

Update

Christian Life Community Canada



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FALL ISSUE

NOVEMBER 2004

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENTS

It is a pleasure to be in contact with each of you in our family of CLCs across this beautiful land we call Canada. We take for granted the many benefits, freedoms and gifts that our Creator has provided so generously for us to enjoy.

There has been a lot of activity and events since our last UPDATE. We had a very successful and inspiring National Assembly in Lethbridge. The charm of the hosts was overwhelming with their generosity, time, prayers and homes to all of us. We got to meet new members of CLCs, new members of General Council and were blessed to have our cousin CLCs from the USA.

We were saddened by the death of Father John English, SJ, on June 9th, 2004. We were privileged to be pallbearers at his funeral on June 15, 2004 in Winnipeg. Father John will forever remain an inspiration because we knew him as the "Father of CLC in Canada".

Check out the 'News from the National' elsewhere in this UPDATE for further information on our National Formation Working Group, our National CLC website, nominations for President(s)-Elect, and our meeting with Father Jean Marc LaPorte, SJ Provincial in Winnipeg. We are deeply grateful to each of you, as you are faithful to the CALL of THE KING as you walk with Jesus with our brothers and sisters and respectfully on Mother Earth with all of Creation.

There will be a North American gathering in Chicago of CLC USA, CVX and CLC CANADA in October 2005. The last gathering was in Guelph in September 2002. There are continued efforts to

foster closer working relationships with the three national CLCs on common issues.

The position of NCC still has not been filled. Members of General Council are finalizing the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for this important office. This should be completed by mid December 2004.

We wish each of you the many graces and blessings of this Holy Season of Advent and Christmas. Let us continue to pray for one another and those less fortunate than ourselves. There are so many needs among our people. Let us contemplate the poverty and simplicity of the Birth of Jesus, the beauty of the role of Mary, as a Mother, the role of Joseph, as a foster father and the fulfillment of God's Divine plan for us in our contemporary world.

Love and Blessings,

Graydon and Kati

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The Gift of **Fr. John English, SJ**



To view what Fr. John Veltri, SJ has to say about Fr. John English, SJ go to:
www.sentex.net/~jveltri/

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS to General Council Meeting, October 16, 2004

Atlantic Region

- Regional Assembly, Saint John, NB. Read John Sumarah's presentation included in this issue.
- Atlantic Regional Formation Team began a series of Group Guide Training workshops. Six new Guides have been through a pre-workshop discernment process with their communities to hear and respond to the call.
- A Resource Manual for Guides is in the development phase with material from the CLC Leaders' Manual along with new and additional material pertinent to Guiding CLC groups. After final editing (by next fall?) it could be available to CLCers across Canada.
- During his visit to Halifax, NS, Jean-Marc Laporte, SJ (Provincial Superior of the Jesuits of the Province of Upper Canada) met with John Sumarah who talked about the CLC activities in the Atlantic Region and growing collaboration between the Society of Jesus and CLC.
- Formation Resource Team has visited each community in the Region.
- Peter Nightingale has discerned to be the region's representative on the National Formation Working Group.
- Members of the Companions Community (Toronto) discerned to become Guides to a number of new communities.
- Fr. JP Horrigan and Susan Tomenson made a presentation on CLC at a parish in Barrie.
- There is new energy in the region and the need to look at a different structure to meet present needs (older members-several new members in formation).
- A Korean Community is meeting. Twelve more people are making Annotation 19. Elaine Regan-Nightingale will be their Guide.

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Prairies Region

- The need for Leadership and Group Guide Clinics was identified.
- Two gatherings were held in Winnipeg on Leadership – a third one is planned for before Christmas.
- Discernment on how to better include our members from the Thunder Bay area is in process.
- Plan for a regional structure will be discerned.
- Date for a spring Regional Assembly has to be set.

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Central Region

Rockies Region

- The Region held its first Core Group Meeting since Dan Clarke became chair. The possibility for an upcoming visit in January, 2005 by Fr. Earl and Kati was on the agenda.
- A reminder that the \$10 sent by members to the National will go back to the region.
- Dan shared about his communications with various communities and individuals.
- Three new groups started last year – another one just finished week six of Phase I Manual.

