

**CLC CANADA  
GROUP GUIDE  
RESOURCE MANUAL  
2023**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**TABLE OF CONTENTS** ..... 2

**PREFACE** ..... 10  
 PURPOSE, HOPE, HISTORY of GG DEVELOPMENT GUIDE MANUAL ..... 10

**SECTION ONE** ..... 18

1.1 CHARISMS OF GROUP GUIDES, IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY, AND CHRISTIAN LIFE  
 COMMUNITY ..... 19

1.2 THE NATURE OF CLC GROUP GUIDE LEADERSHIP ..... 23

1.3 THE IDENTITY OF A CLC GROUP GUIDE ..... 27

1.4 THE ROLE OF THE GROUP GUIDE ..... 28

1.5 CLC COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP ROLES: THE GROUP COORDINATOR AND THE  
 GROUP GUIDE ..... 30

1.6 THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GROUP GUIDE THROUGH THE PROCESS  
 OF GROWTH IN CLC ..... 34

A. PRE-COMMUNITY GROUP FORMATION ..... 34

B. THROUGH THE STAGES OF GROWTH ..... 35

STAGE I: PERIOD OF RECEPTION ..... 35

STAGE II: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR VOCATION..... 36

STAGE III: DISCERNMENT OF VOCATION ..... 37

STAGE IV: APOSTOLIC DISCERNMENT ..... 38

C. THROUGH THE PHASES OF FORMATION ..... 39

D. GROUP GUIDE’S RESPONSIBILITIES IN PHASE 1 MANUAL ..... 40

1.7 THE ROLE OF GUIDE IN THE MEETING PROCESS..... 42

A. MEETING FRAMEWORK..... 42

B. THE CLC MEETING FORMAT AND PROCESS IN PART 1 ..... 43

1.8 THE ROLE OF THE PROCESS GUIDE IN A LARGE ASSEMBLY ..... 45

A. WHAT IS AN ASSEMBLY PROCESS GUIDE?..... 45

B. THE PROCESS GUIDE’S ROLE IN A LARGE ASSEMBLY ..... 47

C. A PRAYER..... 48

<b>SECTION TWO .....</b>	<b>50</b>
2.1 THE GROUP GUIDE, CLC AND THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION .....	51
A.    IGNATIUS' THREE-PART VISION .....	51
B.    THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES .....	54
C.    THE DYNAMIC OF THE FOUR WEEKS of the SPRITUAL EXERCISES.....	56
D.    PRAYING THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES.....	58
2.2 TWO KEY PRAYER EXERCISES.....	61
A.    PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION .....	61
B.    TWO STANDARDS EXERCISE: THE SIGN AND STRATEGY OF JESUS .....	62
2.3 CONTEMPLATING THE THIRD WEEK EXERCISES.....	68
2.4 CLC DEVELOPMENT AND THE ACTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT .....	69
2.5 A COMMUNAL SPIRITUALITY.....	72
A.    SPIRITUALITY IS MULTIDIMENSIONAL.....	72
B.    THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF OUR CLC VOCATION .....	73
C.    THE FOUR SEASONS AND THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES .....	74
2.6 WHAT IT MEANS TO HAVE FAITH .....	77
A.    FAITH IS... .....	77
B.    ACTING WITH HOPE IN THE WORLD TODAY .....	79

<b>SECTION THREE .....</b>	<b>80</b>
3.1 DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES #1 - #9 .....	81
A.    DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #1 .....	81
B.    DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #2 .....	85
C.    DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #3 .....	91
D.    DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #4 .....	96
E.    DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #5 .....	99
F.    DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #6 .....	103
G.    DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #7 .....	107
H.    DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #8 .....	114
I.    DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #9 .....	119
3.2 THE CLC CHARISM.....	125
A.    CLC CHARISM: VISION, COMMUNITY, MISSION .....	125
B.    THE PURPOSE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY .....	126
3.3 OUR COMMON MISSION .....	130
A.    THREE AREAS OF MISSION .....	130
B.    CHRIST AND SOCIAL REALITY .....	131
FOR A MORE JUST WORLD.....	132
WITNESSING TO OUR WAY OF LIFE .....	132
STANDING AS PROPHETS IN OUR WORLD .....	132
FORMATION THROUGH EXPERIENCE AND ACTION .....	133
NETWORKING AND COLLABORATING .....	133
C.    CHRIST AND CULTURE.....	133
D.    CHRIST IN DAILY LIFE.....	135

E. MEANS FOR MISSION .....	137
3.4 A REFLECTION .....	139

**SECTION FOUR ..... 140**

4.1 COMMUNITY LIFE DIMENSION .....	141
A. COME AND SEE.....	141
B. CHRISTIAN MATURITY THROUGH CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY .....	142
4.2 STEPS, STAGES AND PROCESSES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT .....	143
A. STEPS IN GROUP DEVELOPMENT.....	143
B. THE FIVE FORMATION STAGES and PROCESSES in CLC CANADA .....	145
STAGES of CONTINUED GROWTH .....	146
GOALS.....	146
PROCESSES.....	147
C. THE CYCLE OF GROWTH THROUGH THE DYNAMICS AND THE GRACES OF THE SP. EX.....	147
D. CONNECTING THE STAGES OF CLC DEVELOPMENT .....	152
4.3 PROCESSES FOR ESTABLISHING CLC GROUPS .....	154
A. THE EARLY STAGE OF CLC DEVELOPMENT .....	154
B. GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES .....	156
C. FAQ - WHAT DO WE DO WHEN AND IF...? .....	159
4.4 DYNAMICS OF A DEVELOPING CLC .....	166
A. THE GIFT OF SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION .....	166
B. EVOLUTION, PURPOSE, IMPORTANCE OF SECOND ROUND SHARING ..	169
C. PRAYER LED BY THE SPIRIT .....	171
4.5 SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION .....	172
A. PURPOSE.....	172
B. ACTIVE LISTENING AND INTENTIONAL SPEAKING.....	173
C. IMPORTANCE of CONTEMPLATIVE LISTENING: 2ND ROUND SHARING .	176
4.6 'TOWARDS' MISSION IN EACH PART OF A CLC MEETING.....	178
A. TOWARDS MISSION' IN PART I OF THE CLC MEETING.....	178
B. TOWARDS MISSION IN PART II OF THE CLC MEETING .....	180
C. 'TOWARDS' MISSION IN PART III OF THE CLC MEETING.....	180
D. CONTEMPLATIVE LISTENING FOR MISSION IN THE SECOND ROUND ..	181
E. DISCERNING THE MOVEMENT OF SPIRITS IN THE SECOND ROUND ....	182
4.7 GUIDING THROUGH PARTS II AND III OF A CLC MEETING .....	183
A. GENERAL COMMENTS PART II & III of a CLC MEETING.....	183
B. EVALUATION AND APPROPRIATION: CONTEMPLATIVE ACTIVITIES .....	187
4.8 THE ROLE OF THE GUIDE IN THE STAGES OF 3, 4, 5, 6 .....	190

**SECTION FIVE..... 193**

5.1 DIMENSION OF MISSION .....	194
--------------------------------	-----

A.	GENERAL PRINCIPLE EIGHT: COMMUNAL APOSTOLATE .....	194
B.	CHARITY AND JUSTICE .....	195
C.	WHAT IS JUSTICE?.....	197
D.	DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING of INJUSTICE .....	198
5.2	PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR (GP4 and GP8) .....	202
A.	READING SCRIPTURE THROUGH THE EYES OF VULNERABILITY .....	202
B.	A SPIRITUALITY FOR HARD TIMES .....	204
5.3	BECOMING AGENTS OF CHANGE .....	215
A.	COMMUNAL-SOCIAL SPIRITUALITY: ENGAGING ISSUES OF INJUSTICE	215
B.	CHARITY AND JUSTICE: BRINGING THE SOCIAL MISSION TOGETHER.	216
1.	JUSTICE AND CHARITY.....	217
2.	THE "TWO FEET" OF SOCIAL MINISTRY.....	220
3.	TWO BLANK FEET .....	221
SESSION I.....		223
SESSION II .....		225
5.4	CLC FORMATION FOR SOCIAL MINISTRY .....	229
A.	FIVE CRITERIA FOR MISSION .....	229
B.	AN IGNATIAN APPROACH: EDUCATION FOR RESPONDING TO INJUSTICE	230
C.	SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND PRAYER AND ACTION .....	234
D.	INDIVIDUAL MISSION .....	239
5.5	THE PURPOSE OF CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY.....	242
A.	FOR THE GROWTH OF GOD'S KINGDOM.....	242
B.	TOWARDS AN APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY: A COMMUNAL PROCESS .....	245
A	COMMUNAL SUPPORT-EVALUATION PROCESS .....	246
C.	COMMUNITY FOR OTHERS.....	249
D.	OSCAR ROMARO – WHO WILL SPEAK? .....	252
E.	COMMUNAL SPIRITUAL FREEDOM PRAYER EXERCISE.....	253
F.	FAITH AND COMPASSION.....	255

**SECTION SIX .....** **258**

6.1	DISCERNMENT .....	259
A.	THE GIFT OF DISCERNMENT.....	259
B.	THE 'WHY' OF DISCERNMENT .....	262
C.	DISCERNMENT – AN INSIGHT.....	264
D.	DISCERNMENT IN A NUTSHELL.....	265
E.	DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS .....	267
F.	HOW DO I KNOW I'M EXPERIENCING GOD?.....	269
G.	EVIL COMES CLOAKED AS AN ANGEL OF LIGHT .....	273
6.2	IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY AND DECISION-MAKING.....	275
A.	GOD IN ALL THINGS.....	275
B.	THREE PERSPECTIVES INFLUENCING DECISION-MAKING.....	277
C.	DISCERNING PERSONAL INTERIOR MOVEMENT OF SPIRITS .....	278

D.	SIX STEPS IN DISCERNING: A SIGNIFICANT COMMUNAL DECISION...	280
6.3	SPIRITUAL INTIMACY AND COMMUNITY .....	283
A.	MOMENT OF DECISION - DIRECTIONS FOR PRAYER.....	283
B.	JESUS TEACHES HIS FOLLOWERS .....	285
6.4	SPIRITUAL FREEDOM .....	287
A.	INTRODUCTION.....	287
B.	WHAT IS SPIRITUAL FREEDOM?.....	288
C.	THREE KEY EXERCISES AND THE DECISION-MAKING DYNAMIC .....	289
D.	COMMUNAL SPIRITUAL FREEDOM PRAYER EXERCISE.....	290
6.5	DISCERNMENT/DECISION MAKING: THEORY - PROCESS - PROCEDURES.....	292
A.	MOVING TOWARDS GREATER FREEDOM .....	292
B.	THREE PHASES AND FIVE STAGES: THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS	295
STEP 1	"WALKING AROUND" THE QUESTION.....	296
STEP 2	CHECK THE ASSUMPTIONS AND/OR DETERMINE THE CRITERIA....	296
STEP 3	FOCUSING .....	297
STEP 4	PRAY AND WAIT FOR THE CHOICE TO EMERGE OR TO BE GIVEN...	297
STEP 5.	SEEK AND PRAY FOR CONFIRMATION.....	298
C.	THE COMMUNAL APOSTOLIC DISCERNMENT MEETING PROCESS .....	300
PART I	OF A MEETING.....	300
PART II	OF A MEETING.....	302
D.	CONSENSUS IN A COMMUNAL DECISION .....	303
E.	DISCERN - SEND - SUPPORT - EVALUATE (DSSE) .....	304
F.	EVALUATING THE DSSE COMMUNAL PROCESS OF A GROUP .....	308

