

# Update

Christian Life Community Canada



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## Greetings from the President,

Dear CLC brothers and sisters across Canada

I extend warm and sincere greetings to each and everyone of you.

Ironically, the fall of the year becomes the spring of a new year. We reap the harvest of our summer experiences as we begin afresh to meet with our communities. As we savour the balmy days of Indian summer with their bright light and long, ominous shadows, we prepare to move indoors to pursue the quieter activities of winter.

On September 9 your General Council met via telephone for an exciting 8 hour conference call. We were happy to welcome back John Sumarah as the Regional Rep for the Atlantic Region after his sabbatical and Dan Clarke for one more year as the Representative for the Rockies Region. Fr. Charles Pottic, SJ was warmly greeted as the new National Ecclesial Assistant and the Regional Ecclesial Assistant for the Prairies and Rockies.

We expressed our thanks and gratitude for the contributions Peter Chouinard and Fr. Earl Smith, SJ have made to CLC Canada and shared on how much we will miss their wisdom and energy on General Council.

With gratitude we listened to the happenings and activities in our four Regions. There are many signs of the Spirit in our national body.

The Leadership Formation Working Group has established a Revision Team for our CLC Manual Phase I. The basic editing of the Manual has been done. After adding updated resource material, the Phase I Manual should be completed by next year.

Fr. Charles reported about his meeting with Fr. Jean-Marc Laporte, SJ (SJ Provincial). We acknowledge with gratitude Fr. Laporte's support of CLC Canada and his openness for collaboration between CLC and the Society of Jesus.

After taking a break over the summer we are again spending time and energy on revising our SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) with the help of our working group, to whom we are grateful.

Thanks also to our National Executive Assistant for consolidating material for this issue of UPDATE and to our webmaster who updates our web site with never ending energy!

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by CLC Canada  
twice a year,  
in the Spring and the Fall.  
To have an article published  
about your community  
please contact  
clccanada@jesuits.ca



### CLC CANADA GENERAL COUNCIL 2005-2006

National President: Kati Gumbmann  
National Ecclesial Assistant: Fr. Charles Pottic-Pâté, SJ  
National Executive Assistant: Marilyn Heaton

Atlantic Regional Rep.: John Sumarah  
Central Regional Rep.: Maria Brown  
Prairies Regional Rep.: Ruth Chipman  
Rockies Regional Rep.: Dan Clarke

In October, General Council met for a two-hour phone conference to discern the issues and the direction CLC Canada wishes to move with regard to North American Collaboration.

In November an International Formation Encounter (IFE) will take place in Rome and an invitation to attend was extended to Gilles Michaud. We look forward to his return when he will be sharing his experience with CLC Canada.

Early 2007 we will be initiating the President(s) Elect Electoral Process and asking for nominations. Please start praying now about this important matter. The President(s) Elect will start the one year term at the fall General Council Meeting.

As a World Community, we will be celebrating the 40th Anniversary of our General Principles in 2007. A calendar was prepared and will be available to the Regions. In addition, every month, with the exception of June, July and August, we will post on our web site, a thought on one of the first nine Principles, which define our charism and on which the other GPs and the General Norms are based. It is our hope that you and your community will make every effort throughout 2007 to *rediscover* the wealth of our GPs. We invite you to read the short introduction on the web site, but always with the text of the General Principles in hand.

May God continue to bless us all and may the following months call us to a deeper union with Christ and a true desire to seek the will of the Trinity.

United in prayer,

Kati Gumbmann  
President CLC Canada

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## NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

### Prairie Region

Prairie Region continues to focus on Formation, Commitment & Leadership, Environment (Lake Winnipeg).

Prairie Region has completed a year long communal discernment process for **regional representative**. We send and support **Sharon Baker** from the Friends of Jesus community as our regional representative elect. More about Sharon in the Spring UPDATE. Sharon's term will start in the fall of 2007.

Fr. Earl Smith's farewell was a moving evening. Following Eucharist Prairie members had the opportunity to affirm and send Earl with a celebration of light and love. Our June gathering also celebrated John English.