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NORTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE 2005
 October 7-9, 2005
 CENACLE RETREAT & CONFERENCE CENTER
 CHICAGO

More in our next issue of UPDATE.



NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

December 12, 2004

CLCers are invited to join in this Way of Prayer across Canada, to be held on the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, recognized as Our Lady of the Americas.

We are encouraged to pray for Aboriginal People and the issues that affect them in whatever ways are comfortable: Reading Scripture, Eucharist, Rosary, Meditation, Prayer Circle, etc.

For more details please contact
 Graydon Nicholas: graydon1@nb.sympatico.ca

CLC DONATIONS 2004—05

MANY THANKS

TO ALL MEMBERS WHO HAVE SENT IN THEIR ANNUAL DONATION:
 WITHOUT YOUR GENEROSITY CLC CANADA COULD NOT FUNCTION

ATLANTIC REGION: 15 members donated \$ 725
 CENTRAL REGION: 43 members donated \$ 3,530
 PRAIRIES REGION: 21 members donated \$ 835
 ROCKIES REGION: 34 members donated \$ 1,650

SURPLUS MONEY FROM THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

was forwarded to the four regions.

REMINDER TO THOSE WHO STILL NEED TO CONTRIBUTE:

To receive a Tax Receipt for this year (2004) your donation needs to be received before the end of December at
 CLC Canada @ Jesuits of Upper Canada
 1325 Bay Street, Suite 300
 Toronto, ON M5R 2C4

NEWS FROM NATIONAL

WORKING GROUPS

“COMMUNICATIONS”

Members of the working group have worked diligently over the summer and have forwarded their recommendations for a new CLC web site to General Council. Due to the generosity of Clarence De Schiffart, Cheryl Gruninger, JP Horrigan, SJ (members of this working group), Pat Carter (CLC USA – outside consultant) will soon start working on our web site. A big Thank You to the working group, for your energy and your financial contribution!

“FORMATION”

Thanks to the efforts of Gilles Michaud (chair), this working group has started to communicate on how best to implement the mission/grace of the World Assembly, Nairobi and of the National Assembly, Lethbridge. Thank You to the delegates who are representing the four regions on this working group: Atlantic: Colleen Sumarah; Central: Peter Nightingale; Prairies: Howard Engel; Rockies: Patricia Hartman.

CHANGES TO THE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR CLC CANADA

As times are changing, General Council felt a need to review/update our SOPs. Maria and Bill Brown, ON, have worked hard over the summer and have presented a draft. GC is now in the process to discern final, future changes. Once finalized, the document will be forwarded to all of our members. **Thanks** Maria and Bill for your efforts!

**FOR
FR. JEAN-MARC LAPORTE, SJ (PROVINCIAL)**
Graydon has sent a survey to the four Regional Reps. Thanks to all the communities who responded to this invitation. In November, Kati met with Fr. Laporte. He was “impressed” by the variety of commitments our CLC members are involved in and expressed a great desire to collaborate more closely with CLC communities in Canada in the future. Graydon and Kati will work on a more specific document for the Provincial on the apostolic activities of the various communities in the next little while.

PRESIDENT(S)-ELECT

Thank you to all the communities for nominating CLCers from the various regions of CLC Canada. Thank you to Graydon who volunteered to circulate the names and credentials of candidates to all communities. Thanks to all who will returned their ballot to the National Office. We are happy to share with you that we definitely have names for future presidents. Our new President(s)-Elect will attend the next General Council Meeting, Saturday, March 19, 2005 (phone conference) and will become President(s) the following spring of 2006. Graydon and Kati will be assisting them as Past President(s) until 2007.

JOHN ENGLISH SJ FOUNDERS FUND

Thanks to the generous response of our membership, CLC Canada opened a GIC in the amount of \$2,492 in honour of Fr. John English. The interest generated by the fund is intended to give financial assistance to proposals which would help the growth of CLC Canada at the local, regional, national and international levels.

For this purpose we will need to establish a Foundation Fund Awards Committee. The five nominees will include the NCC plus one member from each region will be selected from members involved with formation. The term is a period of three years.

