



# Update

## Christian Life Communities Canada

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June 2001.

Greetings and Blessings of the Risen Christ to you all:

One of the most heartwarming stories to come across our desk in a long time came from our own Gilles and Leah Michaud, of the World Secretariat, commenting on a CLC community meeting during their recent trip to Kenya.....

*We sat on chairs on the sidewalk outside the cathedral sharing umbrellas as protection from the rain. This CLC community of working women meet in their lunch hour - the only time available .....there is no other place to meet. Community members live in different parts of the city. All have families to care and cook for after work. Most have no vehicles and any travel after dark is dangerous. Every two months they spend a full day together for prayer and formation. .... (Oh how we wish we had a picture of that meeting!)*

In this issue we do bring you pictures of some CLCers in Canada. This is the first time colour photography has graced our newsletter, but we hope to make it a regular feature - so please send in photographs of your community events, etc. to share. We also bring you news from our General Council, a message from our new Ecclesial Assistant, Earl Smith, SJ, and news from CLC friends in other parts of the world.

**Elaine and Fran**  
**National Presidents**

**Winnipeg, MB  
June 2, 2001.**

**Dear CLC Canada Membership;**

**+May God bless our nationwide communities from 'Sea to Sea' on this day of Pentecost. It is my joy and privilege to named your National Ecclesial Assistant. In time I hope to establish contact with many of you either via email or in person. God will provide whatever forms of communication are necessary for me to be available to you! My deepest desire is that we continue to grow in our loving knowledge of the Lord Jesus as mediated by the Spiritual Exercises of our Father, St. Ignatius. In this way we will be provided with the tools required to serve God's Kingdom, tools such as discernment of God's will and the acts of communal generosity that are inspired from it  
Please feel free to be in touch with me at the following email address:  
earlsmithsj@cswebmail.com**

**Truly,  
Earl Smith, S.J.**

**The Community Contact Person is the KEY communication  
Between the local community and Regional/National CLC  
The Contact Person is the "Messenger"  
Therefore ideally they**

- 1. Have discerned a call to take on this role and assume it for at least three years**
- 2. Are given a portion of the CLC meeting for this business**
- 3. Read and explain all materials received to the community members**
- 4. Are responsible for making sure that the community answers**

## **CONGRATULATIONS!**

**Sue Rambow of the Emmaus Community in Courtenay, B.C.  
Recently received a national award for sterling service in immigration.  
Well done! Sue**

## **PRESIDENTS' REPORT**

News since our last UPDATE.....

### **Special Meetings:**

- David Nazar, SJ, Provincial - Thanking him for appointment of new National Ecclesial Assistant, Earl Smith, SJ. Regional Ecclesial Assistants - acknowledgement of the great work that J.P. Horrigan, SJ has done in Central region. Discussion of future appointments of Max Oliva, SJ for Calgary/ Lethbridge area and search for Atlantic Regional E.A. We also shared with him the results of our Survey and discussed the establishment of a CLC Website and availability of Jesuit site.
- Catholic Register Interview - four enquiries resulted from February article.
- Presentation of balance of Disaster Fund to Jack Costello, SJ, Jesuit Faith & Social Justice Office. Monies to be used by Jesuit Refugee Service, Rome.

### **On the Road Again:**

We have continued to be renewed by the wonderful people we have met on our travels. Their stories, Faith commitment and action for others give us a wider appreciation of the workings of the Spirit across Canada. CLCers are DOERS - in all areas of life. We along with General Councillors have been the recipients of some wonderful hospitality by local host families. The following communities have welcomed us to their meetings..

- Our Lady of Lourdes, Waterloo
- Fruitfull Garden, Kitchener
- Holy Ground, Elora
- Our Lady of the Way, Pickering
- While meeting with General Council we took the opportunity to meet with: St. Paul's High School and St. Mary's Academy, Winnipeg, and later visited Regina and Thunder Bay CLC communities.
- Ubi Caritas Community, Brantford

## **VOLUNTEERS WANTED.....**

**For UPDATE Newsletter.**

**To be part of a Working Group  
put out twice yearly**

### **Requirements:**

- Computer skills
- Lay-out skills
- Ability to work as a Team

**(Presidents are Editors) Write to the National Office of CLC**

## TRAVEL & COMMUNITY - "MAKING FRIENDS IN THE LORD"

By Daphne Stockman, Member of Christian Life Community, Calcutta, India

My first visit to Canada was in the winter of 1984 when I went to Guelph to experience the 30 days Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius followed by a Spirituality Workshop. That retreat became the beginning of a deepening relationship with the Lord. Though Guelph was covered with snow and I even slipped on the snow, the winter had a certain serenity about it which helped me to pray deeply.