Prairie members organized a retreat day to explore the theme of **Commitment** in our CLC Way of Life. Prior to the July retreat, members spent two weeks with prayer and reflection material compiled by Pam Daigle, Atlantic Region. The retreat day in a cottage on the shore of Lake Winnipeg was a gentle yet powerful experience. A spectacular afternoon thunderstorm punctuated the sharing experience.

At the August Regional organizing meeting members affirmed the movement to initiate and maintain a North American dialogue around collaborative visioning and action. There are questions and concerns around CLC's capacity to support a North American dialogue. Members encouraged CLC Canada to keep moving forward with this initiative.

September included the opportunity to welcome Fr. Charles Pottie S.J. Fr. Charles has brought with him many gifts. We have already grown to appreciate his warmth and strength as well as his beautiful singing voice that enhances the efforts of even the most vocally challenged among us.

We are looking forward to preparing for a Group Guide workshop in January, 2007 facilitated by Peter & Elaine Nightingale from Central's formation team. Rockies region has been invited to participate in the workshop.

**Please keep Diakonia in your prayers as they undertake a communal experience of the Spiritual Exercises facilitated by Fr. Charles Pottie S.J.**

CLC members in Winnipeg have collaborated with the Adult Education Centre at St. Ignatius to initiate the Ignatian Lay Volunteer Program. Program participants have completed the Spiritual Exercises. Individuals commit to a yearlong volunteer placement.

The volunteer placements focus on being with the material poor. Volunteers meet monthly with a spiritual director. Monthly community building gatherings facilitate participants sharing their experience of God in their volunteer placement. Three retreats are planned over the course of the year.

Warm greetings to members across Canada.

By Ruth Chipman  
Prairie Region Representative



## Central Region

Central Region holds the beginning history of CLC Canada. Fr. John English and four couples, Barbara and Peter Peloso, Desneiges and Art Walters, Helen and Lou Drago and Helen and Frank Sullivan began to gather in Guelph in 1975. Since then, much has been kept in boxes and passed on to succeeding presidents. It seems timely to go through all the memorabilia and keep what captures the history of Central Region.

Our History Coordinator, Susan Tomenson and her committee, Alice Reid, Fran Morrison and Peter Peloso have begun the work. On October 23, 2005, Jean Marc Laporte SJ, Jesuit Provincial, gave permission to the Central Region Executive Council to store and preserve our "CLC History" in the Jesuit Archives in Toronto. Our Ecclesial Assistant, J. P. Horrigan, SJ then contacted the Jesuit archivist, Jacques Monet, SJ, to discuss ways and means. Fr. Horrigan and Susan Tomenson drew up a way of

proceeding which continues to be reviewed and revised as the process is experienced. The committee has begun sifting through all that has been saved. What is deemed relevant and pertinent will be submitted to Fr. Monet for inclusion in the archives.

*It is important for communities to have someone act as historian as they begin or continue their 'History Line'...*

It is important for communities to have someone act as historian as communities begin or continue their own "History Line" in a simple and straight forward way in a binder scrapbook:

- 1) The event (including photos);
- 2) The date of the event;
- 3) The significance of the event for the community.

Hopefully if this process is followed, and if the four regions collect and keep their history, the history of CLC Canada is also born and can be maintained.

By Maria Brown  
Central Region Representative



## Atlantic Region

The Regional Council meets the last weekend in October. A couple of vacancies on the executive need to be filled.

Many groups continue to meet and flourish. One ecumenical group is doing the Spiritual Exercises using the Phase Three Manual. A couple of groups have discontinued with CLC and there has been expression of interest from at least two new groups in the Region.

Atlantic CLC is happy to welcome Earl Smith, SJ as Ecclesial Assistant.

CLC in the Atlantic has been invited to spend a day at the Jesuit Centre of Spirituality to assist with 50 others in planning and strategizing the work of the Centre. Collaboration in action!

By John Sumarah  
Atlantic Region Representative



Our Lady's Circle CLC celebrating Josie's birthday in April  
Standing: Deborah Albert, Sandra Wright, Patricia Lawson, Francois Thebeau  
Seated: Graydon Nicholas, Josie Sheppard



## Rockies Region

The Rockies Region hosted a gathering in Coaldale, Alberta on October 17.