**SECTION SEVEN..... 309**

7.1	GROUP DYNAMICS.....	310
A.	PATIENT TRUST .....	310
B.	GUIDING TO HELP WITH GROUP DYNAMICS.....	311
C.	THE ROLE OF THE GROUP GUIDE .....	312
D.	PAYING ATTENTION TO THE DYNAMICS IN A GROUP .....	314
7.2	POWER.....	316
A.	PRINCIPLES FOR UNDERSTANDING POWER AND FOR ITS LEGITIMATE USE....	316
B.	EXERCISE: CLUES ABOUT WHAT MAKES A GOOD GROUP .....	318
C.	GROUP NORMS.....	319
7.3	WORD OF GOD/WILL OF GOD AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE .....	320
A.	CHRISIAN LIFE AND SPIRITUAL LIFE .....	320
B.	APOSTOLIC SPIRITUALITY.....	321
C.	ELEMENTS IN A SPIRITIAL EXERCISE OF THE CORPORATE PERSON....	322
7.4	PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT .....	323
A.	OUR GIFT TO THE WORLD - OUR RESPONSIBILITY.....	323
B.	THE SEVEN ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT.....	324
C.	COMMUNAL AWARENESS EXAMEN.....	326

7.5 GUIDE LISTENING AND DISCERNING .....	328
A. THROUGH THE LENS OF COMMUNAL SPIRITUALITY .....	328
B. WHAT DO GUIDES LISTEN FOR AND DISCERN? .....	329
C. GUIDING CLC APOSTOLIC COMMUNITIES: COMMUNAL MOVEMENT OF SPIRITS .....	331
7.6 WORKING THROUGH CONFLICT .....	335
A. CONFLICT HAPPENS .....	335
B. SKILLS NEEDED FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICT .....	336
C. WORKING WITH CONFLICT .....	339
D. PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS IN GROUPS .....	344
E. COMING TO PEACE.....	345

**SECTION EIGHT ..... 347**

8.1 BEST PRACTICES.....	348
A. AN UNDERSTANDING .....	348
B. THE CRAFT OF SACRED LISTENING .....	348
8.2 FACILITATING MOTIVATION OF MEMBERS IN A GROUP .....	350
A. MOTIVATING MEMBERS .....	350
B. MOTIVATING AND ENERGIZING A COMMUNITY .....	352
8.3 CASE STUDIES OF CLC IN DIFFERENT STAGES OF GROWTH AND DECLINE .....	353
A. SETTING THE STAGE.....	353
B. CASE STUDY 1 – PRE-COMMUNITY .....	354
C. CASE STUDY 2 – INITIATION.....	356
D. CASE STUDY 3 – REDEMPTION (PHASE A).....	358
E. CASE STUDY 3 – REDEMPTION (PHASE B).....	359
F. CASE STUDY 4 – DEEPENING .....	360
G. CASE STUDY 5 – APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY .....	362
H. CASE STUDY 6 – DISCERNING MISSION .....	364
8.4 CONTINUOUSLY CALLED AND CHALLENGED .....	366
8.5 NOTES, REFLECTIONS AND PRAYER EXERCISES .....	370
A. THE CALL OF CHRIST THE KING.....	370
B. THE TWO STANDARDS AND A MEDITATION ON THE TWO LEADERS....	370
C. THE TWO STANDARDS: A MEDITATION ON TWO LEADERS, TWO STRATEGIES.....	371
D. JESUS’ PERSONAL CALL TO GROUP GUIDES .....	373
E. A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CLC GENERAL PRINCIPLES .....	374
F. MEDITATING ON THE CLC GENERAL PRINCIPLES 1-9.....	375
GENERAL PRINCIPLE 1 (Preamble).....	376
GENERAL PRINCIPLE 2 .....	377
GENERAL PRINCIPLE 3 .....	378
GENERAL PRINCIPLE 4 .....	379
GENERAL PRINCIPLE 5 .....	381
GENERAL PRINCIPLE 6 (SENSE OF THE CHURCH) .....	382

GENERAL PRINCIPLE 7 .....	383
GENERAL PRINCIPLE 8 .....	384
GENERAL PRINCIPLE 9 .....	386
8.6 THE CLC CHARISM: EIGHT PRAYER EXERCISES .....	389
PRAYER EXERCISE #1.....	390
PRAYER EXERCISE #2.....	391
PRAYER EXERCISE #3.....	392
PRAYER EXERCISE #4.....	393
PRAYER EXERCISE #5.....	394
PRAYER EXERCISE #6.....	395
PRAYER EXERCISE #7.....	396
PRAYER EXERCISE #8.....	397
8.7 SENDING FORTH CELEBRATIONS .....	400
A. FOR A MEMBER WHO HAD DISCERNED A MISSION OR MINISTRY.....	400
B. CLC BLESSING FOR ONE WHO HAS DISCERNED TO LEAVE CLC.....	401

**SECTION NINE ..... 405**

9.1 THE APOSTLE: SHAPED TO GOD’S HAND.....	406
A. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR GROUP GUIDES.....	406
B. REQUIRED FORMATION OF THE GUIDE .....	407
C. RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT GROUP GUIDE LEADERSHIP.....	409
9.2 FIVE LEVELS OF RESPONSES WHEN COMMUNICATING TO INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS.....	411
9.3 CHARISM AND MISSION OF THE CLC GROUP GUIDE .....	415
A. UNDERSTANDING CHARISM AND MISSION.....	415
B. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ROLE OF THE CLC GROUP GUIDE.....	415
C. LISTENING, INTERVENTION AND JUSTICE.....	417
9.4 STRUCTURE, PROCESS, INTENT OF AN IGNATIAN LAY COMMUNITY .....	420
A. DIAGRAM OF AN IGNATIAN LAY WAY OF STRUCTURE/PROCESS.....	420
B. WORKING COLLABORATIVELY .....	423
C. CHURCH MODELS AND APOSTOLIC STYLES .....	426
9.5 GROUP GUIDE FORMATION: THE SPIRITUAL AND COMMUNITY DIMENSION .....	430
9.6 GROUP GUIDE FORMATIONAL PROCESSES .....	435
A. THE FIRST CLC CANADA GROUP GUIDE 7-DAY COURSE HELD IN GUELPH, ONTARIO ON MARCH 1985 .....	435
B. BASIC TOPICS IN GROUP GUIDE WORKSHOP IN GUELPH ONT. 1993 ..	436
C. BASIC OUTLINE of CLC MEXICO GG FORMATION PLAN.....	437
D. GROUP GUIDE NATIONAL FORMATION 2005.....	441
WORKSHOP I.....	441
WORKSHOP II.....	442
WORKSHOP III.....	443
E. A REGIONAL GROUP GUIDE FORMATION WORKSHOP .....	445
9.7 CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES OF A CLC GROUP GUIDE.....	446



9.8 CLC AND THE MARIAN DIMENSION.....	452
9.9 ADDITIONAL NOTES .....	456
A.    DISCERNMENT AND CONTEMPLATION .....	456
B.    INTERPRETING AND PRAYING THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES.....	457

**SECTION TEN ..... 460**

10.1 SUPPORTING GROUP GUIDES IN MISSION .....	461
A.    DSSE .....	461
B.    PEER MENTORING AS A DSSE APPROACH .....	461
10.2 SEVEN FACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE PEER GROUP MENTORING .....	463
WHAT MAKES A GOOD PEER MENTORING GROUP?.....	463
10.3 PEER GROUP MENTORING: TWO DISTINCT PROCESSES.....	466
A.    CLARIFICATION OF TERMS FOR GROUP GUIDING.....	466
B.    BASIC FACILITATION GUIDELINES FOR THE TWO DISTINCT PROCESSES.....	467
10.4 A PEER GROUP SUPERVISION SESSION: ONE WAY OF PROCEEDING .....	469
10.5 A PEER GROUP CONSULTATION PROCESS: ONE WAY OF PROCEEDING .....	472
10.6 ADDENDUM: ONE GUIDED PROCESS FOR SUPERVISION OR CONSULTATION .....	475

**SECTION ELEVEN ..... 478**

11.1 REFERENCES AND RESOURCES FOR GROUP GUIDE RESOURCE MANUAL.....	479
A.    ON CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY CANADA WEBSITE .....	479
B.    WORLD CLC DOCUMENTS .....	479
C.    REFERENCES FOR ARTICLES .....	480
D.    ADDITIONAL RESOURCES .....	482

# PREFACE

## PURPOSE, HOPE, HISTORY of GG DEVELOPMENT GUIDE MANUAL

*'Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.'*

The **PURPOSE** of this Resource Manual is to gather resources and practises aimed at assisting those who are called to be Group Guides - well-formed servant assistants for all those called to the CLC vocational journey.

CLC General Norm #13 states:

*"Special attention must be given  
at the world and national levels  
to ensure that all local communities be helped to live a genuine CLC process  
with a well-formed guide and an efficient co-ordinator'.*

As with the CLC Leaders' Manual published in 2020, our hope is that this updated Group Guide Manual will further help Canada's CLC Group Guides find instruction, affirmation, and helpful resources for their ministry, at whatever level of service they offer themselves and their gifts. The format used for this Manual is similar to that used for the Leaders' Manual.

Building on the work done by earlier CLC formators in Canada, this GG Resource Manual was developed so that access to GG formation would be more readily available

at a time when in-person workshops and GG Formation courses are becoming increasingly expensive and time inefficient.

The HOPE for this Resource Manual is that:

1. The Manual will provide active Group Guides with easy access to relevant resources in the process of guiding a group through various stages of CLC development.
2. Regional Formators will be able to adapt formation processes to accommodate local needs of the Group Guides, or potential Group Guides, in consideration of family and work schedules, economic travel, environmentally sustainable footprint, and varying levels of existing formation.
3. This particular Manual, when twinned with the Leaders' Manual, will be the outcome of an intentional desire to gather, in one place, many of the various resources, tools and affirmations used in supporting CLC Canada Guide formation since 1985. We remind Group Guides that for each topic areas in the Sections of this Manual, there may be corresponding articles covering the same topic area in the Leaders' Manual. Therefore, we strongly encourage the Group Guides to become familiar with the Leaders' Manual.