Thank you Bill Brown for proposing guidelines on how to administer the John English CLC Founders Fund.

If you are interested in reading this document, please contact your regional rep.

WARNING: This reflection has the potential to change your life

By Father Earl Smith, SJ - CLC National Ecclesial Assistant

Imagine yourself along with your local CLC community. **You are seated at a workshop facilitated by the late (and beloved) John English, S.J. on the topic of leadership.** John begins this meeting in his usual way – with a prayer of guidance and surrender to the Trinity. The meeting continues with John asking everyone assembled to raise their hands if they can recognize themselves to be a leader. What kind of leader? It matters. The question remains for all to hear, **“Who among us is an apostolate leader?”**

Too few hands go up to satisfy John who thinks, “They can do it. What is going on here?”

On this occasion John chooses not to keep his cool. He decides that his best response is to challenge everyone present.

A flurry of questions and insights rises to conscious awareness in John’s head. He begins teaching.

What gives? We are the sons and daughters of God invited to share the Lord’s ‘Common Mission’. We are called to give witness to the Apostolate Mission of Jesus. In whatever part of Canada we live God’s Kingdom needs to be more firmly established. Why are we looking to someone else, to anyone else but ourselves, to do work needing to be done? Pick an apostolate, discern an apostolate, and be sent supported by the blessing of your local CLC community.

**Ordinary people
make good CLC
apostolate leaders,**

John believes each person present has potential to live our CLC way of life to include not just regular faith sharing and planning meetings, but also, and most essentially, some gift of service.

He continues to reflect the lived reality of CLC Canada. The Provincial of Upper Canada Province, Society of Jesus, wishes to collaborate nationwide in the performance of various apostolate services. He notes with satisfaction that many CLCers have experienced the transforming graces of St. Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises. Many CLC Canadians are now trained to give these same Exercises in cities such as Halifax, Toronto, Guelph, and Winnipeg.

John continues to be steamed up. He is not content to focus on CLC Canada alone knowing full well that what good born of service here in our country began years ago at CLC Assemblies in distance lands like Spain, Brazil, Kenya and Italy. CLC is the inspiration of a worldwide community and our thinking small about ourselves or in isolation to our identity as members of a worldwide body does no one any good! **Wake up he preaches!** We here in Canada need to get ourselves onto the apostolate map of CLC World. In France there are retreat houses to be administered. Germany has the same apostolate but is also heavily invested in work with migrant workers. CLC Kenya works in over populated slums assisting to the needs of AIDS sufferers. Hong Kong runs a school. While John concedes that in Canada further discernment is required and that a nation-shared apostolate is NOT required, could now be the time to explore such a possibility? Could it be an interest in Water, Immigrants, or Refugees? Maybe our focus could include Canada’s aboriginal citizens? Could it be some kind of ‘good work’ as yet unexplored, but with potential interest to our national membership? Why not?

John is near an end of his exhortation. He is nearly breathless. **Where is the leadership?** It is not so hard to find. It dwells within us. It is the small gentle voice of the Holy Spirit who speaks to us of ‘holy desires’. Is anyone home? Let’s be at home in our hearts. Let us make daily attempts, prayer attempts, communally discerned attempts and not lose heart. Because to lose heart on so vital a concern as apostolate leadership is to lose union with the heart of Jesus beating within ^{us}

John now stands still with a vague subtle smile on his face. He has spoken much truth and it is left to his audience to ingest it and make some part of it their own.

Some persons present walk away shaking their heads never to return, never to hear John teach them again.

Will you, dear reader, also walk away never to consider apostolate leadership again?

The answer is somewhere within each one of our hearts. Let us find it in community!

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CLC NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Lethbridge, AB - May 27-30, 2004

By Graydon Nicholas

There were many important parts of our National Assembly in Lethbridge. The hospitality of the area CLCers was very evident to us who arrived on Tuesday and left the following Monday. We were met and housed by wonderful people who took welcome us into their homes. The last minute changes to fine tune the agendas and the materials were done with great teamwork by General Council.