The gathering, held in the home of Ray & Ellen Wagner, was a introduction of CLC new Ecclesial Assistant Fr. Charles Pottie. We started with song, prayer and reflection on how we were coming to the gathering. There were 30 members present out of about 37 local members. The Courteney, B.C. group being on the west coast was not able to be here but Fr. Charles is planning a visit with them in the near future.

Fr. Charles's session with us was meant to Strengthen, Motivate, and Uplift us in CLC in the Rockies Region and it was all of that for the members present.

After our session we all drove over to the local parish in Coaldale where Fr. Charles celebrated Mass for CLC members.

Fr. Charles also attended our Rockies Core Group meeting earlier that same day.

I feel our region is looking forward to working on formation in the upcoming year. There was a great awareness of Rockies members needing the Spiritual Exercises. We are going to plan another gathering in January, 2007.

We are also looking forward to have some Group Guides from the Rockies attend the Guide Workshop in Winnipeg in January, 2007, once we know the cost.

May God continue to bless CLC and the Rockies Region.

By Dan Clarke  
Rockies Regional Representative




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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR NATIONAL CLC ECCLESIAL ASSISTANT Father Charles Pottie-Pâté, SJ

Dear CLC friends in the Lord,

I am delighted to be able to write you for the first time in *Update* as your National Ecclesial Assistant. In my new setting in Winnipeg, I am reminded so often of my predecessors, dearly loved John English [whose intercession I rely on] and Earl Smith [whose guidance has left its mark, and who is sharing his gifts with Atlantic Canada]. I am grateful for all they have been and done for CLC Canada. I only hope and pray that I can serve you as generously as they have done.

This summer and up to now, in my move westward from the Maritimes, I was able to "know interiorly" in some limited way the richness of the CLC across Canada.

My six years or so with Atlantic Christian Life Community as regional ecclesial assistant was very formative for me. After a wonderful day of formation and celebration (and farewells) with the New Brunswick CLCers on July 29th, and then a farewell and commissioning by *Truth Given* (my regular group the past six



years), I landed in Toronto and there JP Horrigan kindly organized a luncheon with a CLC group. I was energized by the vitality of what I heard from them. And I knew this was only a small part of what is happening in Central Canada. (Unfortunately, I didn't have time to touch base with my counterpart in Quebec, Fr. Bernard Belair, sj or any of the members there - but hopefully in the coming year!)

Then when I arrived in the West, I experienced the Prairie region welcome and gathering in early September, as well as good meetings with our President, Kati, and our General Council conference call (8 hours!!) initiating me more into the 'national' perspective. I have been able to catch a glimpse of each of the groups in Winnipeg in the past two months. And as I told the members here, it felt "like home" because of the bond that we share through the CLC charism. Then in mid-October, I visited our brothers and sisters in the Lethbridge area where their generosity and enthusiasm was catching. I hope to return there in February. I still want to meet our B.C. friends in due time. (cont. on page 5)

## OUR NATIONAL CLC ECCLESIAL ASSISTANT (Cont.)

Each time we pray the Eucharistic Prayer III, the words

*"From age to age you gather a people to yourself, so that from east to west a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your name...."*

have a new resonance in me. I have been experiencing the charism of our Christian Life

Community way of life across Canada. For this I give thanks and I pray that God's Spirit continue to help us grow more deeply in fidelity to this gift.

Let us pray for each other.

Charles Pottie-Pâté, sj  
National Ecclesial Assistant  
CLC Canada

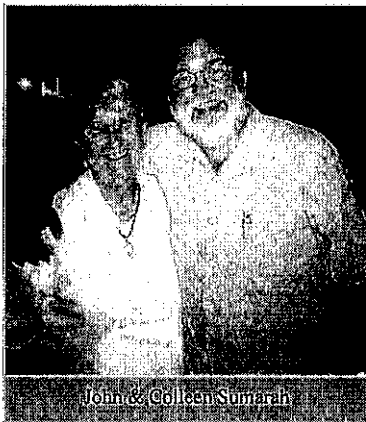
## To CLC Canada with Gratitude and Prayers

For my sabbatical leave 2005-06 from Acadia University, Colleen and I discerned a call to spend time with CLC Kenya and to attend a three-month apostolic spirituality program in Wales. We were sent by CLC and wish to report to and thank the CLC'ers in Canada who supported us in many ways.

