



# C.L.C. FIRE

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The Newsletter of the Christian Life Communities of Canada

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VOL. 1, NO.1

*"Go and set the world on fire!" St. Ignatius Loyola*

WINTER, 1995-6

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In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.  
All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.  
What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

A light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.  
The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.  
He was in the world, and the world came into being through him;  
yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own,  
and his own people did not accept him. But all who received him,  
who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God,  
who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh  
or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us,  
and we have seen his glory, and the glory as of a father's only son,  
full of grace and truth.

John 1: 1-5, 9-14.

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**A BELATED MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR IN 1996!**

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**Co-Presidents**  
Bob & Shirley Gatchene  
129 Glen Lake Cr.  
Kitchener, Ont.  
NCN 1C4

**Ecclesial Assistant**  
Fr. John English sj  
Box 1238  
Guelph, Ont.  
N1H 6N6

**National Community Coordinator**  
Jean Floyd  
207 Lourdes St.  
Waterloo, Ont.  
N2L 1N8

**Ecclesial Asst. Youth/Y. Adult**  
Alan Fogarty sj  
567 Huron St.  
Toronto, Ont.  
MSR 2R6

**CLC FIRE**  
Editor  
Tom Lussier  
42 Harwick Lane  
Winnipeg, MB  
R2J 3H1  
(204)-254-3685  
or at  
St. Paul's High School  
(204)-831-2340 (fax)

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This is my first attempt at editing a newsletter so I begin by asking for your patience, mercy and support as I begin serving the National Community in this way. I know that I have already strained the patience of some members of our community in taking so long to produce this issue. I apologize to all concerned! I ask for your patience as I continue to work out the what, the how and the when of future issues. I ask for your mercy as I expect there will be many blunders along the way to producing a good newsletter. I hope to learn from my mistakes! I ask for your support as the quality of this newsletter depends, for the most part, on the people of our National Community contributing materials for it and sharing their constructive comments with me.

As I was preparing this first newsletter I asked myself many times "How did I get myself into this mess?" The answer that keeps coming to me in my contemplative moments reminds me of Chris Sullivan's (Hidden Life CLC) inspirational sharing at the National Assembly this past summer in Halifax. Chris shared that...

**"Being born is messy. Dying is messy. Everything in between is messy! Life is about living gracefully in the mess. Being in community is messy but in it, we find God. We are called to transform our world out of the mess, to be prophets of change... As Anthony de Mello sj teaches us, spirituality is about waking up to the reality that all is well and about seeing the beauty of the human condition in spite of the mess."**

Despite the busyness, frenetic pace, and the over-committed nature of my existence (That about sums up most of our lives I am sure!), I felt a real sense of urgency and what seemed in my heart, a call from God, to further the mission of our National Community by serving as Newsletter Editor. At the National Assembly what kept coming to me in my prayer and reflection was the urgent need to improve communication between individuals, local communities and the regions that make up our National Community. It became more and more apparent to me that the sharing of experience, reflections on the state of affairs, and interpretations of the "signs of the times" should not be limited to National Assemblies, General Council (GC) or Executive Council (ExCo) meetings. In spite of this, it appeared that there was no one at the Assembly who felt they could take on the responsibility of editing the national newsletter- one of the only organized methods we currently have to communicate with each other. That is when I got myself into this mess!

Beginnings are always fraught with both anxiety and hope! We have to work through anxieties, dream dreams and be willing to take risks! It is my hope that *Fire* will be a means for communicating our personal and communal insights into what are the most pressing issues of our day and what kind of discerned actions we might take in response to these issues. I hope as well, that *Fire* will be a source for further individual or communal prayer and reflection throughout our National Community. I dream that through the cross-fertilization of ideas, insights, and action plans from various contributors, originating from the different regions and constituencies that make up our National Community, *Fire* could become an agent for the ongoing formation of our local and National communities. As well, I dream that *Fire* might be an instrument for deepening our sense of CLC spirituality and of how we can become a more visible and transformative presence in the Church and our society- calling us to be more ecologically aware, better stewards of our world's gifts, and to be agents for the promotion of faith and justice. In short, it is my hope that *Fire* will help us incarnate the grace and message of the '94 World Assembly in Hong Kong...

**"The awareness of being a community called to be with CHRIST and sent by HIM into a divided and suffering world. HIS SPIRIT, who governs history, moves us to read the signs of the times and to put into practice our spiritual experience as a service for building justice and peace. We have to live this not only in words but in deeds and in truth."**

That brings me to the question why name our newsletter "*Fire*"? I tried a number of other names out in the production of this issue, prayed about the question, mused about it, decided on one name that still left me a little unsettled. Then one day I was reading to prepare for one of my classes and the words of Fr. Teilhard de Chardin sj struck me as the answer to my burning question (sorry, pun intended)...