India and Canada were twinned some years ago, but it was at the World Assembly in Guadalajara, Mexico in 1990 that we experienced the essence of this bond. We remember Fr. John English, SJ, Jack Milan, Joanne Mawhinney and Gilles Michaud. From our national community there were Tony Martyris, K.S. Markose and myself. We all helped to create a bond of sharing, caring and friendship.

After that World Assembly I returned home via Canada. My brother, Lionel, who lives in Mississauga and myself were invited to attend the CLC Assembly in Guelph. It was a great experience. I remember sharing some of my feelings about the World Assembly. I was impressed by the personal sharing in the chapel with the feather initiated by Graydon and Beth Nicholas. Jean Floyd also was instrumental in helping our project: "He's my brother, She's my sister" with a donation of clothes.

Canada was at its best in autumn. I was spellbound at the sight of the leaves on the trees, praising God for such wonderful nature so generously shared with us. It was also then that I had the privilege of attending a meeting of the Companions CLC community in Toronto. Our friendship was further cemented through greetings and letters. Later I had the pleasure of meeting

one of the Companions when she visited Calcutta on her way to Darjeeling.

Then again, in Itaici, it was like meeting old friends when we shared and laughed with the Canadian delegates. We exchanged momentos and I do consider the Canadians CLCers my dear friends in the Lord.

Again, after the World Assembly I visited my brother and was welcomed by the Companions in Toronto. I was so happy to meet Enid D'Costa, formerly of Bombay CLC, who had joined this CLC community so far away from home in India.

Reflecting on these many visits and encounters with Canadian CLC members I feel a special closeness to them and a feeling of being one with them in their concerns and their mission as they surely do with us in India. They shared so generously their formation manuals and pamphlets on the "Consciousness Examen" and "Ignatian Prayer". I have experienced that distances and differences are not obstacles to "community" but can be overcome through friendship, sharing and caring, which includes keeping each other in prayer before the Lord.

In all these encounters with CLC friends in Canada I see the Lord's love and goodness and way of telling me "you are not alone". It was especially so when my husband, Willie, passed away. Not only my local CLC but others in the World CLC community too, and especially Canada and Brazil were very near.

At present I am in the process of listening to other "calls" one of which is to emigrate and where else, can you guess? Yes! Canada.

## ***PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND***

*I give you the end  
of a golden string;  
only wind it into a ball,  
it will lead you in  
at Heaven's Gate  
built in Jerusalem's wall  
William Blake*

**This golden string led 4 CLC Toronto Companions-J.P. Horrigan, Mary Jane Kelley, Betty Ratcliffe and Susan Tomenson to the Palestine of Jesus on a Pilgrimage of mind and heart. We were resident students at St. George's College in East Jerusalem. We came to appreciate the depths of the difficulties which affect the lives of so many Palestinians and Israelis. One of our experiences was a visit to The Church Of St. Peter In Gallicantu built on the 1st century residence of the High Priest Caiaphas. It was an emotional and touching experience to go down to the dungeon where Jesus of Nazareth spent his last night on earth. Jesus' suffering reminded us of all those who are imprisoned unjustly.**

**On our return to Toronto JP Horrigan spearheaded The 100 Week Project. This project hopes to raise the awareness of the many human rights violations on both sides.**

**As CLCers we urge you to pray for the peace of Jerusalem.**

**Mary Jane Kelley, Betty Ratcliffe and Susan Tomenson written on April 23rd, 2001-  
The Feast of St. George (see photograph)**

**APOLOGIES to  
Christa Streicher of the  
COMPANIONS OF JESUS COMMUNITY  
Kitchener-Waterloo, ON. We missed your name  
in our last issue**

**Please Pray For..... All who are sick  
Especially John Floyd, husband of  
Past-president Jean Floyd, who has  
Recently suffered a stroke**

# SHARING THE EXPERIENCE

## Christian Life Communities on the rise

BY MICHAEL SWAN  
The Catholic Register  
February, 2001

One of Canada's quietest Catholic lay movements has quietly doubled in size over the last 10 years.

Christian Life Communities, the lay apostolate which promotes and practises the spirituality of Jesuit founder St. Ignatius of Loyola, has 50 communities and more than 350 members across Canada, plus more than 200 youth members. They're part of a worldwide movement of about 150,000 people.

Just a few years ago CLC in Canada seemed a gently aging group of devoted Catholics - a diminishing band of idealists hanging on from the heady days of Vatican II reform in the 1970s. But these days youth groups based in high schools and at universities, as well as a steady stream of married people with young families, are coming into the movement.

"I think what they're seeking is the intimacy of this kind of sharing," explains national CLC president Fran Morrison.