The delegates arrived in style as Dan Clarke and other volunteers transported the delegates from Calgary. The setting on the campus of Lethbridge Community College was very ideal and conducive to a CLC gathering. The socials were a great opportunity to meet and discuss with CLCers their faith journey, the information of their communities, to discuss politics and loyalty to the Flames.

The Presidents welcomed the delegates. The symbols from the communities were brought forth into the gathering. The representatives from the Atlantic Region sent us off with songs and prayer that evening and much needed rest for the hard work over the next few days.

The next day was a heavy agenda of necessary business matters. The tight time lines were broken by needed energy when the delegates introduced their communities and the Regional Representatives placed a leaf to designate each community. It was a grace filled moment to hear the significance of each named CLC.



The remaining business had to be finished after lunch. It was at times very challenging with diverse points of view being expressed. However, with teachings taught to us by Father John English, we were able to reach consensus on the contentious issues of finances. Mr. Gilles Michaud used his experience to guide us to resolve our differences. There was a very energetic presentation from Julie Dwyer-Young as she inspired us to reflect on our stewardship to all of creation as outlined in the CCCB dossier of October 2003.



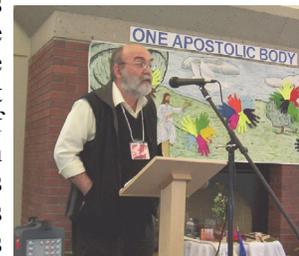
Barb Peloso, our facilitator, led us as the Assembly opened.

Father Earl Smith and President Kati Gumbmann shared their experiences at World Assembly in Nairobi in 2003. Their power point presentation was made vivid by their comments and photos of the faces of Nairobi. We saw the faces of abject poverty among the marginalized persons of Nairobi. Their field trip beyond the boundaries of Nairobi was a vivid reminder that we live in a rich country where water, housing, food, resources and other things we take for granted are plentiful.

Lois Campbell, who is the President of USA CLC and North American Representative on the World CLC, helped us to appreciate the formation that we have received.

The Central Region led us in an ecological prayer experience and some reading for the evening.

Mr. John Sumarah was the Keynote Speaker for our Assembly. His powerful and inspiring presentation taught us about his experience as a delegate in Nairobi in 2003. He quietly and gently taught us and reminded us of our Charism, Mission and Vocation as CLCers. He reminded us that the Trinity is community. He reminded us that we are involved in apostolic actions as individuals and as members of communities. Our apostolic actions could be very minor and yet very significant. He taught us that we have opportunities in a community to help one another. He encouraged us to discern, support, send and evaluate our efforts in responding to the call of Jesus. There was opportunity to gather as Regions to share and listen to what we heard from John.



The Holy Ground CLC led us after lunch in appropriation and visioning for the next ten years. It was challenging to think ahead and try to vision our CLC communities at the national, regional and local levels. Our relationship with the Society of Jesuits was also a very thought provoking process. We met in small groups to brainstorm about what we thought was a priority. The results of our sharing formed the future that was presented to us the next morning.

Our trip to Waterton Lakes National Park in the bus was a CLC adventure. We were paired with someone we did not know. Gary Hartman was our tour guide. He prepared material that informed us about the importance of water. We stopped at the Oldman River Dam that was built to support irrigation needs of the farming communities. His wife, Patricia, made the beautiful Rosaries that we received. It was a pilgrimage as we prayed and meditated on a theme for each decade of the Rosary. There was an opportunity to recite the final decade of the Rosary in many languages of our membership.

We traveled to the Knights of Columbus camp building for supper, social and a tribute for Father John English. After our meal, we were entertained by a group of visiting Nuns who sang and did skits to the delight of everyone. Farewells were extended to those who had to leave Lethbridge the next morning. There was lots of laughter and merriment.

The moment came when President Graydon Nicholas held an Eagle Feather as he spoke of Father John English. This was the first National Assembly that Father John did not attend. People were invited to come



forward, hold the Eagle Feather or have the Eagle Feather held, to share their moments with Father John. Graydon informed the gathering that he was going to give his Eagle Feather to Father John English. He hoped that the Eagle Feather, with our stories, would be placed inside the casket of Father John. It was a very emotional time for all of those gathered. The trip back to Lethbridge was very interesting as stories were shared from all of our experiences at the Assembly.