**"Some day, after we have mastered the winds, the tides, and gravity, we will harness for God the energies of love; and then for the second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire!"**

I was also struck by the imagery of the flames surrounding the new logo for the National Community! Fire is one of those primitive archetypal symbols that summons out of our guts a deep sense of wonder, security, awe, respect, and power. It can protect, heal, illuminate, change, renew or destroy. How many of us have been soothed and mesmerized by the sight of a campfire or a roaring fireplace? Fire is a symbol that links us in solidarity with all of humanity that has gone before us. From the dawn of humanity in the mists of pre-history, in pagan religious rituals, and in our own tradition- through the Exodus, the Pentecost event, to the Paschal fire at the beginning of each Easter vigil- fire is a symbol that has, in some measure, allowed us to touch and express the profoundly mysterious reality of God's coming into our world, touching our lives. Throughout scripture, God's presence and supreme intervention in history is manifested by fire: the burning bush (Exod. 3), the pillar of consuming fire (Exod. 13), the Sinai covenant event (Exod. 19; Dt. 4), and finally, the Pentecost event (Acts 2). Fire is also symbolic of God's sanctifying, purifying effect in rituals (Lv. 6, 10, 24) and in our hearts (Is. 6; Mt. 3; Acts 2). Fire symbolizes the regenerative, miraculous energy of the Spirit's coming to the disciples in the upper room as they are missioned to bring the fire of Christ's Spirit to the whole earth. It is in this mission that all of us have a share. In Luke 12:49, it is written...

**"I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already!"**

This is the fire that comes from living the reality of the cross and the resurrection passionately! Fr. John English sj, commenting on this passage in his homily at the closing liturgy of the National Assembly related that...

**"for Ignatius, being a disciple meant catching fire and being the fire! Like Jesus, Ignatius believed that God is in the world. God is here! God can be found in everything! Ours is not an other-worldly faith. It is a faith that God is here. If we are awake to it, we will be on fire and will light the world on fire. If we are not awake we won't light the world on fire, in fact the only thing that will burn is our own heart. If we are awake then, we will find God in all things and will not fear conflict- we will find God even in the fight!"**

Perhaps if we take these messages to heart, our National Community will help light the way so our Church and world will **"for the second time in the history of the world... discover fire!"** It is my hope that *Fire* will help all of us to start blazing and that it will be a means for all of us to share how, in our lives, the fire burns already.

Having said all of that, what do you think of the name? Please let me know. The newsletter belongs to the National Community, if the name doesn't seem right please let the members of the ExCo and myself know. I would also appreciate hearing from you about what you would like to see in *Fire*.

I have only just begun to get a sense of what should go into each issue. I vaguely envision at this point, that each issue might be composed of the following:

1. A Main Theme with a few articles contributed by different members of the National Community. **In this issue the theme is the National Assembly in Halifax last summer. My thanks go out to Beulah Costain (Ixtus CLC PEI) and Shirley Gatchene (Co-President) for their reports on the Assembly, and to Jean Floyd (Nat Com Coordinator) for the National Assembly financial statement included in this issue.** Past articles from the World Community's *Progressio* or from the U.S.A. Community's *Harvest* that relate to an issue's theme may be included as well.
2. A National CLC Leadership section that includes messages from the Co-Presidents, summaries of GC or ExCo meetings, any important message that the GC or ExCo want to get out to the National Community. **In this issue are greetings from the Co-Presidents and highlights of GC and ExCo meetings since the National Assembly. My thanks to Jean Floyd for her report on the Council meetings and for her ideas, general support and encouragement.**
3. A portion dedicated to communicating News and Views from the World Community. **Please note that in this issue there are reprints of two Projects from the World CLC ExCo. The first deals with prayers for peace; the second announces the theme of the 1996 World CLC Day.**
4. A Mission or Social Action section. **In this issue there is a reprint of a letter from the World CLC President and an edited version of a letter Fran Morrison (Fidelis CLC) sent to Ann Benson (Atlantic GC Rep.) in preparation for the National Assembly.**
5. A Spirituality section that includes articles written by any member of our National Community pertaining to some aspect of CLC spirituality, a sharing of reflections on the experience of living the CLC way of life, or perhaps a discussion of one of the General Principles or Norms that comes out of an individual's or community's reflection on how they try to en flesh this ideal in their lives. **My thanks to Peter Peloso (GC Elder Rep) for his thought provoking reflection on how CLCers might respond to some of Reginald Bibby's message in *Fragmented Gods* included in this issue.**
6. A Youth CLC section that might include reports from the Youth and Young Adult Ecclesial Assistant or the Youth Representative on the General Council, or a sharing on the CLC experience by a Youth CLC member. **My thanks also go out to Jonathan Frate (Grade 11 CLC, St. Paul's High School) for his reflection on attending the National Assembly.**
7. A Potpourri section that might include Regional Reports, letters to the editor, book reviews by any member of the community who has read a good spirituality/resource book and would like to share their insights with the National Community (particularly useful if the book reviewed relates to the main theme for the issue), letters or prayer requests from any member or local community of the National Community, a "Did You Know" corner that might include newsy information about a particular member's accomplishments, a community project or whatever, and a calendar of upcoming events and information on future issues.

Once again, please let me know if you agree with what I envision for *Fire*. Do you see anything I might have missed in my vision for OUR NEWSLETTER? Do you have recommendations for THEMES for upcoming issues? What about next issue? Please send me your comments, ideas for themes, letters, news, important dates for meetings, articles for the different sections, whatever you can! I hope to put out two more issues in the coming year. **The deadline for submitting articles or whatever for the next issue of *Fire* is April 2, 1996. If you are submitting an article please include a brief "bio" that introduces you to our readers.** Thank you again for your patience in waiting for this issue. I promise the next foreword will not be as long. In closing, as Ignatius spoke to his men going to the missions- **"Go and set the world on fire!"** and please read on and enjoy this issue!

