology LS: 137 ff.</td>
<td>Visit: <a href="https://www.clc-usa.org/news">https://www.clc-usa.org/news</a> re: CLC events, actions, National Assembly (July 18-21).</td>
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**Sources**
(1) Arturo Sosa. 2018. PDF. Discerning-Lay-Community-in-the-Service-of-Reconciliation
(2) Pope Francis. 2015. Laudato Si.
(4) The Long Journey to Europe. Various sources.
(5) The problem with plastic, storyofstuff.org/the-story-of-plastic
(6) Overcoming Consumerism. www.becomingminimalist.com
(10) Joan Chittister. April, 2019. Acceptance of Inferiority and the Freedom It Brings. NCR.
(11) Global Catholic Climate Movement / Earth Day
The 18th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues took place in N.Y. from April 22 to May 3, 2019. This forum followed the program of other forums with tracts for government sessions and side events for civil society. The theme was: Traditional Knowledge: Generation, Transmission and Protection. During the event, I received a copy of the “Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth” which was generated by the World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, Cochabamba, Bolivia, April 22, 2010. I thought it to be an inspirational addition to the theme. Some highlights that I noted are as follows:

**Preamble:** Considering that we are all part of Mother Earth, an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings with a common destiny... Convinced that in an interdependent living community it is not possible to recognize the rights of only human beings without causing an imbalance within Mother Earth.

**Article 1. Mother Earth**

(6) Just as human beings have human rights, all other beings also have rights which are specific to their species or kind and appropriate for their role and function within the communities within which they exist.

**Article 2. Inherent Rights of Mother Earth** These rights are the same as those found in the UN Charter on Human Rights

**Article 3. Obligations of human beings to Mother Earth** (1) Every human being is responsible for respecting and living in harmony with Mother Earth.

The Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the UN hosted an event entitled “Toward an Integral Ecology: Responding to the Urgent Cries and Horizons of the Amazon.” It was cosponsored by numerous organizations, one being the Red Ecclesial Pan Amazonica (REPAM). It took place in preparation for the upcoming Synod on the Amazon which will take place at the Vatican, October 6-27, 2019. Church Leaders and experts, including members of the UN, will examine problems and solutions to challenges in the region. Archbishop Bernardito Auza said in remarks delivered by Msgr. Tomasz Grysa that Pope Francis expressed his solidarity for indigenous peoples “who are great caretakers of the environment, yet face discrimination for following their ancient traditions and customs.” He criticized those “who view the region as an inexhaustible source of resources without regard for the rights of indigenous peoples.”

Four members of the panel were impressive as they spoke to a common theme: “Help for the Indigenous Peoples and for the Amazon Itself.” Archbishop Roque Paloschi of Brazil spoke of Pope Francis’ visit to Peru and how important it was to show the Church’s support for indigenous peoples. He expressed hope that the Synod would demonstrate the importance of protecting the hopes and dreams of its inhabitants.

Sister Digna Erazo Cardenas, a Pastoral Agent in Ecuador, said that regardless of protection under national or international law the Amazon people are enduring many hardships along with the undermining of their ancient traditions. She added that countries and companies of the Global North reap the benefits of exploiting the lands while indigenous peoples from the Global South suffer the consequences.

Chief Juirn Seixas Reis of the Marugua community in Brazil expressed his concern about the lack of marking boundaries of indigenous lands and called on the
international community to correct the situation. He called the Amazon the lung of our world and said, “If our lung doesn’t work we will die.”

Fr. Justino Rezende, a member of the Pre-Synod Council and a Salesian is the only indigenous priest participating in the Pre-Synod meetings. He said that the people of the Amazon are highly aware of the importance of the rain forest, but the whole world must understand this and what a great loss it will be if the rain forest is destroyed. Fr. Rezende noted that the Holy Father insisted that the Synod take place at the Vatican in order to spread awareness of its importance throughout the western world and the northern hemisphere. He called on everyone to make a commitment in favor of life and to rethink the way we address indigenous issues while understanding indigenous languages and appreciating their culture.