While in Nairobi we attended weekly CLC meetings with a local group. This was a rich and rewarding experience to witness the commitment of CLC'ers in Kenya. We also attended the Christmas party for all the CLC groups in and around the Nairobi area. We have much in common with our CLC brothers and sisters in Kenya and have much to learn from them regarding their apostolic thrust. CLC Kenya has an office with 2½ paid positions.

Our main apostolic outreach was volunteering three days a week at St. Al's School. We were inspired by the students and the staff of the school. We requested financial support from our local CLC group in Wolfville and they were able, with the generosity of others in CLC Canada and in the community surrounding Wolfville, to raise money to purchase textbooks for the students. We were also able to sponsor two radio programs where young women from St. Al's were able to share their experiences and their need for support. During the Christmas season we sponsored a week-long recreational program where fun activities were supplemented by a daily meal. At the school we participated in a variety of classes and clubs, primarily as mentors and support persons.

At request of the Principal of St. Al's School we offered a one-day retreat to the students and staff. In attendance were 125 students, 11 staff and the National CLC Ecclesial Assistant, Terry Charlton, SJ. Later Terry invited us to co-direct a three-day retreat in the north of Kenya for CLC'ers in that region. He also invited us to give a two-day retreat to 30 Jesuit Aspirants.



John & Colleen Sumarah

In Wales we participated with 17 others from around the world in a three-month program on apostolic spirituality. St. Beuno's Spirituality Centre provided an excellent setting and program for our renewal time. John English, SJ did his Tertianship 30-day retreat at St. Beuno's many years ago. Prior to the retreat which is at the heart of the apostolic program we were offered workshops on the Enneagram, Prayer, Shame, with Art and Clay as means of exploring the spiritual. During the 30-day silent Ignatian Retreat we had personal daily direction, Eucharist, adoration and several prayer periods. After the retreat we were offered workshops on the Dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises, Discernment, Prayer and Social Justice. We were very pleased and grateful for all that we received at St. Beuno's and will no doubt benefit for some time from the many graces we received.

Peace and prayers.  
John and Colleen



St. Al's School

## A Glance at Our GP History

With his Apostolic Constitution (1948) *BIS SAECULARI*, Pope Pius XII initiated the renewal process of the Marian Congregation/Sodalities. In 1953 he approved the World Federation which had its First World Assembly in Rome in 1954. The 1959 Assembly in Newark took a first step towards the formulation of the General Principles. That same year the Secretariat in Rome sent out its first letter to all federations. It was the beginning of a world-wide consultation and exchange of experiences that led to our first General Principles.

At the Assembly in Bombay in 1964 the General Principles were practically ready but it was judged wise to present them for approval after the conclusion of Vatican II. The Fourth World Assembly in Rome in 1967 brought forth a new name and the new General Principles. In 1990 the CLC General Assembly approved important modifications to the General Principles, which were adopted by a large consensus and then ratified by Church authority.

### From Marian Congregations to World Christian Life Community

#### A brief review of our history

1540

Society of Jesus is founded by Ignatius of Loyola.

1563

A Jesuit teacher by the name of *Jean Leunis* gathers a group of students of the Roman College for the purpose of spiritual advancement – the Marian Congregation is born. This first group quickly becomes a model for other congregations throughout the world.

1578

The Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Claudio Aquavia, approved the Common Rules for those who wished to adhere to Congregation life.

1584

Pope Gregory XIII with the Papal Bull *Omnipotentis Dei* entitles the first Congregation at the Roman College (the *Primaria*) to be the head of all the Congregations.

1587

Pope Sixtus V, following the request of the Society of Jesus, issues the Bull *Superna Dispositione*. This Bull states the right of the Superior General of the Society of Jesus to create aggregates of the first Congregation within other localities, even among persons who were not students of Jesuits schools. It might be interesting for us today to remember that in this early time of the Society of Jesus, Jesuits and lay people who were members of the Congregations would frequently work as a team.

The seventeenth century not only saw the high-point of Congregation Life but also the beginning of its decline in spirit.