Thomas G. Lussier

**CLC CANADA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
**August 17 to 20, 1995**  
**Mount St. Vincent University**  
**Halifax, Nova Scotia**

**ISSUE THEME: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**Report by Shirley Gatchene,**  
**National Co-President**

In August 1995 delegates from across our country gathered for our National Assembly in Halifax. The simple act of coming together brought with it an energy that was beyond compare. The fruit of many months of planning, organizing and hard work became evident, and an overwhelming sense of gratitude was experienced by all. The hospitality shown to all of us by our maritime brothers and sisters was exceptional and will not be forgotten.

The theme of our assembly was Micah 6:8 - "**To act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with our God.**" We had been praying for months in preparation for this assembly, seeking an openness to receive and hear what the Spirit was saying to CLC Canada in 1995.

Our first evening together as delegates was a graced experience. To be able to share and listen to each other from across Canada and hear the common bond we share together of generosity, compassion, sensitivity and an active response to justice was gift. The youth present added something very special to our evening. As they shared their ideas and thoughts with us, there was a sense that together we create a beautiful pattern.

The business portion of our weekend followed with many topics presented for consideration and decision by means of consensus; one being our Constitution. This was exciting for us because after years of hard work and the efforts of many people, our Constitution was accepted after a few minor adjustments. Thanks who all contributed to this great work!

Mary Boyd spoke to us on how small communities can have an impact on society. She reminded us that the process is from the bottom up, and starting small, taking on small issues that can have an impact. She also encouraged us to think long term because undoing what has been done takes as long as it took to do. We must always remember that we are working with God. God is on the side of the poor. God decides this, it is His own disposition. God owes it to His own righteousness!

Mary also suggested that we could look at other national or international groups to see what issues they are dealing with and help or link up with them to work together toward social action. We certainly came away from Mary's talk feeling encouraged that each of us has a part to play in contributing to a more just society.

As we journeyed through our weekend, we continued to discern what CLC of the future means to each of us individually and communally. **We heard in many different ways that in CLC we are called to be prophets of transformation.**

The future we are living into is the possibility of a discerning world community - connected from local, to regional, to national, to international - rooted in the Gospel and our General Principles, speaking boldly and acting with compassion to transform the world.

**To define:**

**Transforming the world:** Discovering and going with the potential that we see in people and structures in our world so that we can empower and bring into being just, humane and compassionate structures in all dimensions of life.

**Speaking boldly and acting compassionately:** Presenting ourselves in a way that comes from the conviction of our faith, our communal interchange and our conversations in the broader community.

Some of the issues that we must look at to enable us to bring all this about would be:

- + Greater understanding of the National and World Community.
- + Better communications at local, national and international levels.
- + Developing youth CLCs.
- + Ecological responsibility and relatedness.
- + Ecumenical interchange.
- + Dialogue and action: Public face of CLC and public interchange.
- + Spirituality - "Discerning community for apostolic service."

Some of the means available to CLC to facilitate this would be our newsletter (*Fire*), E-mail (Technology), Group Guide development, Regional Representatives, Regional Assemblies, Youth Manual, Education groups (re. Social Analysis) and to encourage prayer.

We now have a new understanding of commitment, and that there is a difference between being committed and being attached. We are not attached to the world, we are committed to a vision. **A vision to transform the world, a vision of creating a future.**

This weekend was full of great insights and new energy both of which were shared and exchanged. We came away with a new sense of commitment, responsibility and call. We were empowered to respond to this new challenge to move forth and beyond our present reality. We received a renewed sense of community at all levels, and the desire to embrace our prophetic responsibility.

How can one really capture and communicate the Spirit of such a powerful event like this in a couple of written pages? I believe that each person in attendance at this National Assembly felt the call to go forth and set the world on fire. As it is written: **"I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already!"** Praise God!

**Shirley Gatchene**



### ***Report by Beulah Costain, Ixthus CLC, PEI.***

In August I attended the National CLC Assembly with six other members of the Ixthus CLC from PEI, Canada. This was my first National Assembly, and I must say I have a broader understanding of what it means to be part of a national and a world community.

I felt very welcome as I registered and was shown to my room. I could feel the excitement of the Nova Scotian hosts and knew that they were as happy as I that eastern Canada was given the privilege of receiving delegates from the whole of Canada. I was also pleased that Friday evening was set aside for relaxation and getting to know each other.

On Saturday I met with the members of the group I would pray share and discern with. We were a group that came from the Central, Eastern and Western regions of our National Community. I was especially taken with the quiet, prayerful attitude of our group each time we met. This gave each type of personality a chance to get their thoughts together before attempting to answer the questions that we were given. I felt very comfortable with this format as it is familiar to my CLC. As well, we met outdoors and the quietness of the surroundings gave us a real appreciation for the greatness of creation.

It was very interesting to listen to the sharing of my group. One woman belonged to a newly formed group and was amazed to discover that CLC has a world vision. She thought the main thrust was to become more aware of God in her own life and perhaps to become acquainted with what was going on in the rest of Canada. The emphasis on social justice was also a new thought for her in regard to her prayer. She was a bit confused by all this information, but was open to and excited about learning more about the whole concept of CLC. Another person shared that he had left a traditional job to work with the poor and homeless youth in his city. He told us how he was experiencing rejection from his family and friends who did not understand his call to minister to these people. I was affected by the openness of their sharing and had a new appreciation of the gift my own CLC has been for me.