Sharing is at the core of the CLC experience. CLC communities, groups of eight to 12, meet regularly to speak with one another about their prayer life and relationship with Christ within the framework of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius. They call this process of personal storytelling "sharing." It requires trust and stark honesty, as the participants speak of their moments of consolation (when they feel in tune with the will of Christ) and desolation (when they have lost the thread of God's will).

Most CLC members have made a retreat based on the *Spiritual Exercises* at some time.

In the CLC, Catholics discover a new dimension of being Catholic, said Morrison, of Waterloo, Ont.

"One cannot be intimate within a parish," she said. "I don't know what the person sitting next

to me in church thinks about God. They're just sitting there."

Within the Christian Life Community, people think of their association as a way of life.

"The Catholic religion has tended to be quite individually oriented," said Jesuit Father John English, the man who founded Christian Life Communities in Canada. "This is an instrument that helps people share their lives, and get some support for decision making.

It's not just sharing for the sake of sharing, explains English, superior of the Jesuit community in Winnipeg. Everything in the *Spiritual Exercises* is directed toward helping a Christian make important decisions. In Ignatian language, the goal is discernment.

"It's not just that existential loneliness that CLC tries to address," English said.

"CLCers are generally action people," said Morrison. "People who are seeking the more are not passive people."

"The more" Morrison refers to is the Jesuit and Ignatian ideal of the *majus* - summed up in St Ignatius' question, "What more can I do for Christ?"

The focus of discernment in the CLC has been on finding ways to be involved in social justice.

"We are trying to walk with the poor on a communal basis," said Elaine Regain, also national president of CLC. "We are people who are very aware of the modern church."

The growth in the CLC has been concentrated in smaller towns and rural communities. Winnipeg, where there's a large Jesuit presence both at St. Paul's High School and St. Paul's College of the University of Manitoba, is the big-city exception. Other hotbeds of CLC growth have been Lethbridge, Alta., and the Atlantic provinces.

"If there's a lack of energy, it's in southern Ontario," conceded English.

The national office of Christian Life Community is in Kitchener, Ont., at (519) 741-9702, or e-mail [clcfcan@ionline.net](mailto:clcfcan@ionline.net).

### WANTED...

Person with computer experience to set up  
WEBSITE for CLC Canada  
WEBMASTER to maintain above  
Contact National Office of CLC

# Is a picture worth one thousand words?



*Christian Life Community - Grade 11*  
ST. PAUL'S HIGH SCHOOL, WINNIPEG



Commissioning Mass General Council  
St. Paul's High School, Winnipeg



St. Mary's High School, Winnipeg, Dale Swirsky  
And other CLC leaders



Good Friday Hike for some Kitchener-Waterloo, ON, CLCers and family members



General Council - How many can you identify? (see back page)



Women's March - Ottawa: Companions  
Toronto members with Julie Dwyer-Young and Daughter Justine



Toronto and Pickering Communities welcome  
Central Region Rep Carol McKerral



JOHN ENGLISH, SJ, EMERITUS  
ECCLESIAL ASSISTANT



Church of St. Peter, Gallicantu  
JP Horrigan, SJ, B. Ratcliffe, Sr. Hilda,  
MJ Kelley, Norm Dodge and S. Tomenson

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## **GENERAL COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS**

**May 3,4,5 2001**

- ❖ First time held outside of Guelph, ON. Great Hospitality, Transportation, Billeting and Saturday Social by Winnipeg Host communities
- ❖ Welcomed to Council:  
Earl Smith, SJ, new National Ecclesial Assistant (who has already visited communities in Regina)  
John English, SJ, now officially Ecclesial Assistant Emeritus  
Geoff Bresch, Prairie Region Rep  
Nora Jean, Atlantic Region Rep
- ❖ Directory: Updated for November General Council meeting by Kati Gumbmann, CLCer from Winnipeg  
(Please send any changes in information and email to Kati at katigumb@cs.com with copy to Julie at the national office)
- ❖ Reminder that as of this year CLC has a responsibility NOT to distribute personal information of membership
- ❖ World Youth Days: in Toronto, July 2002: Working Group has been formed with Matt Couture, Youth Rep, as the Chair to organize a CLC presence at this event. We are hopeful that some of the Winnipeg High school students will travel to Toronto and be billeted by CLCers in Thunder Bay and Toronto areas by CLC families.  
World Youth Days Website: [www.wyd2002.org](http://www.wyd2002.org)
- ❖ Response to Social Justice initiatives by email: Important to gain mandate from membership before committing CLC as a national body Presently only personal signatures advised.
- ❖ Communal response to Social Justice issues to be explored at Fall General Council meeting.
- ❖ Importance of not losing the Wisdom of Elders noted: Decision to include at least one Elder on all future Regional/National Working Groups
- ❖ Membership/Commitment Working Group established
- ❖ "*Spiritual Exercises for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*" a new perspective combining Ignatian Spirituality and Ecology presently under production
- ❖ CLCers urged to share the "Myth" - the reason for choosing CLC as their Way of Life with other members of the Church

### **WORKING GROUP TO FIND NEW PRESIDENT(S)-ELECT FOR CLC CANADA**

**The National Working Group -three CLCers from each Region of Canada (including at least one Elder) are presently searching for a person(s) to serve the national community.....Please keep them in prayer**

From the desk of Gilles and Leah Michaud.....