1748

Pope Benedict XIV with the Bull *Praeclaris Romanorum* tried to renew the vigour of Congregational life. This Bull increased the advantages of membership by granting the members increased spiritual benefits and this perhaps had a reverse effect. At this time the Society of Jesus, a victim of political intrigues, was already struggling for its life.

1773

Pope Clement XIV signed a document to suppress the Jesuit Order. The Congregations by the order of the same pope became one of the normal works of the universal Church. In the eighteenth century membership increased vastly, from 2,500 groups to 80,000. The consequence was a diminishment in fervour and practice. The spiritual life of the members and the social concern for the rejected of society was reduced to pious practices and annual and symbolic events. The Marian Congregation had become a pious mass movement, different from what Ignatius or Jean Leunis or Aquaviva had meant it to be.

1922

Fr. Ledochowski, Superior General of the Society, convened a meeting of Jesuits working with the Marian Congregation or Sodalities as they were called in some countries. The central secretariat, a service center, was founded. It was the first secretariat for Jesuit works. Today the SJ curia has eight similar offices for other works. This was the first step towards restoration.

1948

Pope Pius XII with his Apostolic Constitution *Bis Saeculari*, gives us an important push towards renewal of the Marian Congregations. *Bis Saeculari* was exactly what was needed: a clear authoritative statement on the authentic identity of the Marian Congregations, a pressing call for reform, orientations towards the future and some declarations on lay apostolate in general. The impact of this document was enormous.

1950

Seventy one Jesuits from forty countries followed the call of the Superior General Fr. Jansen and met in Rome as a first answer to *Bis Saeculari*.

1951

First world congress for the lay apostolate was held in Rome; forty delegates from 16 countries took the opportunity to meet and discuss the idea of a world federation.

(cont. on page 7)

1952

Eucharistic Congress on Barcelona: the opportunity was used to meet and discuss the "World Federation" further. The central secretariat in Rome was asked to prepare some Statues.

1953

The World Federation of the Marian Congregations is approved by the same Pope.

1954

1<sup>st</sup> Assembly of the World Federation in Rome.

1959

2<sup>nd</sup> Assembly in Newark, USA.

1962

Opening of the Second Vatican Council.

1964

3<sup>rd</sup> Assembly of the World Federation in Bombay, India.

1967

4<sup>th</sup> Assembly and a new name and a new beginning: **Christian Life Communities.**

1968

On the feast of the Annunciation, Pope Paul VI confirms the General Principles of the World Federation of the Christian Life Communities.

1970

5<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Santo Domingo a crisis and a challenge (the GP were amended and approved 1971 by the Holy See).

1973

6<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Augsburg/Germany: the call to be free, *the liberation of all men and women.*

1976

7<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Manila/Philippines: the call to the poor, *poor with Christ for a better service.*

1979

8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Rome: call towards a World Community, *at the service of One World.*

1982

9<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Providence: *the challenge to be one World Community on mission to "bring about justice"*  
Four groups in Canada discern to become the English Canada Community of CLC and apply to the World Community.

1986

10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Loyola: *seeing Mary as model of our mission, being asked to do "whatever Christ tells us".*

1990

11<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Guadalajara: *an international community "at the service of the Kingdom, to go out and bear fruit".*

1994

12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Hong Kong: *CLC Community in Mission. "I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already!"*

1998

13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Itaici, Brazil: CLC, a letter from Christ written by the Spirit sent to today's world: *Deepening our Identity as an Apostolic Body – Clarifying Our Common Mission.*

2003

14<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya: to receive and embrace the call to be an apostolic body that shares responsibility in mission and to consider and define all the consequences of living out that call at all levels; Discerning, Sending, Supporting, Evaluating: *Sent by Christ, Members of One Body.*

2008

15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly ????