Our group had some difficulty extending our thoughts into the future and visioning what the CLC of the next century may be like. However, we did feel confident that the Holy Spirit would lead us if we were open to discern God's call to us. Perhaps the most outstanding insight we had was that of the desire to minister to youth and invite them to become part of CLC. This we felt was a deep commitment of many people at the Assembly.

The process of coming to consensus on issues I believe caused some confusion to some of the people attending. I know this process is counter-cultural and not the process used in everyday life. However, I believe that it allows everyone, even the quiet and insecure, to have as strong a voice as the most vocal and assured. It is well to remember that we are always breaking new ground and making our way as we go, trusting that the Spirit will lead us if we are open to hear the voices of all. I am aware also that the process of consensus takes more time than using a more conventional (decision-making) model, but it is good to remember that we are not in a secular milieu when we meet as CLC.

**Beulah Costain**

Statement of Revenue and Expenditures for  
National Assembly, 1995.

<b>Registrations</b>			<b>10,595.75</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	Float	350.00	
	Administration	322.24	
	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>168.00</u>	
	Subtotal	840.24	
	Accommodation and Meals	<u>12,096.50</u>	
<b>Total Expenses:</b>		<u>12,936.74</u>	<b>12,936.74</b>
<b>Deficit:</b>			<b>2,340.99-</b>
Charged to General Council		<u>668.84</u>	
			<b>1,672.15-</b>
<b>Travel Fund</b>	8,280.00		
<b>Travel Expense</b>	<u>8,548.61</u>		
	268.61-		
<b>Lobster Draw</b>	<u>1,446.80</u>		
	1,178.19		

**Note:** As indicated above, we emerged from the National Assembly in a minus position financially. When the final bill was received from Mount St. Vincent it was considerably higher than contracted for due to a considerable number of people either arriving early and/or staying longer than the original registration fee covered. **If any members feel they were in this position, it would greatly benefit our National Community if you could remit the additional amount.**

Night's lodging was \$16.25 for a half-double, \$22.50 for a single

Meals: Breakfast 5.20  
Lunch 5.97  
Dinner 8.14

GST and PST were added to all the prices.

**Jean Floyd (National Community Coordinator)**

## **THE YOUTH VIEW:**

**"A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm."**

This quote by Henrik Ibsen accurately delineates the lesson that I obtained from the National CLC Assembly. That lesson is, the value of community. Granted, prior to the conference I did have some grasp on the value of community. However, it was not until the Assembly that I learnt its true value.

When I first arrived in Halifax at the meetings I stopped and looked around. As I was scanning, I took a step back in astonishment. Everyone was older than me!!

**ISSUE THEME: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

At first I was a bit apprehensive about sharing my feelings with people that were old enough to be my parents and grand parents. Then something incredible happened, I saw something. That something was community.

I was literally awed at the community that existed between everyone. There were representatives who had been in groups for a short time, and those who had been in groups for almost thirty years! It was unbelievable. It was unbelievable that there was that much dedication. It was unbelievable that there was that much friendship. Dedication, to stay with the group through the long haul. Friendship, to comfort those in times of need and to rejoice with others in times of happiness.

Well, that about sums it up for me. Apart from the activities, the sight seeing, an the infamous ferry ride, one thing stands out. That is, community. The power of community extends to the outer limits. It is so much more than just gathering together: it is being together. Community takes dedication to begin and friendship to survive.

Community is the central, vital component of CLC. I myself am in my third year of CLC and have only begun to grow close to my group. It is my hope however to help make the group develop and grow as a community. Then, thirty years down the road at the CLC National Assembly, I will turn to a young high school student and say...

**"A community is a ship; everyone  
ought to be prepared to take the helm."**

**Jonathan Frate, Grade 11 CLC  
St. Paul's High School**

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## ***A message from the Co-Presidents...***

**NCLC GENERAL COUNCIL NEWS**

Dear Friends in Christ,

By the time you receive this message we will be celebrating the Christmas season or beginning a new year! This is a busy time for each of us individually and also in our communities across Canada.

It seems like a long time since some of us gathered together at our 1995 National Assembly in Halifax where we shared and exchanged many ideas, were challenged and called forth by the Spirit to carry out our prophetic responsibility in CLC. It was also there in Halifax, that we were officially commissioned by the national community to continue the work which many before us started. We truly consider it a privilege to serve the Lord in CLC at this exciting time in our CLC history, as He calls all of us forth in faithfulness, to serve Him in love, humility and justice.

We would like to ask you for your continued prayers for the leadership of CLC Canada at all levels, and also for the many communities across Canada, that the Lord would continue to direct, unite and bless us. We pray for discerning communities, that they will be given the Wisdom to be sensitive to where and how God's Spirit is leading us at the local, national and international levels, as we move together with the Spirit, rooted in the gospel of Jesus and our General Principles, with clarity of vision, into the third millennium.

As we continue to pray for each of you, we ask for your prayers for us as we embrace our new role of Co-Presidents of CLC Canada. We look forward to serving the National Community, and anticipate any opportunity that would offer itself to meet or hear from CLCers across Canada.