The year 2019 was designated as the International Year of Indigenous Languages. The designation of an international year signifies the importance of the topic. The disappearance of languages is one of great concern to those people interested in the history and heritage of indigenous peoples.

One workshop that I attended centered around the loss of language and its detrimental effect on the history and culture of a tribe in our American West. Sachem Hawkstorm, Chief of the Schaghticoke First Nations, gave us a familiar account of his growing up on a reservation surrounded by poverty and hopelessness. The situation causes migration to surrounding cities which indirectly impacts culture and language loss. He knows of a tribe with two native speakers left. It reminded me of the sad history of our Native Americans compounded today by land grabs for pipelines and fracking. Reubin Fast Horse, a teacher of the Lakota language, spoke of trying to keep this language alive by giving language lessons at New York University. Unless we change conditions on the reservations, their languages will not survive.

Other workshops that I attended had representatives from nations close to us like Canada and Mexico and others far away like Brazil, Indonesia and Nepal. Their message was the same. Our lands are important to us and have a spiritual significance. Taking care of Mother Earth is everyone’s responsibility. We have a history of expertise in caring for the earth and for the health of our people. We ask that our knowledge and languages be respected, recognized and strengthened. Please listen to us.

A final reflection is that the Bishop’s Synod on the Amazon, if successful, will have a tremendous effect on the indigenous peoples worldwide. It deserves not only our prayers but our interventions.

The second Forum that I attended was the sixty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). It took place at the UN in New York, March 11-22, 2019. The CSW Committee arranged over 400 parallel events and five regional caucuses for over 4000 participants from around the world. A large number of embassies hosted side events. In preparation for the Forum, a committee of UN women prepared a document listing items they considered important for the UN agenda during 2019. This is circulated each year to Member States and NGOs in order to elicit feedback before the Forum. Members of the CSW Committee were not satisfied with the level of participation that this method offered us. As a result the NGO CSW Zero Draft committee was established in 2017. We prepared our own document which was sent to all member states. When the UN Women’s document was circulated, our members inserted our document into their copy and recirculated it to member states. A review of the two documents showed that many of our ideas were incorporated into the final document. I was pleased to see that our ideas on Climate Change were included.

There was one idea which did not make it into the final document but was in the initial one sent to all UN members. The first paragraph of our document referred to the 1948 Charter on Human Rights. It then listed all of the documents for the last seventy years that dealt with adopting these rights. It ended with: “Still, change on the ground has often been piecemeal and erratic, accompanied with violent backlashes of violence against women and girls. Hence, there is a growing consensus that we need to refocus on a new dimension, an ethical, moral and spiritual one.”

The Europe/ North America caucus held its final meeting during the second week of the Forum. The focus was on plans for Beijing + 25. In 2020, the UN will celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the massive gathering of more than 50,000 participants that took place in Beijing. At next year’s CSW Forum there will be no negotiated outcome document. Plans are being formulated for review of the past 25 years and next steps for the future.

In her article to CSW participants, Soon-Young Yoon, UN representative for the International Alliance of Women said: “We must build bridges with social movements working for human rights, climate justice, rights of indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees, as well as the elderly, youth and girls. We must also make sure that governments implement the Beijing Platform of Action.”

Members of the NGO Committee on the Status of women look forward to working on the preparation of Beijing + 25.

A CLC and small group participant in California for more than 20 years, Loretta shares tips to finding God in all things, from toothbrushes to stickie notes and spiritual vitamins.

Ignatian principles permeate this workbook which includes questions for each chapter, plus opening and closing prayer suggestions perfectly suited for CLC use. Through 11 short chapters and a concluding section, Loretta offers thought-provoking material to prompt faith-sharing.

**Some sample questions:**

- Are there people I admire who seem to be too busy? Or do I envy people who aren’t?
- Do I hold realistic expectations for myself, and where do they originate? Does God have expectations for me?
- Am I busy because I like it? Because I want to be? Because it makes me feel needed, useful, important or wanted? Am I busy as result of a divine call?
- What qualities might grow in me if I were less busy?
- To whom was I a grace yesterday? To whom do I think I might be a blessing today?
- Using the analogy of meals or snacks to describe prayer, what would I say is my most common “prayer meal?”