In selecting the contents of this revised Group Guide Resource Manual, we have been influenced primarily by the perceived needs of Group Guides who are tasked with the *immediate and ongoing guidance of the development of CLC groups* in Canada. As well, effort has been made to ensure that all basic guide training information, in this Manual, is based on approved CLC criteria, guidelines and universal principles.

<b>Preface</b>	the preface outlines the CLC World and Canadian history of Group Guide development
<b>Section One</b>	clarifies the nature of CLC Group Guide leadership describing responsibilities and gifts needed
<b>Section Two</b>	offers materials related to the three dimensions (pillars) of CLC with a focus on Spirituality
<b>Section Three</b>	presents World CLC fundamental directional documents
<b>Section Four</b>	offers materials related to the dimension of Community
<b>Section Five</b>	offers materials related to the dimension of Mission

- Section Six** proposes ways of Communal Discernment for mission as fundamental to CLC's existence
- Section Seven** identifies or describes some key tools or instruments in working with group dynamics and offers CLC processes particularly in dealing with conflict resolution
- Section Eight** suggests best practices, case studies and prayer exercises to assist leaders and groups in working with CLC materials or processes
- Section Nine** explores Guide formation within the CLC way of life, structure and institution
- Section Ten** deals with the area of Group Guide mentoring, peer supervision and peer consultation.
- Section Eleven** is a catalogue of World, National and Regional documentation for further and more in-depth GG study and formation

Having group guidance by well-trained Guides, from a beginning inquiry about the Christian Life Community (CLC) to a full engagement and commitment as an apostolic community in mission, is strongly recommended.

*'Forming Guides is to communicate a spirit  
 ... to form attitudes... to transmit some techniques...  
 We accept that we will never be formed enough,  
 because we see in the experience a dynamic factor of growing.  
 This is why we are able to take risks (responsibly),  
 and specifically, to take the risk of guiding a group,  
 while we commit ourselves to be in permanent formation.  
 We see this permanent formation as an internal,  
 slow, integrated, and gradual process.  
 Therefore, we assume that nobody fulfils the requirements of the ideal,  
 but that all are willing to enter upon a journey of discovery in faith  
 and take the necessary steps, small though they be.'*

*Progressio Supplement # 33 pg. 8*

A Group Guide welcomes continuing formation in order to deepen their proper understanding of the ongoing regular meetings of Groups whether at the Local, Regional or National levels. Being well-versed in the content of the CLC Canada Formation Manuals, in group processes, in the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises and the Social teachings of the Church, facilitates the Group Guide's ability to be constructively present at regular local meetings. Their knowledge, wisdom and experience will help to instill the spirit of both the 500-year-old treasure of the CLC way of life and the spirit of commitment to ongoing discernment of the Trinity's guidance at World, National or Regional General Assemblies.

It is also recommended to provide peer group support through occasional meetings among the guides themselves. At these meetings, guides can enrich and support each other through sharing their experiences and helpful practices.

## **HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF GROUP GUIDES**

CLC's historical roots go back to 1540 when Pope Paul III approved the founding of the Society of Jesus. From the very beginning, Ignatius and his companions invited lay persons to cooperate in the apostolate and even assume the responsibility of some specific programmes by inviting them to form groups, sharing with them the same spirituality, and introducing the experience of the Spiritual Exercises.

Based on these widely spread experiences, a young Belgian Jesuit, Jean Leunis, who met with Ignatius in 1556 and was assigned to the Roman College, created the first Marian Congregation with students of this institution. The early 16<sup>th</sup> C documents and the Common Rules of 1587 reflected the spirit of Leunis' vision: the membership would decide their own Rules, make all major decisions, elect their own group leaders including the Jesuit in charge (father-protector). *The term 'father-protector' emphasised a common responsibility not a hierarchical difference.*

By the time of the writing of The Rules of 1910, there was a reversal of understanding of the words, 'father-protector'. The distinctive hierarchical term '**director**' was substituted. In these years the **Marian Congregations** (known as Sodalities in some countries), genuine lay associations, became highly structured and hierarchical with a Jesuit as the Director named by the S.J. Provincial Superior. In the 1967 Vatican II renewal phase, the original spirit of intent of a 'father-protector' was reclaimed and eventually renamed '**ecclesiastical assistant**'.

In a 1977 *Progressio Supplement #9*, Fr Juan Miguel Letturia, S.J. outlines the guidelines aimed at assisting ecclesiastical assistants of CLC - specifically for those who serve as a guide for a community. He emphasises that the most important key to a guide's assistance is his/her own Christian living.

From the earliest years of CLC development, Jesuits and other clergy provided much of the guidance as well as serving as Ecclesiastical Assistants. Often, the guide's attention was divided among many groups as well as their various mission and ministry responsibilities for, and within, their own religious community. In some countries, the lack of Jesuit presence presented a challenge and an opportunity for Ignatian formed Religious Brothers and Sisters to step forward and offer a valued accompaniment to help grow CLC groups. It took longer for CLC groups, in some countries, to be open to having trained lay men and women to act as Group Guides.

In 1981, The Survey (World CLC Formation Process Publication) noted that *'as far as the guide is concerned, independently of whether this person is a priest, deacon, religious, or lay person, the essential thing is that he/she should fulfil the role of guide as effectively as possible'...* again, affirming the importance of the guide's own faith life. The book outlines the importance of a guide from the pre-community stage as 'being at the centre of group life' until the emergence of natural group leaders to the group guide's changing role at various stages of a group's life.

The following excerpts from *Progressio Supplement #33 Formation of Group Guides*, followed up on emphasizing the connection between a well-formed guide and a well-formed CLC group:

Pg. 20] *'The General Principles are a very rich text inspired by current theology and the tradition of CLC. They are, however, expressed in a very condensed form. Their richness becomes evident only after careful reading and reflection.*

*Whoever reads them carefully, and this is what a guide should do, will realize how their spirituality flows from the Kingdom and the Incarnation contemplations of the Exercises.*

*Moreover, familiarity with the G.P. is a guarantee that the guide is not simply "doing his or her own thing" or assisting his or her own group, but collaborating with groups of lay people, helping them to become what they want to be and to live their vocation within the Church. This seems to be a basic attitude for a genuine guide, and one of its expressions is the knowledge, understanding and identification with the G.P.*

*Therefore, from the beginning of their service, guides should be helped to read the G.P. (basic formation). They should be helped as well to deepen, make their own and communicate the meaning of the G.P. on a permanent basis (on-going formation), knowing that there isn't a more authoritative statement of the CLC charism than that of the G.P. The lay and apostolic character of CLC, the sources of*

*our Spirituality and our means of spiritual growth should be stressed and deepened by the guides.*

Additionally, Supplement #33 affirms the importance of well-formed guides:

... [Pg. 10] *'For on-going formation the guide will find it most helpful to be rooted in a group as a member so as to receive 'fraternal help'. But it is essential to have some kind of supervision where this is possible, especially at the beginning stages. By supervision, we mean a relationship between a new guide and a more experienced one, either on a one-to-one basis or within a small group setting. The supervisor, by means of listening, confronting, and offering suggestions, is called to help other guides develop skills that enable a group to grow towards apostolic effectiveness.'*

---

In 1990, the delegates to the World General Assembly in Guadalajara approved the revised General Principles and General Norms. Specifically, #41 B recognized the role and value of Group Guides.

*'The guide, well formed in the Ignatian process of growth helps the community to discern the movements at work in the individuals and the community, and helps them to maintain a clear idea of the CLC goal and process. The guide assists the community and its co-ordinator to find and to use the means needed for the community's formation and its mission. The guide's participation in the life of the community is conditioned by the objectivity needed to carry out effectively the role of guide. The guide is chosen by the community with the approval of the national or regional community.'*

Once we have a clear idea about the role of the guide, it is easier to plan out the formation required. While there are certain universal guidelines/orientations, we must remember that formation must be linked to the local, regional and national context. There are a variety of practices whereby national communities offer formation to group guides. The formation programs may be comprised of a series of weekends or a series of evening sessions. Alternatively, the process could take on the form of an intensive course of several days together.

Since the first Group Guide course held at Loyola Retreat Centre in Guelph in 1985, the founders of CLC in Canada recognized the value and importance of Group Guide formation and also the necessity of their influence in the authentic development of communal discerning apostolic CLC groups. Considerable attention and effort in this area resulted in 'travelling formators' visiting and hosting formation courses for future Guides across Canada. During these early years, regional structures began to take shape beginning in Atlantic Region in 1999. CLC Regional Councils soon recognized the need for Formators, and eventually assumed responsibility to carry on with Local Group Guide Formation Processes.

Currently, many CLC National groups are engaged in developing resources and formation possibilities, but CLC has always been reminded to adapt language, structures and procedures to local culture and be attentive to the needs reflected from the signs of the times at the national or regional levels. For some time, it became clear that CLC Group Guides, or potential Group Guides throughout Canada, could now benefit from shared resources. Thus, in line with former Guide formation, the development of this latest Manual is 'Made in Canada'.

Please note that some articles will seem familiar as they, or a facsimile, may have been used in the Leaders' Manual. This was done intentionally to highlight the importance of the subject matter dealt with or, by providing a similar article on the same topic that may prove to be the one that is better understood. One of our desires is that this Resource Manual provide all, even beginners, with simple and clear profit in their Guide formation.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We gratefully acknowledge the early CLC group guide formation pioneers in Canada who offered their services in providing group guide training beginning with the first Guide Training Program held in Guelph, Ontario in 1985. They include *Fr. John English SJ, Peter Peloso, Barbara Peloso, Lois Zachariah, Kuruvila Zachariah, Gilles Michaud, and Jack Milan*. As outlined in the History component of this Section, shortly afterwards, Regions began to organize their own formation programs.

For some years now, CLC members have been expressing the need for a comprehensive resource manual for our National Group Guides. In collecting and presenting the many articles, documents and processes, we have not been able to identify all the authors. If you are able to definitively identify specific authors, please inform the CLC Canada National Formation Working Group.