Once again, as we live the Season of Christmas, let us pray that the Peace of Christ remain in our hearts, families, communities, country and our world. We wish each and everyone of you a blessed, peaceful Christmas and New Year!

We remain in Christ,

**Bob & Shirley Gatchene,  
Co-Presidents, CLC Canada.**

# Highlights of the General Council and Executive Council Meetings...

Following the National Assembly in August, a GC meeting was held dealing with business arising out of the Assembly...

The Constitution approved by the National Assembly with some fine tuning will be done by the chair of the Constitutional committee to be presented at the next GC meeting. The matter of two non-spousal persons acting as co-presidents and the Group Guide Leadership Program will be reformulated and presented to ExCo. Suggestions made on the SOP (standard operating procedure) for Social Action developed by Ichthus CLC will be incorporated and reviewed. The need for improving communication reinforced at the National Assembly will be met by possibly improving office (computer) technology, updating and improving a National directory, placing greater stress on the responsibility of Regional Reps to GC for communication. In the area of Finances, Jean Floyd will continue as Treasurer with the assistance of Dan Goodmanson of Winnipeg, until a treasurer is found. The National Assembly authorized GC to exercise the power entrusted to it by assigning funds from any budget category according to the greatest need. More clarity is needed on the SOP for pro-rating the travel to National Assemblies; Fr. John English sj and Bob Gatchene will work on this. In November, Past President Gilles Michaud attended a Formation Program funded by the World CLC held in Rome, Italy.

At an Executive Council meeting held Oct. 15, 1995...

ExCo will present to GC the suggestion that rather than Co-Presidents we have a President and a Co-President in order to facilitate the possibility of the two non-spousal persons filling the roles in the future. Prior to taking up the roles the two would decide who is filling what role. The new logo seen on the Assembly mailing (and the front of Fire) was approved. In the area of Social Action, Peter Peloso will formulate a letter to the City of Halifax re. pollution in the Bedford Basin and send it to Ann Benson (Atlantic GC Rep) for approval and forwarding; Letters from the World ExCo requesting prayers will be **included in the newsletter**. Co-President Shirley will formulate the Grace of the Assembly to be presented at the next GC. The sample of the National Directory update being developed by Dale Swirsky (Youth GC Rep) was approved with suggestions for next GC. There is a Formation Course in Peru we will attempt to send someone to, funds providing. It was felt that the general membership is still not aware of the role of elders. Peter Peloso will work on a definition. The following proposals will be presented to the GC: 1) Fr. John English sj will seek appointments of an elder from each province and 2) It will not be necessary for appointees to attend GC or ExCo meetings but they will be provided with minutes and if they wish to address an issue they may attend or send their "wisdom" with their Regional Rep. SOPs referred to in the Constitution and for Assemblies will be ready for presentation to the GC after weighing all of the recommendations and critiques. Some representatives from our National ExCo plan to attend the first weekend of the World ExCo Meeting held in Chicago on Feb. 2-11.

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*The following is a declaration from the World CLC President dated 1st September, 1995 asking for prayers and action for peace in the Balkans. With the fragile peace in the Balkans, this call to the World CLC for prayer remains current.*

## SOCIAL ACTION /MISSION

Dear friends in the Lord,

Fifty years after the atomic disaster in Hiroshima, we are sadly witnessing the ongoing disasters war is causing in different parts of the world. They are the expression of deep conflicts of interest that make peaceful coexistence and exchange between cultures and people difficult. It hurts us particularly to see Europe and the whole world witness impassively a true genocide of our brothers and sisters in Christ in the Balkans, Europe, and which despite its declaration of human rights, keeps silent, becoming an accomplice of a situation in which the dignity of individuals and people is brutally violated. Peace efforts are obviously inefficient. Well aware of the complexity of the situation in which many interests are involved, we believe, however, that in front of such a situation we cannot remain impartial or silent. We have to **take sides for those who suffer** the disasters of war, denouncing the fact that, under the cover of a peace mission, interests other than those of the groups in conflict, are served.

The World Community, joining the feeling of the whole Church, asks-- **demands** -- that all hostilities be immediately stopped in order to reach a just peace. We know well that our words have no other weight than that of men and women of good will who try to feel in their own bodies the sufferings of so many brothers and sisters exhausted by the destruction of God's loving plans for humanity.

We appeal, therefore, to all those who in different countries have decisional power, to join efforts in searching for the negotiation of a just peace that will not reward true aggression, violence, ethnic cleansing or any violation of human rights, but will respect the true and



legitimate interests of people.

**SOCIAL ACTION /MISSION**

We also urge the representatives of the different religions present in the conflict regions (Catholics, Orthodox, and Muslims) to open roads toward mutual understanding and dialogue, which are indispensable for building true peace. We believe, after all, in the same God, the God of life, not of death.

Most especially, we wish that the World Community join in praying to the Father for the end of our brothers' and sisters' sufferings, knowing that our prayers are heard.

**Jose Maria Riera Mas**  
World CLC President



***The following (edited) letter sent from Fran Morrison to Ann Benson prior to the National Assembly speaks of our common call to Social Action as part of our call to Mission. It is reprinted here to serve as a source for reflection in your own group. Please share about it in a meeting with your local CLC.***

Dear Ann,

We are a long established community, five women, who have met regularly and faithfully over eleven years. All of us treasure the gift of CLC in our lives. We devoted time and prayer to your request for our input and the following was the outcome of this time together...