The workbook includes additional prayers and questions to spark individual reflection. Enjoy creative and simple tips to open new opportunities for prayer despite your bulging calendar.

“All of life can be a prayer,” Loretta writes. “Love is a verb, and love is prayer. The secret of prayer for busy people lies in remembering that prayer is God’s project, and we are willing participants.”

An early version of this book, minus the questions, prayers and small group guides, is available as a Kindle book at Amazon.
The essence of Ignatian spirituality is reflection on experience. It is the heart of the CLC group meeting and it will be the heart of the Pittsburgh Assembly. CLC members from all over the country, from each of the geographic and cultural regions will reflect together on our experience of Ignatian spirituality in our local, regional and national communities. It is our hope that every community will be represented so that our discernment reflects all of the diversity of our national community.

The Assembly begins with registration on Thursday afternoon. There will be a Mass for anyone who can arrive before the dinner at 5:30. We begin formally at 7 for prayer, to get acquainted with who is ‘in the room’ and to reflect prayerfully on our graced history. The Graced History Line that reflects the collective pre-work of local communities will be visible in the Assembly room.

What have we done for Christ?

Friday’s focus is on how we have been gifted as CLC. ‘What loaves have you?’ (Mark 6:34) Secondly, we consider our paralyses, how we get stuck locally and across CLC-USA. Our liturgy will focus on God’s redeeming and reconciling love. Friday evening we will split up to enjoy dinner and conversation with local CLC members concerning Pittsburgh mission efforts.

What are we doing for Christ?

With the graces of Friday in hand, we will turn our attention on Saturday morning to the four Apostolic Frontiers: family, global poverty, youth and ecology. Together we will prayerfully explore what we are already doing and how we might be called individually and collectively to respond to these needs in Christ’s kingdom.

In the afternoon we will bring all that we have heard and shared into the question, How is God calling CLC-USA to Deepen, Share and Go Forth? What will we do for Christ?

We are blessed to have Denis Dobbelstein, World CVX-CLC President, join us for the Assembly. He will speak to us on how he experiences CLC as Gift for the Church and the World.

Saturday evening we will enjoy a celebratory dinner at Duquesne and party together. The Assembly closes on Sunday with liturgy and sending. We will seek confirmation of the discerned decisions of the weekend.

Overview

Preparing for the Assembly: July 18-21, 2019

As you know, CLC-USA is meeting in Assembly this summer in Pittsburgh from July 18 -21. Our theme is “CLC, A Gift for the Church and for the World.” The Assembly will discern the CLC-USA response to the call from the 2018 CLC World Assembly to Deepen, Share and Go Forth. Participants will reflect together on how we are called to Deepen our CLC charism and mission, Share the gift of CLC and Go Forth in our own lives and as a National community. We truly hope you can join us in Pittsburgh.

The Assembly will open on Thursday evening with a reflection on our collective history. The Assembly planning team wants that history to reflect all of our communities, those present and members who cannot attend. As a result, we are asking each local community to spend some time focused on your own history as a CLC and add 3 or 4 of the most significant events in that history to a CLC-USA History Line. A prayer process and community meeting format are included as is the link and the directions for adding events to an on-line History Line.

We are including three documents for your use.

1. Prayer in advance: Please give the Prayer Exercise on Our CLC History, to the community at the prior meeting and invite members to use it for prayer before the next meeting.

2. At the meeting, use the included meeting format which includes a prayer process (CLC-USA Assembly Pre-Work).

3. After the meeting, please add the events your community identified to the online History Line. The link is https://time.graphics/line/239219. Also attached are directions for using the timeline. Please include your community name when you add an event. If you have difficulty adding the event to the History Line, please send it to Frank Vuong at frank.vuong@gmail.com

Thanks for your help. Please keep the Assembly in your prayers.

Lois Campbell
Chair, Assembly Program Team

You’re Invited!
Prayer Exercise on Our CLC History

Events of the history of CLC important to me.