The Assembly recommended that a Working Group on Formation be established over the next five years. Representatives from our regions would be part of this Working Group with Gilles Michaud as the Chairman. We closed our Assembly with a beautiful Liturgy. There was wonderful music. Father Earl gave us a very inspiring Homily. We prepared to return home after lunch and fond farewells. The Spirit of Father John was with us throughout the Assembly.

Please continue to remember
Jacob and Betty,
 our Iranian refugee couple.
 After years of hardship and
 prayerful waiting
 they never lost hope in the Lord.
 Last week they finally had word
 from the Embassy
 and a promise of an
 upcoming interview
 which might allow them
 to immigrate to Canada.

COMING SOON
OUR NEW WEB PAGE
 at
[www.jesuits.ca/clc/
 index.htm](http://www.jesuits.ca/clc/index.htm)

ATLANTIC REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
St. John, NB
August 27-29, 2004

About 50 CLC'ers from PEI, NB and NS arrived on Friday evening, some tired, some stressed, all anticipating the weekend. The movement I experienced for the group was one of welcome, gathering and presentation of ourselves through the symbol of candles. The music, Venie Sanctae Spiritus, led us to an experience of the gentle spirit consoling us for agreeing to come and deepening our experience of peace. I saw the presentation of candles as a way of representing each community and recognizing the different stages of development of each one, all under the love and guidance of the Trinity represented by the largest candle in the place of honor. Friday evening prepared us well as a group for the work on Saturday. Friday was an experience of the heart.

Saturday, at least during the day, was an experience of the head. We worked hard. There was lots of input, information, issues and challenges. The day was long and everyone was gracious in completing their tasks, presentations, response panel, small group, large group, etc. We learned more about CLC and its value in the Church and the world. We connected with the larger CLC as a world community. While we were left with many concerns, questions, new information, etc, we experienced gratitude for our Regional Community keenly desiring to grow as the Trinity desires.

We were able to celebrate joyfully Saturday night. The celebration made us aware that while we pray and work hard we are invited to "make room for fun" in CLC. We used our voices and bodies in our celebrations. We were touched that the Bishop of Saint John would join us in our festive time.

Sunday morning was a moment of anticipation of the Eucharist where all is brought to the table. We anticipated our appropriation and evaluation of the Assembly. We reviewed the theme and grace of the Assembly to deepen our appreciation of the call to be one apostolic body. A spirit of unity prevailed as we were "sent" home with the encouragement of Ignatius and Mary.

Miami 2004,
CLC-U.S.A. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
...becoming an apostolic community
By Elaine Regan-Nightingale

The formation leaders from all 10 regions attended a one-day pre-conference where many of the same leadership/formation difficulties in both U.S.A. and Canada were raised. Once every six weeks, the formation leaders in the regions meet the others who are responsible for formation and they "talk through" what is happening in formation in their regions. They have found that these meetings are their most valuable tool. Also it was noted that the Canadian manuals stress the 2nd round which could be pivotal in moving a community both individually and communally. Later in a cross-border meeting initiated by the Canadians, members of Michigan and Ontario promised to explore the 2nd round and share the findings at an ecology retreat in Michigan in January of 2005.

Some highlights from the assembly...

The Americans were most appreciative of John English (a loss to the Church and the whole world), the Zachariahs' work on ecology, and John Sumarah's paper given at Lethbridge.

Lois Campbell, President of CLC USA, welcomed several groups emphasizing the gifts they bring to CLC:

- Koreans know how to get commitment;
- Vietnamese know how to keep young families;
- Marymount Loyola in L.A. knows how to get undergraduates;
- Miami knows how to get young adults.

In all the above it was clear that retreats were the key to maintaining cohesion and commitment

Daniela Frank, President of World CLC Exco, gave a keynote speech on the importance of our identity: *let's be more and more who we are.*

George Lundy, SJ gave a great keynote on the use of *social analysis in discerning, sending, supporting and evaluating.*

Alberto Britto SJ, World Vice-Ecclesial Assistant, gave us an important paper on *the role of the* .