We also wish to acknowledge the CLC members who have in so many ways assisted in developing this Resource Manual. Whether as authors of articles, advisors, proof-readers, typists, there was no task that was unneeded. We are grateful for the generosity of *Charlena Keenan-Bourque, Ruth Chipman, Pam Daigle, Kelsea Gillespie, Michelle Mahoney, Julia Donahoe-MacDougal, Beth Nicholas, Jane Abernethy-Parker, Elizabeth Poley, Karen Reeves; special mention, Pat Lawson.*

*Leah Michaud*

# SECTION ONE

1.1 CHARISMS OF GROUP GUIDES, IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY, AND CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY .....	19
1.2 THE NATURE OF CLC GROUP GUIDE LEADERSHIP .....	23
1.3 THE IDENTITY OF A CLC GROUP GUIDE .....	27
1.4 THE ROLE OF THE GROUP GUIDE .....	28
1.5 CLC COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP ROLES: THE GROUP COORDINATOR AND THE GROUP GUIDE .....	30
1.6 THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GROUP GUIDE THROUGH THE PROCESS OF GROWTH IN CLC .....	34
A.    PRE-COMMUNITY GROUP FORMATION .....	34
B.    THROUGH THE STAGES OF GROWTH .....	35
STAGE I: PERIOD OF RECEPTION .....	35
STAGE II: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR VOCATION.....	36
STAGE III: DISCERNMENT OF VOCATION .....	37
STAGE IV: APOSTOLIC DISCERNMENT .....	38
C.    THROUGH THE PHASES OF FORMATION.....	39
D.    GROUP GUIDE’S RESPONSIBILITIES IN PHASE 1 MANUAL .....	40
1.7 THE ROLE OF GUIDE IN THE MEETING PROCESS.....	42
A.    MEETING FRAMEWORK.....	42
B.    THE CLC MEETING FORMAT AND PROCESS IN PART 1 .....	43
1.8 THE ROLE OF THE PROCESS GUIDE IN A LARGE ASSEMBLY .....	45
A.    WHAT IS AN ASSEMBLY PROCESS GUIDE?.....	45
B.    THE PROCESS GUIDE’S ROLE IN A LARGE ASSEMBLY.....	47
C.    A PRAYER.....	48

## 1.1 CHARISMS OF GROUP GUIDES, IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY, AND CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY

*A charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit which gives an energy to love and help others. A charism can be given to an individual or a group for the sake of others. Our Ignatian charism is essentially apostolic. (CLC Leaders' Manual p. 25). Our CLC charism is essentially the CLC way of life (3 dimensions/pillars: spirituality of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, community, mission).*

### **Charisms of a Group Guide:**

- Felt sense of call to this ministry: to empower members to become an effective channel of God's love, building relationships and spiritual growth of a group.
- Faith: trust in the love, power and help of God and freedom to act on this trust.
- Pastoral: building Christian community by nurturing continuing spiritual growth of a group.
- Teaching: permits the learning and skills that help the community and individuals reach their fullest spiritual and personal potential.
- Prophecy: communicating a word or call from God through words or action; to be a channel of truth and wisdom.
- Wisdom: knowledge, insight that enables him or her to recommend solutions to make good decisions.
- Discernment of Spirits: perceives when the group is moving towards God or away from God.
- Spiritual Guidance: a *contemplative gift* which gives an energy to accompany others as they awaken to the spiritual in everyday life and directs them towards a deepening relationship with the Spirit.

### **What is the 'mission' for which this charism is given to the CLC Group Guide?**

The particular 'energy' of spiritual guidance is given to the CLC Group Guide to accompany those who want to live the Ignatian charism as it is expressed through the CLC charism. It involves supporting the group through all stages of its group life. We do not live our vocation and mission as isolated individuals. We live them in community.

## **Charisms of Ignatian Spirituality**

Coming out of the spiritual experience of Ignatius of Loyola, and based on his Book of Spiritual Exercises, Ignatian Spirituality offers a unique pathway for coming to know Jesus and his saving message in a deeply personal and vital way. Jack Milan, Phase II Manual Resource 1, names six characteristics of the Ignatian Charism which help us respond to the reality of our world today.

### **1. Incarnational World View:**

- God reveals himself in reality
- the concrete world embodies qualities of God
- reality gives you spiritual energy - love energy
- awareness of God in all things! Give thanks!

### **2. Life Attitude of Reverence:**

- respect for human life and the earth
- respect for what we are, what we do
- respect for needs of each and for all.

### **3. Interior Freedom:**

- attach ourselves to what is of God
- detach ourselves from what takes us away from God
- be in the light, hope and trust in God
- know the truth and be set free.

### **4. Action Orientated:**

- response-ability with the Trinity
- co-creators
- positive apostolic vocation
- do-ers through discernment.

### **5. Rooted in Reality with Humility:**

- be accountable - "I count"
- be real, live in joy (Jesus, Others, Yourself)
- daily examen - "lived experience consciously confronted"
- live unity in humility.

### **6. Communal:**

- participate, share in the mystical Body of Christ, the Church
- in, with, through this mystical body we get energy, direction
- commitment for human family, family of God and all God's creation.

*The following gives a brief overview of the scope and power of the **Charisms of Ignatian Spirituality***

- ❖ Ignatian Spirituality is **TRINITARIAN**. God the Father is at work in each and all transforming us into Christ by the power of His Spirit. We are a trinitarian people called to be one in the unifying love that is God. Hence, it's a radically communitarian spirituality. Life is communion with the Trinity and through the love of the Trinity with brothers and sisters. Our lives are full of experiences of God's love and of God's initiatives that invite us to live and share that love with others. Ignatian Spirituality is experiential.
- ❖ It is **CHRIST-CENTERED**. Jesus is the Lord and Savior. He is the Sacrament of the Trinitarian life. The Father has placed us with the Risen Christ through the gift of the Spirit to companion, labor, suffer and set free with Him. It's a biblical spirituality. It invites us to enter into the History of Salvation which has Christ as its center; and through Christ to discover the meaning of the movement of all history.
- ❖ It's a spirituality of **CHOICE** at the level of faith. God chooses us in Christ to be His own. God invites us to respond to this initiative in freedom with our choice of Him. In choosing Christ, we make choices that recognize God's Reign: that God is the origin, end and focus of all. It is a spirituality of discernment. It lives attentive to the movements of the Spirit in and around us. Its goal is God's love.
- ❖ It's an **APOSTOLIC** spirituality. Its goal is to help people. God is found and served in those ministered to. It moves us to serve the faith by promoting God's justice. Devotion flows out of service done in love.
- ❖ It's a spirituality that **FINDS GOD IN ALL THINGS**. It's a spirituality that loves the world and finds it full of God. It's a secular spirituality. God is present everywhere, gifting us, laboring for us, filling our lives with all blessings. It's a spirituality of gratitude that recognizes that all is gift. Our gratitude motivates our response. It sends us forth.

**Charisms of the Christian Life Community:**

General Principle 4 is one of the best short presentations of the whole of our "charism". When inviting people to approach the GPs for the first time, it is helpful to begin with this, because it transmits the core identity of what CLC means to its members. In step with the logic implicit in our name "Christian Life Community", GP 4 first focuses on the following of Christ, then invites us to witness in our lives and finally highlights the meaning and importance of community. Work for justice and simple lifestyle are shown as distinguishing marks of our CLC.

***The CLC CHARISM encompasses VISION - MISSION – COMMUNITY (GP 4):***

***VISION:*** *Our Community is made up of Christians: men and women, adults and youth, of all social conditions who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with him for the building of the Kingdom, who have recognized Christian Life Community as their particular vocation within the Church.*

***MISSION:*** *We aim to become committed Christians in bearing witness to those human and Gospel values within the Church and society which affect the dignity of the person, the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation. We are particularly aware of the pressing need to work for justice through a preferential option for the poor and a simple lifestyle which expresses our freedom and solidarity with them.*

***COMMUNITY:*** *CLC is a gathering of people who want to integrate better their faith and their daily life in all its dimensions, and who can recognise themselves in our charism. This gathering in community is immediately related to apostolic service, especially in our daily environment. The group is a faith community, with charisms to share their faith and experience unity in love and action.*

*See SECTION THREE, Chapter 3, 'CLC Charism' for added information.*

## 1.2 THE NATURE OF CLC GROUP GUIDE LEADERSHIP

### PREAMBLE

#### *GP #4*

*To prepare our members more effectively for apostolic witness and service, especially in our daily environment, we assemble people in community who feel a more urgent need to unite their human life in all its dimensions with the fullness of their Christian faith according to our charism. We seek to achieve this unity of life in response to the call of Christ from within the world in which we live.*

Our charism tells us that our CLC way of life is communal, that it is rooted in the Spiritual Exercises, and its purpose is to form groups for mission. Leadership deals primarily with vision, with keeping the mission in sight, and with discovering the most helpful ways to become effective in moving others towards this. Fidelity to our General Principles and Norms, our Charism Document, the CLC Process of Growth and the unfolding direction from our World Assemblies inform CLC Leaders about their ministry of service to Christian Life Community.

*N.B. As the following information is collected from various articles through the years from Progressio, World Assemblies, CLC Workshops etc. and collated here, it is impossible to name all the resources as many were not noted.*

#### **Who Are CLC Leaders?** *(See Leaders' Manual pg. 28-31)*

Within a CLC group, every member is fundamentally a leader. How does this happen? It happens through the influence we bring to bear on our communal life and our ways of proceeding. We do this through our stories, our shared reflections, and discussions, through the questions we raise, and through our interactions in discernment processes.

*"Leadership comes from within and is as much about who we are as what we do. Leadership is not a specific act but about how we live our lives. We are all leaders simply by the fact that we influence one another and call each other to greater service for the Kingdom. It is also important to realize that organization and structure is also a gift of the Spirit, and we need people in formal leadership so that we can move forward in God's service to provide direction and formation for CLC whether at the local level or at the world level."*

*Chris Lowney (Leadership Consultant)*

Though all of us are leaders in these ways, some are called forth to contribute in more 'formal' roles. Some become Group Contacts, some Group Coordinators, others are called to be trained for the role of Group Guide. CLC Leaders also serve at 'governance' levels on National or Regional Councils or as part of Formation Teams. No matter what leadership undertaken, there is always a learning curve for every CLC Leader who says 'yes' to such a call and no one accepts such roles without discernment, being grounded in humility and having a willingness to grow with the help and support of others.

This understanding of CLC leadership can help us consider the following attitudes, characteristics, knowledge, and skills needed to become an effective Group Guide. A Group Guide has a felt sense of call to this ministry with an openness to mentorship for on-going growth and development in this ministry.