- The Apostles rejoined Jesus and told him all they had done and taught. Mk 6:30
- And Mary said: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; for he has looked with favour on his lowly servant. Yes, from now onwards all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name, and his faithful love extends age after age to those who fear him. Lk 1: 46-50
- Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, ‘Woman, this is your son.’ Then to the disciple he said, ‘This is your mother.’ Jn 19: 25-27

Image: I open the book of our story of CLC in my community, region, country and world. I see the faces of the people I met during these years and I recall our common events with tenderness.

The grace that I desire: I ask the Holy Spirit to help me recognize and welcome, without censoring, the significant events that have marked our CLC history.

Points for meditation:
- I observe the Apostles coming to Jesus, Jesus who listens. What do the Apostles tell him? How does Jesus look when he listens?
- I take some time to observe the immense joy and the immense sadness of Mary.
- What are important moments for me within CLC? Moments of trust, peace or joy? But maybe also moments of sadness and suffering?
- I choose the three moments that are the most important to me, moments of joy or moments that are painful. I write them down.
- I imagine I come to see Jesus, like the Apostles, and tell him my story, with all the joys and the difficulties.

Conversation with the Lord (or Father or Son or Holy Spirit): I share with Jesus the three most important moments that have surfaced for me. Happy ones or difficult ones. How does He look at me? What does He say? How do I respond?

Conclusion: I review this prayer time: what has given me joy, sadness, fear, anger…? What did I discover? I note what I want to share with my CLC group: the three moments that are the most important to me.

Note: Pray with this meditation prior to the community meeting.

Meeting Format:

CLC-USA Assembly Pre-Work

1. Brief check-In: How has God moved in my life since our last meeting?
2. The grace: To perceive the key events in my/our CLC history and how they have impacted me/us
3. First round of sharing from the Prayer Exercise on CLC history (listen to each other without comment): What three moments in my/our CLC history are most important to me? Why are they important? What feelings do they evoke?
4. Prayer Exercise: Read and reflect on the following passages for about 10 minutes.
   - At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father…” (Lk 10:21)
   - He was amazed at their lack of faith. (Mk 6:6)
   - As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it. (Lk 19:41)
   - And he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.” (Mt 26:37-38)

Points for reflection:
- As I listen to the sharing, which events touch me most? What feelings do they evoke? Does any event bring consolation? Does any bring desolation?
- What does Jesus say to me about these feelings? What do I say to Him about them?

Conclusion:
- I review this prayer time and prepare to share the events that brought consolation and desolation with my community.

5. Second Round of Sharing: What did I hear as I listened and reflected on key elements and consolation/desolation in our history as CLC?
6. Third Round of Sharing: How is God speaking to us as a group? What events do we want to add to the CLC-USA History Line?
7. Closing Prayer
Lent, Earth Day and the National Assembly:
Sharing Our Stories - Water Is Life!

“Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another.”
Laudato Si’ 42

Around the world people celebrated Earth Day on April 22, 2019. Please send a photo, written reflection or some symbol of your Earth Day Action and email to pittsburghclc@gmail.com (put Earth Day/Lenten Actions in the subject heading). This will be collated in an overview as we celebrate together at the CLC-USA National Assembly in Pittsburgh (July 18-21.)

The Assembly will give us the opportunity to share our experiences with one another. At times we may feel what we can do is so little compared to the enormity of the issues, but when we share our efforts, we can see that our offering is part of a much bigger effort! Where one of us is, we all are.

Many of us also joined with people of faith, responding to World CLC’s Lenten invitation to Less Meat, Less Plastic. Include examples from your movement toward a plant-based diet and living with less single use plastics (SUP) that are contributing to significant, positive impacts on the sustainability of our common home, Earth.

https://myemail.constantcontact.com/CLC-USA---Lenten---Earth-Day-Newsletter----.html?soid=1103429965303&aid=rBVCs16se5U
https://catholicclimatemovement.global/earth-day-2019/?fbclid=IwAR1EdgylvBzHMCa2xmtMwzrjUXGZcvVje_uqP8HQ6LxLQu_zVfoJ75gOlo

And as we gather from across the country and a few from around the world, PLEASE BRING a small container (less than 3 ounces) of WATER from your neck of the woods. We will gather together liturgically this life symbol of our diversity and oneness in our opening rituals in Pittsburgh July 18.