The Zachariahs made presentations on ecology and discernment and the Nightingales attended the assembly.

For further information on the U.S.A. Assembly – photos/speeches/action plan check out the website: www.clc-usa.org

Loving Memories Of Father John English, SJ

By Graydon Nicholas

President, CLC Canada

My initial meeting with Father John was at a prayer meeting in Saint John, NB. He was invited to our Prayer Group to introduce Christian Life Communities to us. The members of our Prayer Group were married couples who were involved with Marriage Encounter. Our spiritual journey had begun with some prayer material that one of our members suggested.

One of our members attended an 8 day Retreat in Guelph. She returned to our Prayer Group and shared her week of prayer experiences. I was a bit bewildered when she shared her contemplations on the Gospels. However, her enthusiasm and excitement ignited a deep desire in my heart to know this Jesus better. Her efforts resulted in our Prayer Group using the book "Becoming Followers of Jesus", written by Barbara Paleczny, SSND and Michel Cote, OP. We struggled in our spiritual journeys and shared our prayer time with one another.

As I reviewed the Introduction of this Book, I marveled with gratitude about those early pioneers of CLC in Canada. It reads as a "Who's Who" of those who prepared the spiritual path for someone such as myself now walking the CLC Way of Life. Father John was the one who encouraged the early pilgrims to prepare the way for us.

Father John was invited to visit our group and introduced us to CLC. The scripture that Father John used was from Philippians 2:1-5, which reads:

"If our life in Christ means anything to you, if love can persuade at all, or the Spirit that we have in common, or any tenderness and sympathy, then be united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind. That is the one thing which would make me completely happy. There must be no competition among you, no conceit: but everyone is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interests first but everyone thinks of other people's interests instead. In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus:
"

Our Prayer Group had been together since 1980. Father John told us that we were already a CLC. We listened to him but we did not believe that CLC was for us. We were visited by Helen Drago and Shirley Gatchene from CLCs in Waterloo. We finally discerned to join the National CLC in the fall of 1988. My wife, Beth, and I were delegated to represent our River of Life CLC at the National Assembly that was held in Hamilton, Ontario.

It was at that Hamilton gathering that I first shared part of my healing journey that I lived during my first 8 Day Retreat in Guelph in the winter of 1986. I shed tears of pain, frustration, joy, peace and love with the delegates. Father John took me aside and encouraged me to

continue to share my experience of the "Washing of the Feet" with others who struggled with their pain and sorrow. I was deeply touched by his kindness and words of wisdom.

Our paths continued to cross as Father John got more involved in helping the Maritimes to discover and walk the CLC way of life. He would ask a CLC member to meet him at an Airport and drive him around to our gatherings. He stayed in our homes and got to know us. There were meetings in NB, NS and PEI. He had tremendous energy and was always writing on his laptop. He gave us prayer material, always on coloured paper. He enlightened us with what was happening in Ontario, in the West and in BC.

He came to celebrate with us as we boarded the CLC train on our pilgrimage to a new way of life. He was patient with us as we struggled and stumbled with our prayer times. He taught us to persevere and trust one another. He challenged us to reach out to others and begin new communities or else we would die a slow death. We took his advice and soon other CLC's were being formed in NB. He attended our Regional Assemblies in NS, PEI and NB and taught us so much more than we could fully understand.

Father John came to the small town of Nackawic, NB and gave a weekend workshop on Group Guides in 1993. Our baby steps were secure with his guidance and prayers. We are very much indebted to Father John as individuals and as communities. His last visit was in Pictou, NS in the Fall of 1999. He had invited a privileged few to come together to prepare us to give Group Guide training in the Maritimes. He encouraged us to modify the Modules for a number of weekends beginning in the winter of 2000. He gave us the Leadership manuals and allowed us to develop this experience to fit the Maritime culture.

I have reflected on this kind and humble man and how he came into our lives. His knowledge, wisdom and vision were of a deeply committed person who fostered us to be Followers of Jesus, to be Co-creators with the Trinity and think beyond ourselves.