#### **Group Guide Attitudes:**

- A desire and willingness to be available – a servant stance
- A realization that the Triune God is the true Group Guide
- An openness to participate in collaborative leadership with a distinct Group Guide role
- A full appreciation of the World dimension of CLC and its unfolding history
- A humility that can own one's gifts and limitations as human persons
- A willingness to grow in knowledge and skills to become a more effective CLC Leader
- Possesses a discerning heart
- Values the Ignatian story and the Spiritual Exercises
- Embodies spiritual freedom

#### **Group Guide Characteristics:**

- To be able to personally live out of the dynamics and graces of the Spiritual Exercises
- To appreciate and commit to CLC leadership role(s) to which they are called and sent
- To be able to 'order' their lives (SE 21), and offer quality time to their role
- To enable and empower CLC members to live the CLC charism
- To recognize, call forth and unify the gifts in others for service
- To listen, reflect, and discern movements within themselves and those they lead



- To encourage others to 'do what they say they will do' and challenge if necessary
- To communicate the unfolding direction of CLC in ways that others can understand
- To be able to work with CLC resources to help form men and women for others
- To adapt their style of leadership to the needs of the group or the situation
- To be accountable

### **Group Guide Knowledge:**

Sufficient understanding of:

- Scripture and biblical tradition
- Various spiritualities in the Church
- Ignatian ways of prayer
- The dynamics of the 4 Weeks of the Spiritual Exercises
- The CLC process of growth and its stages
- The DSSE way of proceeding for communal apostolic decision-making
- Group dynamics
- Social Analysis
- The Social Teaching of the Church
- Theological Reflection
- CLC language/terms
- CLC tools for assisting CLC groups in becoming lay apostolic communities.

### **Group Guide Skills:**

Sufficient skills related to the knowledge named above are important for CLC Group Guides. However, knowing how to facilitate the process of becoming an Apostolic Community is of key importance. This 'process' is the DSSE way of proceeding. The degree to which CLC Leaders use knowledge and skills to assist communities in this way of proceeding, the more effective CLC will be in becoming a Lay Apostolic Body.

Besides the usual skill set which includes active listening, re-stating to understand, summarizing, pulling everything together, challenging, supporting, encouraging and giving feedback, the Group Guide needs additional skills. For instance, in Phase 1 Manual, the Guide:

- understands the goals and objectives of the first 13 sessions of the Phase 1 Manual;

- knows how to prepare for a meeting based on sessions 1-13 (CLC Canada Formation Manual Phase 1) and set appropriate agendas for effective meetings at this stage;
- distinguishes between the first, second and third rounds of Part I of a CLC meeting and facilitate these effectively;
- asks helpful questions to assist group members understand their experiences, both in interventions and in the evaluation and appropriation rounds;
- assists a group and its members in developing the habit of a simple Daily Awareness Examen;
- leads group members to reflect on their meeting through simple evaluation and appropriation rounds and simple meeting recaps;
- knows how to assist the group in discerning the next step in CLC formation and to celebrate the graces of the phases reached;
- knows how to assist new group members discern moving to the next step in CLC formation which includes joining the World Community and contributing an annual fee to the National and Regional Community;
- recognizes consolation and desolation in a group and begin to recognize their connection to the First Week Rules in the Spiritual Exercises;
- has a general understanding of the 5 Fundamental Stages of CLC Formation and is able to recognize the signs of Pre-Community and Initiation in the group;
- Recognises which CLC tools may be helpful during the early stages of CLC group development, especially the Life-Death-Resurrection, the Power Cycle and bringing to life the Group's Graced History;
- understands adult to adult leadership styles in CLC's Leaders' and Guide Manuals: can see the need to adapt to what the group needs rather than "my" preferred style;
- keeps in mind the DSSE as an overall frame of CLC's formation for mission.
- have an appreciation of personal strengths and growth (growing edges) using the Guide Log;
- understands the importance of having a personal mentor; and
- through peer group sessions or supervision adapts the style of leadership to the needs of the group or situation.

*Compiled by Pam Daigle, Atlantic Formator; can be used for Group Guide Evaluation*

## 1.3 THE IDENTITY OF A CLC GROUP GUIDE

Each person is created with a unique value as one singularly wanted and loved by God, quite apart from any trait that person shares with anybody else, or any contribution he or she might make to society. Part of our vocation is to appreciate ourselves as the pearl of great price because God does. We get to discover ourselves as the treasure in the field and to rejoice with God in the wondrous work that God does in each of our lives (Matthew 13:44-46).

It's the unique identity inherent in each being. Each one of us has been given our gift, it's what makes me, me, and not somebody else. You cannot be cloned. It's the part of me that is not to be replicated.

As a Group Guide, I'm not just one of a kind, and you're not just one of a kind, and we are each not just one of a kind; we are one of an eternity. No pressure! Each of us has come with a gift. And if we do not give our gift, the world misses out.

So as a CLC Group Guide, you are called to be just yourself. Live with it. Here I am. I'm just me and all I can do is be me. That's the only thing I can do, and I can do it better than anybody else. If I don't do it, nobody will do it. So often we spend our lives trying to be other people. Yet God says, "I made you, and I like the 'you' I've made, so just do your best and be yourself, and I'll be there to help you." It's not something we have to do alone, but something we grow into.

## 1.4 THE ROLE OF THE GROUP GUIDE

CLC Group Guide facilitates the formation of the CLC Group in all its stages of growth, helping the community to live the CLC way of life being sensitive to the movement of the Spirit at the personal and group level. The Guide embodies the CLC Charism, and has experience of all three pillars of CLC, namely, Ignatian Spirituality, Community Growth and Apostolic Mission.

And so, the Group Guide:

- introduces the group to the CLC meeting process and the CLC way of proceeding
- encourages participation in community life and mission
- encourages a growing integration of faith and life
- facilitates the formation of the CLC Group in all stages of growth being sensitive to the movement of spirits in the personal and group level
- records the group's progress and recognizes each stage of formation as it is reached
- facilitates members growth to embrace/live the vocation and commitment to CLC way of life leading to temporary and permanent commitment
- retains the vision; has a clear idea of the group's goals and appropriate means to retain the vision
- promotes compassion towards the poor
- guides communal discernment which leads to greater apostolic decisions
- helps the group be faithful to the grace of the moment whether the community is in consolation or desolation
- encourages and guides the group to use:
  - ✓ Ignatian methods of prayer
  - ✓ the daily Awareness Examen
  - ✓ spiritual direction
  - ✓ the Spiritual Exercises
  - ✓ Discerning, Sending, Supporting and Evaluating as a way of discerning mission
  - ✓ major CLC documents such as the General Principles, the CLC Charism, the Process of Growth in CLC.

The Guide has a specific service role within CLC. There are certain characteristics of a person/CLC member who is suited for that role.

Well formed Guides are vital for the ongoing growth of the Christian Life Community. To continue to grow and deepen CLC, we know we need to form new groups which means recruiting, accompanying, and forming new Guides.

*Excerpt from CLC Australia Formation Resources*

*If the above lists, yet incomplete, describing the role of the Group Guide feels overwhelming, remember that the formation for this ministry is ongoing and taken in small steps which invite us towards generosity, openness, and humility. Within the Christian Life Community, all are continually in formation personally and communally. It is good to remember that this is God's work and, if we are willing to join this enterprise, it will be Grace that will sustain us.*

---

## 1.5 CLC COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP ROLES: THE GROUP COORDINATOR AND THE GROUP GUIDE

### Preamble

*Essentially, there are three formal roles in CLC – the Group Guide, Group Coordinator, and the Group Contact. Here we will explore the collaboration between the Group Guide and the Group Coordinator as the community and its leaders grow in maturity with the three dimensions (pillars) of its way of life (spirituality, community, and mission) and the three dynamics which allow it to develop as an apostolic community (the process of growth, the stages of growth, and DSSE).*

The COORDINATOR and the GROUP GUIDE are the **co-leaders** of the CLC group. A Guide's role is distinct, but it also includes the knowledge and skills of the Group Coordinator. In fact, during the early stages of CLC development, when group members are just beginning to explore the CLC way of life, the Guide often exercises the role of Coordinator.

By the end of the Phase I Manual, however, a member of the group is invited to assume the role of Coordinator so that the Guide can live more fully and freely their unique role. What follows are excerpts from writings which describe the collaboration of the CLC Guide and the CLC Coordinator.

The Group Coordinator and Group Guide form an important team in the guiding, formation, and facilitation of the communal discernment process of a CLC meeting.

### Responsibility of the Group Coordinator

***Foundational** is knowledge and experience of the 3 Part process of group meetings.*

#### Part I - Spiritual Conversation

1<sup>st</sup> Round – sharing of personal experience (scripture reflection/life experiences)

2<sup>nd</sup> Round – what have 'I' heard that reveals a deeper understanding/common thread.

3<sup>rd</sup> Round – what is the Spirit revealing about how ‘we’ as a community are to move forward.

Part II - Formation: Phases I, II, III, of the CLC Canada Formation Manuals

Part III - Evaluation and Appropriation

Coordinating a group is an important ministry in the development of an authentic CLC. Group Coordinators, collaborating with the Group Guide, grow into the knowledge and skills needed for this role. The Coordinator learns to move both the group and the meeting process from the **INSIDE** of community. Being sensitive to group harmony and goals, the Coordinator makes sure the group keeps focused, using basic CLC documents of formation and vision as guidelines.

These include:

- The CLC Charism
- The General Principles
- The CLC Formation Stages
- A basic understanding of the three pillars of the CLC way of life (Community, Ignatian Spirituality and Mission).
- A basic understanding of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius
- Discernment that influences CLC’s way of life and approach to decision-making is essential.

The Group Coordinator should also be aware of current formation developments and be open to learn how to facilitate the group accordingly, i.e., forming apostolic community – the DSSE [discerning, sending, supporting, evaluating] call of the Nairobi World Assembly.

Ideally, as a group develops, more responsibility should be accepted by the group itself for its communal life and less responsibility should fall on the Coordinator. This is something that should be fostered from the beginning - delegating aspects of the meeting process to others. Many groups in Canada share facilitation of the CLC meeting.

Fidelity to the Three Phases of the National Formation Manuals is assumed as a guideline for developing local groups. However, Coordinators, in consultation with the Group Guide, may adapt these Manuals to the needs of their own community.

Coordinators will encourage members to make personal retreats which will deepen the Ignatian charism. In addition, a communal retreat or day of reflection should be part of the Coordinator's vision for the group's annual schedule.

### Responsibility of the Group Guide

#### THE CLC GROUP GUIDE

- During the first year, Phase I of the Manual, the Guide leads the group.
- At the end of Phase I, a group Coordinator is chosen, and the Guide collaborates, supports, and works together with the Coordinator as he/she learns their roles, responsibilities and becomes familiar with various CLC documents.
- The Guide's responsibility is to facilitate the members' growth to embrace and live out the vocation and commitment to live the CLC way of life.
- The Guide must be grounded in the Spiritual Exercises ... steeped in Ignatian spirituality as a way of life, a keeper of the vision ... be a 'student' of the basic and evolving documents of CLC formation and growth so as to be able to open these up for the local groups they serve.
- The Guide is a co-discerner ... sits on the fringe discerning the movement of spirits of the group. The Guide helps a group discern what personal and communal spiritual movements within their interchanges are leading them towards the Lord and to decide what to do about that discernment.
- The Guide must always ensure that the group continues to move beyond itself and does not turn inward. This is done by assisting the group to name its vision, set goals and realize them through discernment processes that (eventually) lead to good apostolic decisions.
- Group Guides are encouraged to regularly reflect on their guiding experiences. Group Guides and Coordinators are encouraged to log their personal journey of leadership at meetings and regularly reflect and share on their experiences ... and the 'progress' of the group.
- Gathering with other Group Guides whenever possible for peer support and ongoing formation is part of their commitment (and) to seek out other guides for consultation when needed.