*Why all these dates and history? First of all it is a good opportunity to look back today remembering gratefully all those who have prepared the way for us. And then, when meditating the past and the themes of former assemblies, we will all feel the call for a continuous renewal and conversion towards our center that is Christ and the participation in the Paschal Mystery (Roswitha Cooper – July 1998)*



ExCo—Guadalajara, Mexico, 1990

## 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our GPs A new beginning A new name

### ROME 1967

Actually it was one of the most exciting and spiritually vitalizing events to be a member of those worldwide delegations. Trembling with many others (including our French-Canadian friends) up to the last minute of voting whether all would accept the "radical" aspects of our way of life, including the Spiritual Exercises and the importance of the small community...! Indeed there were still many delegations - including important Jesuits - who were strictly against those elements - which could not be meant for laypersons (since even some Jesuits would not accept them for themselves!)

Also important was the idea of changing our name - helpfully prepared by the French group - but not fully accepted by those who feared our loss of Marian identity. Many of us - including our Canadian friends - tried to stress the opposite: this "new" growth toward our CLC way of life would even identify more our union with Mary in all aspects of our life - both individual and as group. When we elected Josette Beaubien (Centre Leunis, Montréal) to the World ExCo we knew we had chosen a person who lived what we decided in our long way of international deliberation.

"Deo gratias" now for our Canadian CLC friends - beyond the language limit and close to us today in a new way.

*Hildegard Ehrtmann (GCL Germany) was a member of the World Executive Council from 1970 - 1979, first as Secretary and then as Vice-President. She also wrote an article for Progressio 1997 as a witness to the changes of 30 years ago.*



### GUADALAJARA 1990

... but I really knew God was in control and we trusted that the decisions we made in Guadalajara is what he wanted.

We were twinned with India at the time and I had a beautiful brass plate in my house for a year and then I sent it to Gilles. Daphne, delegate from Calcutta, gave me a book of poems by Tagore that I looked at just yesterday.

It was so wonderful to meet people from all over the world that knew what I knew about the path God has CLCers on.

That is all I can come up with now. I am forever grateful for that opportunity of representing Canada, with Father John and Gilles, it is a graced moment in the time line of my life.

*Joanne Mawhinney (is a member of Emmaus, Courtenay, B.C.)*



Delegates at World Assembly in Rome, 1967



## CLC World General Assembly, Guadalajara Mexico, 1990

### A DISCERNING COMMUNITY

As I reflect back on this landmark event in our graced history I am reminded of the words given to us in Proverbs: "Let the wise also hear and gain in learning and the discerning acquire skill..."

I recall the words in the initial request from the World Executive Council given to those delegated by their National Executive Council in 1989 who would begin preparing for the upcoming 11<sup>th</sup> World General Assembly, "We must enter with generosity and a discerning spirit into a process of deliberation, with the confidence that God will show us the way through. It is helpful, however, to prepare ourselves and to foresee a possible process. To understand our role as delegates, we should therefore begin with reviewing the, CLC World Assembly. What is it and how does it function?"

As I began reading and researching various CLC documents I became aware that we were being asked to begin, within our Canadian CLC, a process of communal discernment that should move us to a global perspective. This unique and historical event was to be a discerning process that would be much greater than I had ever anticipated and, consequently, much more challenging. It was a world body, made up of 147 CLC delegates from 51 countries, coming together to discern and decide on the revision of the General Principles and some of its main contents.

To participate fully and actively in the communal activity, the National ExCo appointed Joanne Mawhinney from CLC BC, John English SJ, the National Ecclesial Assistant, and me, Gilles Michaud from CLC PEI, to begin this journey by reading documents that would explain the past history of the CLC General Principles. To read through significant events of CLC history was an uplifting experience as it helped to deepen my commitment to this way of life and to recognize the unique ways of God's presence within that history.

Our first indispensable step, as we were being reminded by the ExCo, was that the process would not begin at the Assembly in Guatalajara, Mexico but in reality at a pre-assembly level in the national community. The process would not end at the Assembly either, especially so with regard to the Revision of the General Principles. Actually, the discerning process had been going on throughout the past 11 years. Therefore, it was recommended that we read: *The CLC World Community - Origin and meaning of Providence 82* (Supplement to Progressio n.20-21). In addition we were to read and reflect on the documents from the World Assembly in Loyola, Spain.