Friday Evening Meal
CLC on Mission
Conversations & Explorations

As in other World/National Assemblies where delegates have had the opportunity for experiencing some aspect of the local place and in the spirit of Culture of Encounter as Pope Francis emphasizes immersion experiences with holy listening, we envision this evening as an opportunity for deepening relationships as a national community through a shared meal and conversation around self-selected mission and leadership formation topics. While these options are still unfolding, we want to give some idea at this point what Assembly registrants will be able to select from, and to have an opportunity for registrants to sign-up. It will be very helpful for local CLCers to know the approximate number of people for each group. We also seek to have clearer sense of what each evening’s cost will be. If you’re planning to attend the Assembly, please email your desired Friday night option to: pittsburghclc@gmail.com.

Spirituality

1. Guide/Leadership Formation and Sharing the Spiritual Exercises (SE): Opportunity for conversation around Bridges/Prayer Companions, Pneuma, Creighton’s Spiritual Direction program, CLC’s Guide Formation and other Ignatian spirituality leadership formation programs, as well as offering the SE in parish-based settings, Lightworks, etc. On CAMPUS with DU cafeteria or take-out for meal. Facilitators: Kathy and Al Yarzibinski (Life Giving Bread CLC, and Pneuma, Pittsburgh)

2. Ignatian Spirituality and Healthy Living: Ignatius and his companions integrated a cura personalis (care of the whole person - body, mind, spirit) approach to daily living. In our world today, many are struggling with the effects of chronic illness. Do you know that some chronic illnesses can be reversed or improved by simple (and prayerful) changes to diet and exercise? Please join this conversation as we explore how Ignatian spiritual practices can help us improve all areas of our lives, including our physical health. Facilitator: Paul Gallagher, D.Min., (Baltimore CLC)

Family/Youth

3. CLC Family Ministries: Learn about Families Turning: Impacting the Addiction Epidemic through Keeping
**Relationships Real**, CLC’s national *Marriage Renewal* ministry, Bridget Brennan and Jerry Shen’s *Marriage Retreats and the Spiritual Exercises*, and the variety of family ministry that S. Florida CVX-CLC has been engaged with for years. Join in conversation with one another about family ministry around the country with an opportunity to visit the beautiful and famous Nationality Rooms at the University of Pittsburgh ($4/person for tour) with a meal at The Porch nearby on the Schenley Quad. **Note:** Reservation required. Estimated total cost: $25. **Facilitator:** Nancy Wood (Community of Hope CLC, Pittsburgh)

4. **Bowen Family Systems Theory, Practical Aid to Contemplative Action:** How do you live out “holy indifference” when a family member or significant other is driving you nuts? Dr. Murray Bowen’s theory of human behavior provides practical guidance for bringing Christ into trying relationships. Attend this dinner group for an overview of the Bowen theory and its relevance to Ignatian spirituality and the CLC way of life. This is more of a workshop than the other options, but with Q and A and conversation. **On CAMPUS** with DU cafeteria or take-out. **Facilitator:** Ann Depner, LCSW (Community of Hope CLC, Pittsburgh)

**Integral Ecology**

We encourage people selecting these ecology options to watch ahead of time a brief episode of Sustainability Pioneers about some Pittsburgh climate action efforts. One of our site visits, Phipps Conservatory, is mentioned in this documentary: [http://sustainabilitypioneers.com/?fbclid=IwAR1VXLFvJjdd-Ry3ww5Gb3iy5zPYJMXf5UncIkTOIFNMVyr90wMkLbDxhIf](http://sustainabilitypioneers.com/?fbclid=IwAR1VXLFvJjdd-Ry3ww5Gb3iy5zPYJMXf5UncIkTOIFNMVyr90wMkLbDxhIf)

Another related documentary to view online is From Paris to Pittsburgh: [https://www.nationalgeographic.com/tv/watch/3681392620b4285b82eeba8745eaa9e](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/tv/watch/3681392620b4285b82eeba8745eaa9e)

[https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/films/](https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/films/)