There is a long history of the evolving role of the Group Guides in CLC Canada. In the last dozen years, the two world Assemblies recommended ways and means to become more focused on the "how to" in becoming a more intentional and effective discerning apostolic community. Today, the road travelled has underscored the importance and value of guidance on the way.



Leadership is a critical component in this CLC process and, in particular, the need for a Group Guide in each community is fundamental. The general consensus is that we are moving in the direction that no new groups ought to be formed without a Group Guide.

Why is the role of the Group Guide critical to the development of the CLC way of life? A Group Guide is one who is "steeped" in CLC Spirituality as a way of life, a keeper of the vision. The CLC Guide is a 'student' of the basic and evolving documents of CLC formation and growth and is able to open these up for the coordinators and local groups they serve. After the initial stage of a developing CLC group, and a Coordinator is chosen, the Guide can exercise his/her role as a co-discerner sitting **OUTSIDE** the community - looking in. That is, the Guide sits on the fringe discerning the movement of spirits of the group as a whole.

The Group Guide, then, should not belong to the group. This is necessary so that the Group Guide can remain objective and continue as a constant presence over time in order to be effective in this role. Guides do need to be familiar with the group's graced history/group story and be grounded in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

A Group Guide, in essence, operates like a Spiritual Director of a group. In the same way that a spiritual director helps individuals recognize their desires and hopes with regard to the Lord, to make these known to the Lord and to put themselves into a receptive position so that the Lord's response may be heard, so too does a Guide do that for an apostolic community. In this way, the Group Guide helps a group discern what personal and communal spiritual movements within their interchanges are leading them towards the Lord and to decide what to do about that discernment.

## 1.6 THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GROUP GUIDE THROUGH THE PROCESS OF GROWTH IN CLC

### A. PRE-COMMUNITY GROUP FORMATION

#### Attitudes, Skills, and Knowledge

In the early months of group formation, a Group Guide:

- holds a deep appreciation for all who have initially gathered to begin the CLC process.
- has a spiritual connection for those gathered and a gratitude for their response to begin a CLC process.
- is sympathetic and understanding of how small steps can make a big difference in people's lives.
- acknowledges that the Trinity calls us all to community and mission since the Trinity is Community in Mission.
- has an awareness that formation is ongoing and need not be rushed.
- trusts that the work of formation is the Trinity at work and the Guides are called to be their instruments. No more, no less. All belong to the Trinity.
- embraces an honest humility about the work of formation. We do our best knowing that we have gifts and shortcomings. All can be used for the Trinity's purposes.
- tries to convey not only through words but through their lifestyle the essence of CLC.
- if faithful to the various spiritual disciplines, will be seen as authentic and believable.
- goes slowly with a group but not too slowly. People want to know where they are headed and how they will get there.

***Note: CLC is a way of life rather than another program.***

The spiritual, communal, and apostolic aspects of CLC need to be shared early and often. While the spiritual and communal are often the aspects most attractive for people, we do want to acknowledge early on that we are essentially discerning apostolic

communities.

Since the three aspects of CLC take time to develop it is good early on to help a group see the relationship between community, spirituality, and mission. Some will be drawn to one dimension more than another and this needs to be dealt with patiently and with respect. It takes time and good formation to catch "the whole thing."

When people express concerns over manuals and reading materials, we acknowledge their views without entering into a long conversation or debate. The Manuals provide good direction and focus for groups. If groups go too far off the recommended track, they may not remain together very long. While any structure and direction are open to critique it is important to have structure and direction.

## **B. THROUGH THE STAGES OF GROWTH**

### **Role of the Guide in General**

- ❖ Suggests and facilitates the contents, means and experiences of the relevant stage
- ❖ Takes the community process forward
- ❖ Follows each individual closely
- ❖ Maintains close contact with the Coordinator, EA and other Group Guides.

### **STAGE I: PERIOD OF RECEPTION**

This is the CLC induction period. It corresponds to the desire for a deeper life. "Lord, where do You live? Come and see, He answered" (Jn 1:35-39). This stage can go on for several months and ends when the person enters the "Temporary Commitment" phase of CLC.

The Objectives at this stage are: knowing others in the group, self-knowledge and personal acceptance, basic information about CLC structures and CLC spirituality.

### **Content...**

- Know oneself
- Draw nearer to Jesus
- Sharing of life & faith
- Relating with others
- Take responsibility in the group
- Explanation of CLC vocation

- Sacramental view of the world

**Means...**

- Regular meetings, based on CLC format – sharing, listening, mutual respect
- Initiation into Ignatian and other methods of prayer
- Scripture prayer and reflection
- Learning about CLC history and documents
- Participating in CLC formation
- Experiences of service
- Education in the faith

**Role of Guide...**

- Initiating others in spiritual life
- Handling the dynamics of the group
- Introducing the group to CLC meetings
- Helping them discover and express inner movements
- Encouraging participation in community life and mission
- Providing examples of CLC vocations

**STAGE II: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR VOCATION**

This is the first stage in the formal process of CLC formation. It corresponds to the First Week and Call of the King in the Spiritual Exercises. It could go on for 1 to 4 years and is completed with Temporary Commitment or the search for another vocation.

The Objectives of this stage are: conversion to the way of Jesus, experience of God's unconditional love, responding to God's call, knowing others in the community, deeper grasp of CLC way of life.

**Content...**

- Personal experience of God
- To know and be known in the community
- Christian view of Sin and Forgiveness
- Experience of Ignatian Spirituality
- CLC structures, way of life, mission
- Social Analysis and Option for the Poor

**Means...**

- Personal spiritual guidance
- Sacramental life

- Basic psychology (knowing how people behave, think and feel)
- Practice of Daily Examen Prayer
- Experiences of the Exercises 4–8 days of retreat
- Autobiography of St. Ignatius
- Discernment
- Study of General Principles and CLC documents
- Participation in formation courses
- Service of the Poor

#### **Role of Guide...**

- Enables a first experience of the Exercises
- Encourages sharing, community, Review of Life, and personal Examen
- A spiritual guide for some
- Supports the coordinator
- Creates climate for discernment and election
- Promotes awareness of social injustice and provides opportunities for service
- Prepares members for Commitment

### **STAGE III: DISCERNMENT OF VOCATION**

This stage poses the question “What must I do for Christ?” It corresponds to the Second Week of the Exercises. People in this stage have embraced the CLC way of life. It goes on for 2-8 years and is completed with Permanent Commitment.

The Objectives are discernment and choice of state of life (lay, priest, religious), discernment and choice of way of life (fidelity and depth in all areas), confirming the personal CLC vocation.

#### **Content...**

- Integration of Christian values
- Personal love for Christ and Church
- Total experience of the Exercises
- Deeper grasp of discernment
- Universality of CLC vocation
- Christian view of globalization, ecology, justice ...
- Preferential Option for the Poor

#### **Means...**

- Continue those of Stage II
- Theology courses for the lay faithful (Lay spiritual formation events in pastoral ministry to be well formed in heart and mind)
- Retreats leading to the full Exercises

- Discernment of inner movements
- Election (state of life)
- Undertaking responsibilities in CLC structures
- Study of CLC history & documents
- Participating in CLC apostolate

#### **Role of Guide...**

- Encourages sharing and discernment of inner movements
- Encourages making the full Exercises
- Focuses on Ignatian insights
- Clarification of desires and choices with regard to vocation
- Encourages participation in CLC courses and gatherings
- Provides openings to the world of those living in poverty

### **STAGE IV: APOSTOLIC DISCERNMENT**

Members at this stage seek to give an apostolic meaning to all dimensions of life. They live out the Third and Fourth Week of the Exercises (*What ought I do for Christ?*), keeping in mind that *"A pure love bids us to serve much"*.

This stage continues all through life and has the following Objectives: Integration of human and Christian life, growing in openness to reality, using one's skills for service of Christ and the Church, creating apostolic communities.

#### **Content...**

- Attitudes of discernment, availability, mission
- Integration of mission into personal life
- Deeper experiences of the Exercises
- DSSE dynamic
- Universality
- Co-responsibility as members of an Apostolic Body

#### **Means...**

- Ongoing formation for mission
- Frequent reception of Sacraments
- Annual inner renewal
- Spiritual guidance
- Share and evaluate apostolic priorities
- Meetings in the DSSE format
- Co-responsibility for finances of CLC

### **Role of Guide...**

- Encourages an active apostolic life
- Helps to order the rhythm of life
- Guides communal apostolic discernment
- Promotes compassion towards the poor
- Sharing of inner movements
- Identifies personal and group stagnation
- Suggests ways to achieve deep integration of life and faith

*Slightly adapted from The STAGES OF CLC FORMATION (2009) and how Stages relate to the Sp. Ex.*

## **C. THROUGH THE PHASES OF FORMATION**

### **The Group Guide is:**

- a listener
- a guide
- a formator
- a holder of overall vision of CLC as an apostolic community
- familiar with the GP & GN, world history, structure, and World Assemblies
- familiar with development and structures of CLC in Canada and the Constitution
- understanding of CLC as a vocation
- a holder of the overall vision of the Spiritual Exercises and relationship with CLC
- attentive to the overall movement of spirits (towards being a discerning community for mission)
- attentive to the consolation and desolation dynamic
- familiar with dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises (P&F, Call of the King, Two Standards) and praying the Grace
- able to explain methods of praying with scripture, meditative reading, Ignatian contemplation, repetition, review of prayer, the Examen Prayer, communal discernment etc.
- able to lead a Graced History process
- knowledgeable of process and meaning of Temporary and Permanent commitment
- understanding of CLC mission and familiar with Social Analysis, Theological Reflections, Criteria for Mission
- familiar with conflict resolution skills, DSSE, power and LDR cycles, Stages of CLC Development

- familiar with the three Formation Manuals and the CLC CANADA FUNDAMENTAL STAGES OF CLC FORMATION (2009) and how the Stages relate to the Spiritual Exercises
- familiar with the CLC Canada Leaders' Manual
- knowledgeable about CLC Communication means: World website <http://www.cvx-clc.net>, CLC Canada National website Christian Life Community Canada, *World Projects*, *Progressio* and *Progressio Supplements*, National Newsletters and Bulletins

*compiled by Leah Michaud*

## **D. GROUP GUIDE'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN PHASE 1 MANUAL**

In conclusion to the Guide' responsibility in Phase I Formation Manual, the Guide ...