CLC has provided us with immeasurable gifts. Through our CLC involvement we have been given a stronger faith, have been provided a community of loving people to help us through some of life's greatest difficulties, and have had people travelling the journey with us to challenge and call us back to our original charism. All of us have been encouraged to risk, in different ways for each of the five, but all of us have accepted some sort of responsibility in the larger CLC family, and this has given a confidence which has spilled over into other areas of our lives. We feel therefore that CLC must try to use these Ignatian gifts and tools to help the wider community of Church and world. As one member put it "We should keep on doing what we are doing; we've done it well!"

Concretely, this means:

- 1) ACTION TO SPREAD THE NEWS OF CLC and make it more visible and attractive to All: MEN, WOMEN, and especially YOUTH. This will require our present members to generously give of their time to help such new communities get started and also will require these members to be willing to risk being in a leadership position in newly forming groups. (N.B., This is a MISSION.)
- 2) We feel that if ACTION FOR THE POOR is a more visible component of our CLC way of life then this will attract more people to join us. It is important here that we KNOW what other CLC groups are doing in the rest of Canada. We have to make better use of our NEWSLETTER to help keep informed.  
(The editor of *Fire* heartily agrees! Please send in your stories, action plans, whatever!)
- 3) We felt that it was vital that ALL COMMUNITIES are involved in the National, as their input is absolutely vital if CLC is to continue to flourish and grow in Canada. We need to stress the broader national/world view of our CLC way of life. This will spill over into ACTION to help members in different parts of Canada, will surely help us become more willing to share financially to keep CLC alive and will keep us WELCOMING communities to visitors from across Canada and from other parts of the world. As one member put it "CLC is NOT just our cosy local community!"
- 4) We want our National ExCo to keep the ideals and General Principles ever before us as a way of calling us back to our charism. We want them to know that we appreciate their efforts to date.

God Bless,

**Frances G. Morrison**  
Fidelis CLC

*The following articles are edited reprints of information bulletins called Projects sent out by the CLC World ExCo, written by Alberto Grossweiler of the World ExCo. The first refers to the declaration on peace in the Balkans reprinted in the Mission/Social Action section earlier. The second is meant to help us get ready for the upcoming World CLC Day- March 25, 1996 and challenges us to work for the unity of our local, National and World community.*

Dear Friends,

the Peace of Christ be with you! The reason for this *Projects* is the declaration by the World CLC President sent to our representatives in the UN in New York, Geneva and Vienna on behalf of our World Community.

**What are we expecting you to do with this declaration? Pray. Discern. Act.**

You will remember how at the end of the World Assembly in Hong Kong we formulated what we called THE GRACE OF HONG KONG. In good Ignatian tradition we repeat it here to remind us all:

**During this Assembly we have experienced God's call to a deep ongoing conversion with regard to our MISSION.**

**As a World Community we have to integrate social realities, with all their problems and challenges, more and more into our life and action. Our conversion finds its source in the poor and humble Christ whom we want to follow and serve.**

**It is in the poor and oppressed of our time that Christ reveals his face. The grace that we receive here and now is the awareness of being a community called to be with Christ and sent by HIM into an divided and suffering world.**

**HIS SPIRIT, who governs history, moves us to read the signs of the times and to put into practice our spiritual experience as a service for building justice and peace. We have to live this not only in words but in deeds and in truth.**

**That is what Saint Ignatius teaches us in his Spiritual Exercises, the source and instrument for our apostolic spirituality, the greatest grace of our lives.**

The social realities in many places are injustice and terrible wars. In the World Secretariat sad news comes to us from many friends in Mexico and Sri Lanka and Zaire. We know of the terrible killings in Rwanda-Burundi, Palestine, and other regions. The production and distribution of landmines continues, so do the experiments with the atomic bomb. Violence against the defenceless and weak is taking place in all parts of the world.

- + What is my/our reaction to this contemplation of reality?
- + Where do I/we need conversion to be a man or woman of peace?
- + How do I/we put into practice our spiritual experience for building justice and peace?

The answer must first be an individual one, but it should be brought into our CLC groups for discernment and for action.

We have to intensify our prayers - pray with a faith and a hope that can move mountains. But we ourselves also have to become more and more peaceful persons, messengers of peace, educators for peace. Each day we must start anew, in our families, communities, working places, parishes... everywhere, to bring the message of peace through our being, our way of acting and living our willingness to suffer without striking back. In addition, we must use our influence in our communities, in political parties, in any groups or organizations where we are influential, in mass media, and wherever possible...to bring about peace.

Jose Maria's (World CLC President) declaration mainly focuses on the situation in the Balkans and therefore, is first of all an urgent appeal to our European community and then to all others who seek and yearn for peace.

Mary, the Queen of Peace, will be with us!

For your personal prayer:

Isaiah 9:2-7 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace

Matthew 5:9	Blessed are the peacemakers.
Mark 9:49-50	For everyone will be salted with fire...
Luke 1:77-79	...To guide our feet into the way of peace.
Gal. 5:22	...the fruit of the Spirit is love, peace...
Eph. 2:14-17	For HE is our peace...