At the 10<sup>th</sup> CLC General Assembly in 1986 in Loyola 134 delegates participated from 50 countries. At this Assembly it was confirmed that CLC's identity and history was held up by 3 pillars: rooted in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, being sent as a Community, and in Mission in

union with Christ poor and humble and in imitation of the fiat of Mary. God affirmed CLC with the grace: "We have also recognized that we are not able to be faithful to our mission without situating it in the context of a Community. It is the entire Community which is sent, united in mind and heart".

This assembly was not only a grace given but also a mission initiating an action plan that would be coordinated by an ad-hoc committee. Their task would be to continue to formulate a Working Document on the General Principles. That Working Document would be presented at the Assembly in Guadalajara as the Proposed Revision Text (PRT). The 147 delegates would be asked to prayerfully discern and discuss the proposed amendments which would be followed by a voting procedure to accept and thereby replacing the General Principles that had been formulated in 1971. The amendments to the PRT would be in light of the thinking of the Church since Vatican II and recent development within CLC. Its changes would come from two sources:

- ♦ from each National Community, six months before the General Assembly.
- ♦ from the ad-hoc committee authorized by a General Assembly (Loyola) for this purpose.

During the Assembly we deliberated at great length on the amendments. The theological reflections brought some degree of confirmation, yet the analysis stage had been difficult. This was mostly caused by language and cultural differences when we broke up into discussion groups. The Assembly had moved through the communal process for eight days and as we approached the last days of the Assembly, it was time to move into the final stage of the communal decision and action. The voting procedure would begin with the approval or refusal of different sections of the PRT and finally would culminate into approving or refusing the amended text of the General Principles.

(cont. on page 10)



## CLC World General Assembly, Guadalajara Mexico, 1990 (Cont.)

As we moved into the last stage of the communal decision-making process it became obvious to many of us that the Assembly had reached a crisis point. The delegations of a few countries could not accept the wording of the revised text. Further discussion was futile because the differences of opinions could not be resolved and therefore much confusion followed. The Assembly and its process seemed to come to a standstill. At that point the Process Guide for the Assembly suddenly stood before us and made his presence known to the Assembly.

Fr. Jim Borbely, a Jesuit from the U.S., began by explaining to us that the process within the Assembly had obviously reached a roadblock. He went on to recall for us the guidelines for discernment of consolation and desolation. He suggested that the Assembly had moved into what seemed to be a state of **Communal Desolation**. As Ignatius points out in the guidelines for discerning different movements, "*When we find ourselves weighed down by certain desolation, we should not try to change a previous decision or come to a new decision*". Fr. Jim went on to suggest that we stop and for the remaining day and evening go off to a quiet place for prayer. It would be through meditation on our current state that we would get

in touch with the movements within each one of us. Matthew 5:38-48 was the scripture passage given with the suggestion that we place ourselves in the crowd and listen to Jesus.

The next morning, all delegates reconvened in the large hall. It became apparent that the atmosphere had changed as we listened to one another. The 147 delegates had become, once again, a community. In our quiet time, we had taken time to pray, to reflect and to recognize that we had been called by the Spirit to go beyond ourselves by desiring to do greater things for God. What had happened to us as individuals and communally is expressed well by St Paul (Phil. 3:10), "*...that I may come to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, and partake of his sufferings by being moulded to the pattern of his death*".

The CLC General Assembly in Guadalajara in 1990 approved the General Principles. The text and its Principles were born of experience. The aim was to return to the CLC identity as being an apostolic community gifted with a spirit of discernment.

By Gilles Michaud

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## RECOLLECTIONS OF THE CLC WORLD ASSEMBLY GUADALAJARA (Mexico) 1990

This World Assembly happened 16 years ago so when Kati sent an email asking me to recollect the event, for a moment, I was not pleased! Soon, however, the 'filing system in my brain' started to pop up and I could once again capture some memories.

150 delegates from different countries converged on to Puente Grande, where we settled in on what was once a large Jesuit Seminary. Mexican hospitality was excellent. We even shared their meal of 'beans' eaten by the poor.

I was part of the delegation from India and was wearing my Indian dress known as the saree. The Mexican ladies were raving about these sarees and at the end of the Assembly we shared.....I gave away all my sarees, except one, and they gave me a huge beautifully embroidered Mexican dress, but two of me could fit into that.....it was such fun and brought us so close.

THE THEME of the Assembly "An international Community at the service of the Kingdom, to go out and bear fruit".