1. understands the goals and objectives of the first 13 sessions of the Phase I Manual.
2. knows how to prepare for a meeting based on sessions 1-13 and sets appropriate agendas for effective meetings at this stage.
3. distinguishes between the first and second rounds of Part I and facilitates these effectively.
4. asks helpful questions to assist group members understand their experiences, both in interventions and in evaluation and appropriation rounds.
5. assists a group and its members in developing the habit of a simple Daily Awareness Examen.
6. leads group members to reflect on their meeting through simple evaluation and appropriation rounds by recapping the meeting before closing.
7. knows how to assist the group in discerning the next step in CLC formation and to celebrate the graces of the phases reached.
8. knows how to assist the group members discern the next step in CLC formation (through the Phase I Manual), \*\*including joining the World Community and contributing the annual fee to the National and Regional Community.
9. recognizes consolation and desolation in a group and begins to recognize their connection to the First Week Rules in the Spiritual Exercises.



10. has a general understanding of the 5 Fundamental Stages of CLC Formation and is able to recognize the signs of Pre-Community and Initiation in Phase One Manual.
- 11 recognizes which CLC tools may be helpful during the early stages of CLC group development especially the Life Death Resurrection and the Power Cycles.
- 12 understands adult-adult leadership styles in CLC's guide manual and can see the need to adapt to what the group needs rather than "own" preferred style.
- 13 keeps in mind the DSSE as an overall frame of CLC's formation for mission.
- 14 have an appreciation of personal strengths and growing edges through using the Guide Log and sharing with a personal mentor, and supervision, through peer group sessions.

*compiled by Pam Daigle; Can be used for Group Guide Evaluation*

## 1.7 THE ROLE OF GUIDE IN THE MEETING PROCESS

*The meeting process is fundamental in how the group is moved to be a "discerning community for mission" (Contemplatives in Action). It is only in this context that the Group Guide finds a place ... listening and observing how the Spirit is active in drawing members to live more deeply the CLC way of life.*

### A. MEETING FRAMEWORK

CLC unfolds in three dimensions (Three Pillars) that define the CLC vocation and CLC Spirituality.

- Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius
- Community
- Mission



PICTURE A FLOWER ...

- ✓ A plant/flower is reflective of the "three-dimensions-in-one" of CLC Spirituality.
- ✓ Imagine the roots as the Spiritual Exercises, the stem as Community, the fruit/flower as Mission. Note the inseparability, the mutuality in each element conditioning the other's growth.
- ✓ Imagine what happens when a bulb/seed **is not** planted in good soil, fertilizing, watering, setting it in the sun. Any resulting growth (spindly stems) cannot be sustained or able to produce fruit.
- ✓ Imagine what happens when a bulb/seed **is** planted in good soil, fertilized, watered and set in the sun. The roots and stem grow in a healthy manner resulting in good fruit/a bloom. Good care, and attention, sometimes pruning of the plant, results in continued bearing of good fruit.

*The Spiritual Exercises, Community, and Mission* are **all** necessary to live the CLC vocation way of life. Formation might be compared to the nourishment for the Three Pillars.

## B. THE CLC MEETING FORMAT AND PROCESS IN PART 1

Meetings are usually held every two weeks depending on the mutual availability of members. There are basically three parts to the meeting:

**Part I** – Welcome, How We Come, Opening Prayer, Grace, Song, Scripture, and three rounds of Spiritual Conversation.

The designated grace and scripture are in harmony with the stage of CLC development and the corresponding “place” in the Spiritual Exercises journey. The intent here is to deepen relationship with Jesus, to grow in faith, hope and love, and to be open to growth, to conversion and freedom, and a desire to follow Jesus more closely.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Round sharing:**

- sharing of personal experience corresponds to the roots or spirituality dimension. Here the sharing is how God has been present to me in my prayer...
- **What did I experience?** ... and how this is reflected in or impacts my daily life.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Round sharing:**

- corresponds to the stem or community (communal) dimension. Here, the link between my relationship to God is linked to each of the others as I “hear” the Trinity speak through members of the community...
- **What did I hear?** ... What is the Spirit saying/teaching me through the sharing of members of my community?

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> Round sharing is about listening to everyone’s story and sharing what I was particularly affected by... words, image, sense of harmony or noting a common thread emerging, new insights etc.*

*This is all about COMMUNAL WISDOM that individuals may have become aware of as they listened to what others shared... this is a developing skill for most, so it is not the time to add more to what was original shared in the 1<sup>st</sup> round.*

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Round sharing:**

- **What is the Spirit revealing about how the community is to move forward?** This corresponds to the fruit or the Mission dimension.

*Here, we hear the Trinity speaking through the broader world community ... the condition, events, people, environment. This is an appropriation of the insights arising from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round. Is there a sense of the Spirit preparing us for something more (mission), affirming what we are doing, challenging us to evaluate (DSSE) what we are or are not doing etc.?*

*The 3<sup>rd</sup> Round sharing is responding to what I hear the Spirit saying to us as a community.*

### **Throughout the 3 Rounds, the Group Guide listens with the open ears of the heart and head.**

- Has the Grace been received?
- Is the group in consolation or desolation?
- What connection can be made to the Spiritual Exercises? What Week of the Exercises are we living? Are we living the CLC Charism? What Stage of Growth and Development is the Group in: Pre-Community, Initiation, Redemption, Deepening, or Apostolic Community? What, if any, leanings for mission were expressed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Round?

*Compiled by Leah Michaud, Formator*

## 1.8 THE ROLE OF THE PROCESS GUIDE IN A LARGE ASSEMBLY

### A. WHAT IS AN ASSEMBLY PROCESS GUIDE?

In the preparation for the 13th World General Assembly in Itaici, Brazil in 1998, the World EXCO decided to provide the World Community with a description of the role and responsibility of a Process Guide.

When CLC began to regularly meet as a World Assembly in 1953 there was some form of discerning the movement of the spirits in all of the Assemblies.

In 1998 as we prepared for the Itaici World Assembly, Guidelines for a Process Guide were written and documented. In it there are nine Guidelines; the first six defines what qualifications or skills the PG must have, and the last three Guidelines describe what the Process Guide is mandated to do at the Assembly:

What do we ask of the Assembly Process Guide?

1. The Executive Council has, in the past, invited a process guide to assist the General Assemblies. The following guidelines for the Assembly Process Guide are formulated for the 14<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. These guidelines are intended to clarify what is understood as the role of an Assembly Process Guide.
2. The Assembly Process Guide, appointed by the ExCo, may be a lay person, an ordained priest, religious sister or religious brother.
3. The Process Guide will work along with the ExCo but is essentially a guide for the whole Assembly.
4. The ExCo will appoint two persons to work as a team with the Process Guide for each day of the Assembly. The two members of this 'steering committee' will make more active interventions on the process of the day while the Process Guide will speak when the opportunity arises, as a source of discerning wisdom.
5. The Process Guide will have a good working knowledge of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

6. The Process Guide will have an understanding of the General Principles of CLC and of its spirituality (charism).
7. The Process Guide, as a Spiritual Guide, will follow the "Spirit of the Assembly", illuminating with his/her words - throwing light on consolation and desolation of the group - as per Sp. Ex. 313- 336. *RULES FOR THE DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS.*
8. The Process Guide will be prepared to ask the delegates to stop and to move into a process of discernment when in desolation or when delegates are in need of questioning themselves.
9. The Process Guide will do whatever is necessary so that the delegates, participating in the process of the Assembly, can discern and respond to the Lord's call.

*Standing Order 7 - Assembly Process Guide, February 2003*

We embark on the bridge of this journey, in communion with each other along with all the saints that have embraced this way of life in this 450 year of graced history. We have come to know that, through this history, there is a force field on the "Ignatian bridge" compelling us to move forward.

As the Body of Christ, we reflect on the experience of God in the context of:

**WHAT HAVE WE DONE FOR CHRIST?  
WHAT ARE WE DOING FOR CHRIST?  
WHAT OUGHT WE TO DO FOR CHRIST?**

It is within that context that we ask for the grace of contemplative listening. This grace will be an essential part of the discernment process in the Assembly.

As such, each one of us will be entering into a process of mutual discovery, disclosure, and risk taking. We do this by *praying* and asking for the grace of Spiritual Freedom, a freedom that opens us to new horizons of self-knowledge, compassion, and deep oneness with the Spirit of God.

As St Paul tells us in his letter to the Corinthian community; "The Spirit we have received is God's Spirit, helping us recognize the gifts God has given us". (I Cor. 2:12)

## B. THE PROCESS GUIDE'S ROLE IN A LARGE ASSEMBLY

*"To what is God calling me?"*, you sometimes ask yourself. *"To what is God calling us?"* is a question which a group should be asking when coming together. The evil spirits may take over the human dynamics of a large group, when a variety of personalities, needs and personal power interact. When the numbers are especially large and the average person has reduced input, there is more possibility of frustration and loss of control.

While the facilitator or leader tries to keep the group on track during the meeting, the Guide stands apart in order to listen to the spirits so God's will among the community is recognized. The Guide remains outside the discussion or movement of the meeting so that he or she can listen to the process and the dynamics underlying it. The possibilities of substantive interventions may distract the Guide from the neutral listening mode or his/her presence. Even if unbiased, the comments may appear partisan to some.

It is very useful, if not essential, for the Guide to know something of the group and the purpose of the meeting. The following are some of the challenges for a Guide of a large group:

- this may be the first time this group has met
- there may be a rigid time constraint on the meeting
- the maturity of the individuals in the group may vary or be unknown
- the maturity of the group as a group may be obscure.

The Guide first listens, then speaks. What does he or she listen for? ... the movement of the spirit of God or contrary spirits. The disruptive spirits are present when instances of manipulation, aggression, ridicule, prejudice, fear, misused power, etc. are present. The Guide may recognize confusion, anger, ambiguity, indecision, lack of direction, etc. and be able to name it.

Are these movements from the good or bad spirits? That depends. Do these movements lead eventually to the gifts of the good spirit – peace, patience, truth, trust, honest, openness, integrity, generosity, interior joy, etc.? Deepening of faith, hope and charity are evidence that it is of the Lord. The Guide can track the action of the group and cite instances which suggest either good or evil spirits.

And when does the Guide speak? An intervention may be appropriate during the meeting itself, usually with the group or facilitator asking for it. Often a member of the group can see the importance of a 'guide-like' statement and reflect this to the group. Occasionally the Guide will initiate an intervention during the meeting. The Guide is also expected to make a synthesis of the meeting at the end and articulate both the sensed atmosphere and major movements toward and away from what appeared to be God's will.

If the facilitator has not included an evaluation by the group, the Guide can initially call for this also.