**World CLC Day - March 25, 1996**  
**UNITED BY OUR VOCATION... THAT THEY MAY BE ONE...**

The World CLC Day in 1995 was centred on the basic question: what do we mean by Christian Life Community? Using the Ignatian Examen as instrument we proposed a revision of our attitudes, looking attentively at our countries, our societies and the most urgent needs around us. With the help of the Holy Spirit we tried to define concrete steps called for in our mission field. As an Ignatian community, the particular vocation of CLC within the Church is founded on the profound apostolic sense that it wants to give to its existence. This implies being attentive to the signs of the times and offering ourselves continuously to be where Jesus most needs us.

This particular vocation is not to be lived in isolation. We recognize the need to strengthen our ties with others, to unite our lives with all those who experience a similar way of life. We learn this "koinonia," implying fraternity, friendship, and community from the first Christians who **"remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and to prayers"** (Acts 2:42).

Jesus dedicated a large part of his public life to forming the **"Community of the Twelve,"** the first Christian community. He makes the **Father known** to them, teaches them **God's plan**, educated them with **his wisdom** and perhaps, what is most important: he takes care of them, with a special care that is rooted in his Love. In John 17, Jesus prays to the Father for those he loves. While he is with them he has cared for them and **"not one is lost."** But his concern is for the future. He entreats the Father to protect them from the **Evil one** and prays that **"they may all be one."**

How often did Jesus have to intervene to call the disciple's attention to their attitudes? The discussion of...**who is the greatest** is a human attitude we know so well, but Jesus taught **the Twelve** and teaches us: **...Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all...Mark 9:35.**

This brings us back to our community. In Hong Kong 1994 we deeply experienced the beauty and consolation of **being one in His Spirit**, to be a **COMMUNITY IN MISSION united by the same vocation.**

To be one does not necessarily mean that we are all of the same opinion or always in agreement. Real love always shows itself in the readiness to "have it out" with each other and in the capability to learn from another and to teach one another. This is the richness of our diversity both in cultures and in social backgrounds. All of us have to give and to receive. None of us owns the whole truth, but united we have a much broader vision of ourselves, our community and the world around us. In Mark 9:49-50 we read:

**"For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."**

Doesn't this word of Jesus express beautifully **how we should be** and how we should **be one**? There is a tension in this picture of fire, salt, and peace, but peace is born out of suffering, and it is, in the end, a gift of the Spirit. Just as the meaning of Ignatian **Indifference** is very different from what "the world" usually understands with this word, so is our **PEACE** not a false compromise or a superficial harmony, but the oneness of our body and mind with the **"will of the Father."** This is what the mission is all about: **"To fulfil the will of the one who has sent me."**

The more we grow individually and as a missionary community the more the enemy will tempt us into division. Either we are tempted to live in and be content with false harmony or to go to the other extreme of wasting our energy in stubbornly defending our own opinion, not listening to the guidance of the Spirit. Both of these attitudes prevent us from **MISSION.**

Through our Ignatian way of life we have the instruments to use and all the help we need, not to fall in the enemy's traps. Above all we have the Lord's prayer for us: **"...that they may be one as we are one...so that the world may believe."** Isn't it a great challenge, and even more so, a wonderful gift that the belief or non-belief of the world depends so much on us. We have within us the healing power that this world so urgently needs, the love and peace so dearly longed for by many, if only we are one.

**A few suggestions for your personal prayer and reflection and also for sharing in the community:**

**WORLD COMMUNITY NEWS AND VIEWS**

- + How do I/we deal with conflicts, tensions in my family/group /working place? Can I oppose others? Can I accept criticism? Can I freely express anger, sadness, joy? Can I admit failure and ask forgiveness? How difficult is it for me to forgive myself and others? Can I work as a team?
- + Where do I need healing/conversion to be a person of peace and so **"to fulfil the will of the one who sent me?"**
- + St. Ignatius tells us that *Union with Christ leads to union with the Church* (G.P.6). This union is expressed through our relationship with our companions. What can I/we do to make our local/national communities more and more a place where this is lived and experienced?
- + What can I/we do to bring about this *union through our vocation* on all levels of our World community? In other words, what steps can I/we take in our local community to help develop the sense of belonging to a National Community which is part of the World Community?

### ***Other World Community News:***

Roswitha Cooper of the World CLC Secretariat passed along a prayer request from Fransico Pena, President of CLC Ecuador for a member of the Ecuador community...

*Best wishes from Ecuador! I am writing to let you know that a CLC companion of ours...has a very serious liver condition. His name is Ricardo Rojas, 32 years old; he is married to Carmen Berrezueta and has an 11 month old baby...I ask for your prayers that the Lord comfort him and his family...Locally they are making contacts so that in case it is feasible, he can be transported to a hospital in the U.S. or in Europe in order to get a clinical, surgical diagnosis. If he recuperates, the one possibility to save him may be through a liver transplant, which is extremely expensive and cannot be done in Ecuador.*

***Consider using the following article as the basis for personal reflection and then for the Group Reflection portion of a meeting...***

**SPIRITUALITY**

### ***A Model which expresses the Gospel from a New Perspective***

Bibby in *Fragmented Gods* shows that Christians in Canada have moved from a position of commitment to one of consumption with respect to the Church. That is, Christians now sense little allegiance to the Church, but with a consumerist or shopper's mentality, take the Baptism, Wedding and Funeral part of the Church and leave the rest. The consumer attitude about goods and services is being applied to religion. People want an abridged version of religion with little or no commitment and openness to religious influence. So our life embracing religion, a victim or this piece meal approach, is being dominated by our present consumerist culture.