5. **Phipps Conservatory:** Eat a meal at the café and tour the Summer Flower Show and one of the world’s most sustainable buildings. Conversations will center around Integral Ecology, *Laudato Si*, Pittsburgh water advocacy and other CLC invitations to creation care. Members selecting this option should be prepared for some walking. [https://www.phipps.conservatory.org/green-innovation/at-hippss/center-for-sustainable-landscapes-greeneest-building-museum-garden-in-the-world](https://www.phipps.conservatory.org/green-innovation/at-hippss/center-for-sustainable-landscapes-greeneest-building-museum-garden-in-the-world)

**Facilitators:** Lois Campbell (Chesed CLC, Pittsburgh), Dan Scheid (Breathing Room CLC, Pittsburgh)

6. **Ballfield Farm (BFF):** Share a potluck meal (with planned vegetarian take-out from Baby Loves Tacos) with BFF members. Conversation topics may include Urban Farming and Building Community, Changing the System 3x/day with Food Choices (practical tips on evolving to a plant-based diet, and simplifying lifestyles), Climate Change Realities, collaborating with the Pittsburgh Project in ministering to at-risk youth, etc. Take in some Northside sites enroute such as Randyland, City of Asylum refugee homes and community gardens. **Facilitators:** Carol Gonzalez and Beth Christensen, (Chesed CLC, Pittsburgh) and Walt Kochirka, (S. Hills CLC, Pittsburgh)

7. **Film Screening PLASTIC OCEAN** with Facilitator Sr. Mary Ann Wachtel (CLC, St Louis) - **On CAMPUS** with DU cafeteria or take-out, perhaps visiting a nearby church.

**Global Poverty- Migration**

8. **Casa San Jose:** Founder Sr. Janice Vanderneck, CSJ and staff organizer Laura Perkins will present immigration issues, solidarity with migrants and refugees. **Facilitators:** Henry Gonzalez (Chesed CLC, Pittsburgh), Dee Kochirka (S. Hills CLC, Pittsburgh), Mac Johnson (Bellarmine Parish pre-CLC, Cincinnatti), Joyce Schlag (S. Hills Social Justice Interfaith), Possible VZ/Mexican or other Latin American meal options in the Southside/S. Hills area of Pittsburgh. **Facilitators:** Henry Gonzalez (Chesed CLC, Pittsburgh), Dee Kochirka (S. Hills CLC, Pittsburgh), Mac Johnson (Bellarmine Parish pre-CLC, Cincinnatti), Joyce Schlag (S. Hills Social Justice Interfaith), Possible VZ/Mexican or other Latin American meal options in the Southside/S. Hills area of Pittsburgh.

9. **From Service to Solidarity:** Since the USA has 5 of the top 13 cities in the world with large numbers of homeless, learn of Operation Safety Net here in Pittsburgh, serving the medical needs of those without stable homes and solidarity with men and women homeless. **Facilitator:** Chris Roach

10. **Bidwell Training Center:** Think Global, Act Local. Tour this world-class educational institution (art exhibit, music, horticultural greenhouse, etc.) and enjoy conversation while eating a meal provided by these top-notch chefs thru the culinary program. Facilitation still needed for this possible option.

**Do Your Own Thing!** Go explore Pittsburgh on your own and have a meal in one of the nation’s premier FOODIE towns!! [https://www.visitpittsburgh.com/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI96Ccko234AIvraOztCh2ecQtLEAYAAYAAEgK81fD_BwE](https://www.visitpittsburgh.com/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI96Ccko234AIvraOztCh2ecQtLEAYAAYAAEgK81fD_BwE)

[https://www.nextpittsburgh.com](https://www.nextpittsburgh.com)

*We’re open to other member-inspired options so let us know if you’d like to help create one.*
Please remember CLC in your estate plan.

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
3601 Lindell Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63108
www.clc-usa.org

CLC-USA is a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization.
All contributions to CLC-USA are tax deductible to the extent allowable under federal law.

Calendar

National Assembly
Pittsburgh, PA
July 18-21, 2019

NCC Meeting
Pittsburgh, PA
July 21-23, 2019

Next Issue

Fruits of the National Assembly