In his Book, "Spiritual Intimacy and Community", he made the following comments in the Preface:

"I have come to believe that we take on the fullness of the mind and heart of Christ and become instruments of God's grace in our

world when we acknowledge the communal dimension and seek to live Christian community rather than imaging ourselves as isolated units. Ignatian spirituality emphasizes loving action, and I believe that we are seeing a renewal of the consciousness that we do not create graced-filled structures by working alone. God calls us to community."

These words of wisdom were written in 1992. Our recent National Assembly in Lethbridge was the first National Assembly that Father John was not with us physically. However, for those who were gathered, we were aware of the gifts of his teachings to us. We were reminded of his past interventions to rescue us in our struggles, disagreements and pain. We knew that he loved to celebrate and recognize our spiritual

achievements. He encouraged us to reach consensus. He reminded us that we are governed "....by the spirit of the Gospel and the interior law of love".

The sacred stories that we shared on the Saturday evening of our Lethbridge Assembly about our experiences with Father John are now etched in our memories. The Eagle Feather that we used that evening now belongs to Father John. His spirit will always be with us whenever we are gathered as communities throughout this great land. His tireless energy will continue to be a source of inspiration to all of us. He wanted us to be an Apostolic Community. He taught us to think of others beyond ourselves. He encouraged us to be united with the Trinity in establishing lasting peace with all of creation.

HOWARD & ESTHER 'S SUMMER ADVENTURE

Dear friends in Christ:

Esther and I would like to share with you about our northern adventure this past summer. We led a Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots (LAMP) Vacation Bible School, one of 17 held in Northern Manitoba alone. With the very professional organization of LAMP Missionary-Pilot Nels Kristenson in co-operation with



community contact and elder Angeline Flett, we held ours in the tiny Cree community of Pikwitonei, MB (population: 109), about 40 km (or an hour and a half train ride) southeast of Thompson in the midst of the mixed forests and many lakes of the rugged Precambrian Shield. We took the overnight bus from Winnipeg to Thompson (a nine-hour ride due north) on July 24-25. We attended an Anglican worship service in Thompson with Nels and his lovely wife, Rachel, a professional violinist. Later that afternoon, Nels flew us the 15 min. it took us to get into "Pik". We stayed in the "teacherage", a comfortably appointed 3-bedroom bungalow (and probably the nicest house in town) by ourselves, since the latest teacher moved out at the end of the last school year. We found it almost like camping since we still had to bring our own food and bedding.

We facilitated two sessions a day for the five days of the school. The first, held from 10 a.m. to 12 noon targeted 4 to 12-year olds and consisted of an opening circle prayer, hymn, story, activity, game and closing circle prayer (i.e. where we all stood in a circle to give our thanks, praise and supplications to God). The second was a Bible study on Hebrews pitched to teenagers. LAMP provided the curriculum materials for both sessions. We

found the children's material, designed for First Nations children of northern North America, culturally sensitive and appropriate (especially the crafts like the medicine wheel) and we used most of it. We understand the youth Bible study was a first effort and LAMP, to their credit, is soliciting feedback from those who have used it to incorporate into future revisions. This time, we dispensed with most of the study as we received it from LAMP (except the anecdotes based on the theme of each lesson, e.g. "perseverance", "love and service", etc.) Esther ended up putting her Orthodox theological training to work and did her own exegesis of the same passages in the Book of Hebrews. Three 13-year old girls faithfully attended these studies, along with many of the younger children who came to the morning sessions.

We arrived back in Winnipeg on July 31 (none other than St. Ignatius of Loyola's Feast Day), tired but also exhilarated by the love we received from the 19 children to whom we ministered and who ministered to us even more. We also felt the many prayers offered by friends and family, especially our Diakonia CLC. Our CLC confirmed our decision to attend through a community discernment process. Moreover, one of the members of our CLC, Tere Hajzler, graciously picked us up to take us to the bus depot in downtown Winnipeg and then also brought us home from there when we returned. A great hunger for the Word of God in this community also moved us especially since regular worship services are no longer held in the two churches in town. We thank God for so touching and enriching our lives with the lives of these children! Do not hesitate to contact us if you wish to find out more about our northern adventure, LAMP or CLC.

Peace! Howard R. Engel & Esther G. Juce