When the Church speaks out on political or social issues an internal division is exposed. The elite corps of leaders make statements but the grass roots don't follow. Where was the Church's clout at Oka or with the Sunday shopping issue?

The problem is that people from our culture buying into pieces of Christianity may dictate the content and forms of faith they are interested in. (The customer is always right.) So the remainder of dedicated Christians may be persuaded to attempt a compromise to keep the attention of the uncommitted. In attempting to translate the Christian message for New Age people Christians may transform it altogether. "He who sups with the devil had better have a long spoon." So Jesus, who wishes a radical conversion on our parts, may be diluted to something more comfortable.

Using "that old time religion" approach to bring about renewal does not work because it carries along with it a cultural inflexibility. The old content is valuable; that is, experiential religion, tradition beliefs, the

importance of Scripture, private prayer, personal morality and Christian community etc.. However, the older mentality sees Church attendance as the litmus test of commitment and is stuck with inflexibility around such matters as sexuality, the ordination of women and lay involvement.

Rather than trying to adapt to a new culture, the tendency is to ignore it, or even see it as an adversary to be battled as "the world." Also, the traditional approach shuns social issues and political influence. It is unable to translate the old product in order to transmit it. Self is denigrated in an attempt to be "humble." We know now from psychology this teaching is an unhealthy one. We should have known this of course, since God commands us to *"love our neighbour as we love ourselves."*

### **A New Approach to meet our Modern Situation**

I would like to suggest a solution in which CLC's can participate. This would involve the Parish becoming a "community of communities" with people forming a network with others in the culture, to influence it, by bringing the image of Christ, the Divine Lover.

Modern people still need answers to the fundamental questions of life such as, life's purpose and ultimate meaning. Living has become complex and so people feel worthless. Materialism, rather than kill the Spirit has stimulated the need for Spirituality. We offer, in Christianity, God given answers to fundamental questions that compliment the limitations of a person's reasoning.

To connect with the uncommitted Christian with the consumer mentality we have to meet them where they still have a connection with the Church: family, baptism, marriage and funerals. During these times, rather than allowing the baptism, wedding or funeral to be a singular one hour event, it needs to be expanded to include sessions before and "celebrations" after preferably with others who are going through a similar experience.

Let us assume we are talking about a baptismal event. CLCs can be involved in the preparatory sessions with the new parents to give them a review of the Gospel message. A post-baptismal celebration would be a chance for additional input followed by a six week "check up" for additional spiritual exercises, retreats etc.. The purpose of this approach is to have the participants, through their own prayer, develop a relationship with God so that they can:

1. have their own experience of God's love, healing, worship and direction,
2. recognize their need for each other, and
3. act on their growing desire for Christian community.

So people are brought together with others who are in similar circumstances as themselves. This is done to create community. We humans need to be in relation to others where we can love and be loved. Our membership in CLC allows us a chance to share the more intimate life in which we tell our story and care for the other members by listening to their sharing. Christians have always stressed fellowship, exchanges and communication in order to share in Christ's compassion, tears and joy.

**Peter Peloso**  
**Hidden Life and Holy Ground CLC, Elora, Ontario**

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**Many thanks...**to the **Ecclesia CLC** of Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario who sold Advent candles and the small Advent prayer/reflection booklet as a fundraiser for our National CLC community.

They invited local CLCers, friends and youth to contribute their reflections on the readings for the days of Advent, and asked that they suggest a question or action that surfaced from their prayer. They sent our copies of this booklet free of charge to CLCs across Canada!

The booklet was extremely useful and an excellent way to unite communities across the country! What a great service done for the National Community!

They have had many requests to repeat the endeavour, using the Lenten readings, gathering reflections from communities or individual members across Canada but as they will shortly lose three members for a while feel that they are unable to take on this project. If perhaps, your community might be willing to take on such a venture please let them know your thoughts. You could contact Fran Morrison of the Ecclesia Community at 123 Renaud Dr., Waterloo, Ontario, N0B 2G0.

## **DID YOU KNOW?...**

**Congratulations** go out to **Rita Schnarr** of **Our Lady of Lourdes CLC** in Waterloo who was given a special award on November 7, 1995 by the Province of Ontario for 20 Years of faithful service to the patients at Freeport Health Care Village.

The English translation of the Spanish language **Youth CLC Guide** developed in Latin America has been translated by **Milton Garcia** a graduate of St. Paul's High School of Winnipeg. Milton was in a youth CLC when he was at St. Paul's. The translation was commissioned by **Youth and Young Adult Ecclesial Assistant**, seminarian **Alan Fogarty sj**, who has sent it to **Fr. Drew Sotelo sj** in San Francisco for final editing. It should be available soon!

That **Fr. Raymond Roussin, sm** formerly the chaplain of St. Paul's College and Group Guide for many Young Adult CLCs there is now **Bishop Raymond Roussin, sm** of the Gravelbourg Diocese in Southern Saskatchewan! If there are people in that region interested in CLC, I am sure that he would be very supportive of their efforts!

That the **Phase III Manual** which is a guide to **The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius** in Group form (basically a concise adaptation of the Annotation 19 approach) is **now available**. Write to the National Office if you are interested in a copy. The cost is \$20. each!

**+ CLC IS A WAY OF LIFE +**