THE FOCUS: A discernment to accept the Revised Text of the General Principles.

THE PROCESS: Bonding among communities and CLC members.

Much work had preceded the World Assembly on the General Principles at local, national levels. The World Secretariat had asked us to frame our changes/modifications, etc. after prayerful discernment so that we came to the Assembly to discern to accept the Revised Text as a world body after going through the recommended changes.

Being of diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures we experienced moments of desolation in the process of discernment. At one stage the differences began to be a block to our proceedings. World President had to stop the Assembly and ask us to resort to prayerful reflection. The next morning the assembly facilitator, Fr. Jim sj helped us refocus and energize as he told us that these movements are experienced in discerning decisions. As we voted for the new text there was a clear majority though not unanimous but there was joy and consolation.

I writing this only to show that we are all very imperfect human beings and need to constantly be in touch with the Holy Spirit through prayer and not only prayer but the experience of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in retreat and lived in daily life as well, as it is a process

(cont. on page 11)

## **RECOLLECTIONS OF THE CLC WORLD ASSEMBLY (Cont.)**

### **GUADALAJARA (Mexico) 1990**

to freedom. However God works through all our human weakness for which we are grateful. The present text of the World GPs is beautiful and rich if we pray on it.

For me personally my experience was 'creating bonds of community' and I quote from an article which I wrote for CLC Canada's Newsletter, Fall 1990.

#### "Bonds of Community"

These are concentric – I mean the bonds from local to regional to national to international....rooted in a "love" (Christ) from whom flows love, acceptance sharing and joy.

As delegates from India to the World Assembly this is perhaps what we and others too brought to Guadalajara. The vitality of our lives back home are somewhat reflected in our bonds of community at the world level.

CLC English Canada and India were to deepen our bonds of love, friendship and sharing in actual 'meetings' with one another and the promise of 'meeting' in the future which was symbolically expressed in our exchange of national flags.

Since I was to visit my family in Canada I was invited to attend the Ontario CLC Regional Assembly at Guelph and I was happy to be there that weekend of Sept.28-30, 1990.

"Bonds of Community" was the theme of the Ontario Regional CLC Assembly and we experienced this in many ways. "First Nation" people were surely very

inspiring and echoed far away in India where a similar situation exists, even today, with our tribal people. Meeting old friends and discovering new ones, sharing and listening was an experience of community as well.

As I return to India I carry this experience to share with CLC there. Through this deeper bonds will be built in Christ over the oceans — bonds that speak a common language of the heart, that live a common culture in our Ignatian Spirituality, that unite us in action, wherever possible, for freedom of the human race.

May CLC English Canada be blessed in fulfilling its hopes for the future! SO YOU CAN SEE THAT THE FRUIT OF THE ASSEMBLY WAS ALREADY GROWING.

I remember how India officially twinned with English Canada and the smiling faces of Fr. John English. sj, Gilles, Joan Mahwinney.

It is really wondrously amazing how God works in our lives: Did I ever dream at Guadalajara, Mexico, that one day I would be part of CLC Canada....I mean on their soil? Did I ever foresee that God would ask me to leave my country and move to another at this time of my life? The greatest blessing, for which I am most grateful, is that I am still a CLC'er and very much involved.

A M D G

*Daphne Stockman (is a member of Rooted in Christ CLC, Mississauga, ON)*

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ January 12-14, 2007—Group Guide Workshop, Winnipeg
- ◆ August 17-19, 2007—Atlantic Regional Assembly
- ◆ September 21-23, 2007—Central Regional Assembly
- ◆ Summer, 2008—WorldAssembly
- ◆ April 23-26, 2009—National Assembly, Guelph, ON



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For Father John's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, CLC Canada General Council established a fund to recognize the founding role played by him. His efforts, when he gathered a small group made up of four couples to begin a special journey of life with lay people in the first CLC community in Canada, grew to encompass communities across the country with affiliation to the World Christian Life Community. The fund is intended to give financial assistance to initiatives which would help the growth of CLC Canada at the local, regional or national levels. At present there is \$4,749.02 in the account. Donations are gratefully accepted at anytime. Please mark your cheque

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