### Report from the World Secretariat, Rome

- **14<sup>th</sup> World Assembly scheduled for Nairobi, Kenya, 2003.....** the first CLC Assembly to be held in Africa. National communities are requested to begin preparation to send a full delegation (one Ecclesial Assistant, two delegate members).
- On our trip to Nairobi we became familiar with the venue site. We had an opportunity to speak and listen to CLC members. The strong commitment to meet weekly (20-35 years old) despite many obstacles raised many questions about the ease of life many of us in the developing world enjoy. For example one CLC group meets in the tiny living area of a home in the middle of one of the slum areas. It is common to have a dozen people meeting in an 8 x 10 ft. living/dining area.
- World Ex Co proposes to create Mission oriented teams to empower the leadership in CLC around the world to carry out the mandate of the Common Mission from Itaiici.
- CLC members from around the world continue to visit the Secretariat eg: Pam Nowina and family from Toronto
- Well established national communities are helping countries who wish to build CLC but lack knowledge of CLC Formation. Examples of such twinning: Hungary is being partnered by CLC Germany, while Croatia is helped by neighbouring Slovenia.

### GENERAL COUNCIL, May 2001

<b>Presidents:</b>	<b>Fran Morrison</b>	<b>Waterloo, ON.</b>
	<b>Elaine Regan</b>	<b>Toronto, ON.</b>
<b>Eccl. Asst:</b>	<b>Earl Smith,SJ</b>	<b>Winnipeg, MB</b>
<b>Eccl.Assist.Emeritus</b>	<b>John English, SJ</b>	<b>Winnipeg,MB</b>
<b>Nat. Community Coordinator:</b>	<b>Julie Dwyer-Young</b>	<b>Kitchener, ON.</b>
<b>Atlantic Region Rep:</b>	<b>Nora Jean</b>	<b>Nakawic, NB</b>
<b>Central Region Rep:</b>	<b>Carol McKerral</b>	<b>Thunder Bay, ON.</b>
<b>Prairies Region Rep:</b>	<b>Geoff Bresch</b>	<b>Winnipeg,MB</b>
<b>Rockies Region Rep:</b>	<b>Marilynn Heaton</b>	<b>Lethbridge, AB.</b>
<b>Youth Rep:</b>	<b>Matthew Couture</b>	<b>Winnipeg, MB</b>

### General Council photograph

**B Row: John English,SJ, Julie Dwyer-Young, Matt Couture**

**M.Row: Marilynn Heaton, Geoff Bresch, Carol McKerral, Nora Jean,**

**Front: Elaine Regan, Earl Smith,SJ, Fran Morrison**

# Is a picture worth one thousand words?



*Christian Life Community - Grade 11*  
ST. PAUL'S HIGH SCHOOL, WINNIPEG



Commissioning Mass General Council  
St. Paul's High School, Winnipeg



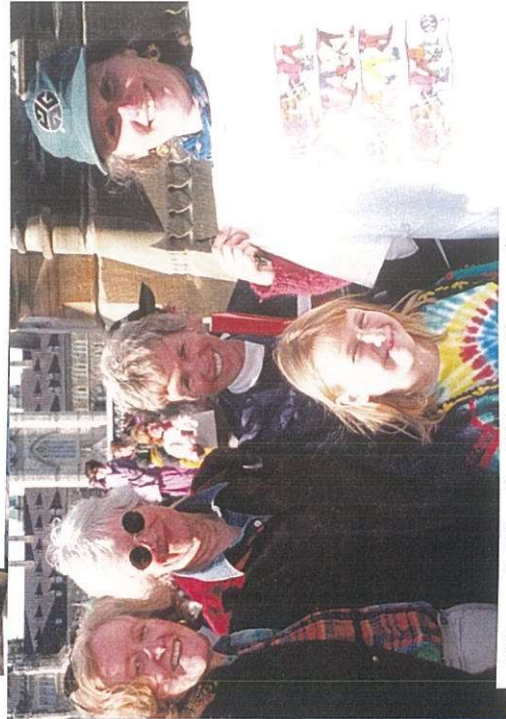
St. Mary's High School, Winnipeg, Dale Swirsky  
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