*By Joan S. Lanahan and Jack Zuercher*

## C. A PRAYER

*Gracious God ...*

*In your loving heart, you made us.*

*Each of us, you made unique.*

*But it was not good that we should be alone,*

*So you placed us in community.*

*You made a purpose for each of us: to serve you*

*by serving our human family,*

*And in turn to be protected and nurtured by it.*

*You made us the Body of Christ.*

*You have taught us, your children, that we are*

*called to be women and men for others:*

*To walk with the excluded.*

*To safeguard the abundant world you have made*

*our common home.*

*To call young people into a spirit of creativity and*

*encounter, where your voice can be heard.*

*And to show others, in the way we walk, a*

*pathway to God.*

*As we reflect on our calling*

*to help build a just and sustainable society where*

*all this is possible,*

*We humbly turn to you:*

*Bless our bodies with strength and determination.*



*Fill our hearts with the compassion of saints.  
Ordain our minds with wisdom and vision.  
Empower our spirits with faith and truth.  
Employ our hands to lay a lasting foundation to  
bless generations to come.*

*Lord, you invite us to find you in all things.  
As we collaborate as a people in the building of  
our society,  
May we find you there.  
In our principles and laws,  
May we find you there.  
In our policies and programs,  
May we find you there.  
In our courts and bureaus,  
May we find you there.  
In our streets and squares,  
May we find you there.  
And in our neighbors, especially those on the  
margins,  
May we find you there.*

*We make this prayer through Christ, Our Lord.*

*Amen.*

# SECTION TWO

2.1 THE GROUP GUIDE, CLC AND THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION .....	51
A.    IGNATIUS' THREE-PART VISION .....	51
B.    THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES .....	54
C.    THE DYNAMIC OF THE FOUR WEEKS of the SPIRITUAL EXERCISES.....	56
D.    PRAYING THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES.....	58
2.2 TWO KEY PRAYER EXERCISES .....	61
A.    PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION .....	61
B.    TWO STANDARDS EXERCISE: THE SIGN AND STRATEGY OF JESUS .....	62
2.3 CONTEMPLATING THE THIRD WEEK EXERCISES.....	68
2.4 CLC DEVELOPMENT AND THE ACTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT .....	69
2.5 A COMMUNAL SPIRITUALITY .....	72
A.    SPIRITUALITY IS MULTIDIMENSIONAL .....	72
B.    THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF OUR CLC VOCATION .....	73
C.    THE FOUR SEASONS AND THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES .....	74
2.6 WHAT IT MEANS TO HAVE FAITH .....	77
A.    FAITH IS... .....	77
B.    ACTING WITH HOPE IN THE WORLD TODAY .....	79

## 2.1 THE GROUP GUIDE, CLC AND THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

### A. IGNATIUS' THREE-PART VISION

#### PREMABLE

#### THE GROUP GUIDE UNDERSTANDS that...

CLC is rooted in Ignatian spirituality (GP 5). It is about being a Contemplative in Action which then compels contemplation both individually and communally. It's the Trinitarian dance - dancing while standing still.

**Ignatian Spirituality is a spirituality of action:** co-laboring with Christ in building the Kingdom of God. Once a person responds to this call, St. Ignatius invites a person to pray to come to know Christ more intimately, love him more ardently and follow him more closely.

The CLC Group Guide ideally has *great familiarity from his/her own experience of the full Exercises and from guiding others through the Exercises.*

*"It is not enough preparation for guiding a group simply to make a retreat according to the Spiritual Exercises. Sufficient reflection and understanding of the process are also important. The Sp. Ex. are meant to be an encounter between the retreatant and God, and in this sense are a gift offered to the whole Church, independently of what will follow in the particular case of each person. In fact, most religious and lay people who make the Sp. Ex. continue to live their Christian lives outside of CLC. Within CLC, the Sp. Ex. are the underlying key to the whole process, and groups grow according to the dynamics of the Exercises.*

*Therefore, it is necessary that the experience of the Sp. Ex. be followed by a reflection on how its dynamics are continued in a communal process of spiritual and apostolic growth. The guide must be helped to understand the Ignatian Steps (Pedagogy) and how they can be used in guiding a group and to take note of the fact that the call to be a mature CLC member comes through the experience of the Kingdom and the 2nd week. The reflection on the Exercises proposed to the guides should be as profound and systematic as possible."*

*From Progressio Supplement #33, Formation of Group Guides pg. 14-17*

Ignatian spirituality offers us a vision. It is a vision of life, of work, and of love—a three-part vision that helps us see what is really true about God and about the world he created.

The Ignatian vision is contained in the *Spiritual Exercises*, the book that Ignatius Loyola assembled to help people come into a more intimate relationship with God. Ignatian spirituality flows from the Spiritual Exercises. The essence of the Ignatian vision is contained in a reflection at the beginning of the Exercises called the Principle and Foundation. God who loves us creates us and wants to share life with us forever. Our love response takes shape in our praise and honor and service of the God of our life.

All the things in this world are also created because of God's love and they become a context of gifts, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily. As a result, we show reverence for all the gifts of creation and collaborate with God in using them so that by being good stewards we develop as loving persons in our care of God's world and its development. But if we abuse any of these gifts of creation or, on the contrary, take them as the center of our lives, we break our relationship with God and hinder our growth as loving persons.

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance before all created gifts insofar as we have a choice and are not bound by some responsibility. We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or a short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a more loving response to our life forever with God.

Our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to God's deepening life in me.

Ignatius's first principle is that all creation is a gift, coming from God and leading toward God. Furthermore, "all the things in this world are... presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily." This means that God is *in* this creation. The choices we make in our daily life in this world push us away from God or draw us closer to him. Ignatius sees God as present, not remote or detached. He is involved in the details of our life. Our daily lives in this world matter.

The Principle and Foundation is a **life vision**. It asks, "what is life all about?" It is a vision that directs us to the source of life. It is truly the foundation of the Ignatian outlook.

Ignatian spirituality also offers a **work vision**. What is our work in this world all about? Why do we do what we do? What values should govern our choices? In the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius asks these questions in the context of a reflection he calls the Call

of the King. He proposes that we think about Jesus after the model of a king to whom we owe reverence and obedience. He is a leader with ambitious plans: "I want to overcome all diseases, all poverty, all ignorance, all oppression and slavery—in short all the evils which beset humankind," he says. He poses a challenge: "Whoever wishes to join me in this undertaking must be content with the same food, drink, clothing, and so on, that comes with following me."

Note two particular features of this work vision. Christ our king calls us to be *with* him. The essence of the call is not to do some specific work, but, above all, to be with the One who calls, imaged in the everyday details of living like our king lives. We are to share Christ's life, to think like him, to do what he does.

The second feature is a call to *work* with Christ our king. Christ is not a remote ruler commanding his forces through a hierarchy of princes, earls, dukes, lords, and knights. He is "in the trenches." He is doing the work of evangelizing and healing himself. His call goes out to every person. He wants everyone to join with him, and each one receives a personal invitation. The initiative is Christ's; he asks us to work with him.

The third part of the Ignatian vision is a **vision of love**. Above all, God loves, and he invites us to love him in return. Later we will look carefully at Ignatius's Contemplation on the Love of God, which concludes the Exercises. Here we will note two statements Ignatius makes to introduce it.

The first is that "love ought to show itself in deeds over and above words." The second is that love consists in sharing: "In love, one always wants to give to the other that one has." The Spanish word that Ignatius uses here is "*comunicar*" - "to share or to communicate." Lovers love each other by sharing what they have, and this sharing is a form of communication. God is not just a giver of gifts, but a lover who speaks to us through his giving. God holds nothing back.

The ultimate expression of his self-giving is Jesus' death. He shares his very life with us. He also shares with us the work he is doing in the world. Thus, the work we do is a way of loving God. It is not just work. By inviting us to share in his works, God is showing his love for us. In our response of trying to work with God, we show our love.

Ignatius raises the questions: What does it mean for us to love? How do we go about expressing our love? How do we show our love for God, for ourselves, for others, and for our world? He invites us to answer these questions by looking at how God loves. He is a God who sets no limits on what he shares with us.

*Excerpt from 'What Is Ignatian Spirituality?' by David L. Fleming, SJ.*

## B. THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

*[1] "Spiritual Exercises is meant in every way of examining one's conscience, of meditating, of contemplating, of praying vocally and mentally, and of performing other spiritual actions. For as strolling, walking, and running are bodily exercises, so every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all disordered tendencies, and, after it is rid, to seek and find the divine will as to the management of one's life for the salvation of the soul is called a spiritual exercise."*

### THE HISTORY

The Spiritual Exercises grew out of Ignatius Loyola's personal experience as a man seeking to grow in union with God and to discern God's will. He kept a journal as he gained spiritual insight and deepened his spiritual experience. He added to these notes as he directed other people and discovered what "worked." Eventually Ignatius gathered these prayers, meditations, reflections, and directions into a carefully designed framework of a retreat, which he called "spiritual exercises."

Ignatius wrote that the Exercises: "have as their purpose the conquest of self and the regulation of one's life in such a way that no decision is made under the influence of any inordinate attachment." He wanted individuals to undertake these exercises with the assistance of an experienced spiritual director who would help them shape the retreat and understand what they were experiencing. The book of Spiritual Exercises is a handbook to be used by the director, not by the person making the retreat.

### THE PROCESS

The Spiritual Exercises are a guided, formalized pattern of prayer sessions that leads one through the process of learning to pray with scripture:

- learning techniques of using all our senses in our prayer
- learning to meditate
- learning to contemplate using the Word of God as a basis.

#### One Learns:

- to pay attention to and recognize the movement of spirits (consolation, desolation)
- how to discern God's desire in making a decision.
- to discover God in all things...even in those things that seem empty of God's presence
- to review and note graces prayed and received.

**THE AIM OF THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES** is to discover God's desire so as to choose:

- state or 'management' of one's life
- progress in sanctity... [15] "... the Creator and Lord Himself should communicate Himself to His devout soul, inflaming it with His love and praise, and disposing it for the way in which it will be better able to serve Him in the future."

**Ignatius' Goal:**

- to help develop a heart knowledge of God and an apostolic spirit of generous service
- to live a life of holiness penetrated by prayer, supporting and evoking mission.

### **THE STRUCTURE OF THE EXERCISES**

Ignatius organized the Exercises into four "weeks." These are not seven-day weeks, but stages on a journey to spiritual freedom and wholehearted commitment to the service of God.

- **First week:** The first week of the Exercises is a time of reflection on our lives in light of God's boundless love for us. We see that our response to God's love has been hindered by patterns of sin. We face these sins knowing that God wants to free us of everything that gets in the way of our loving response to him. The first week ends with a meditation on Christ's call to follow him.
- **Second week:** The meditations and prayers of the second week teach us how to follow Christ as his disciples. We reflect on Scripture passages: Christ's birth and baptism, his sermon on the mount, his ministry of healing and teaching, his raising Lazarus from the dead. We are brought to decisions to change our lives to do Christ's work in the world and to love him more intimately.
- **Third week:** We meditate on Christ's Last Supper, passion, and death. We see his suffering and the gift of the Eucharist as the ultimate expression of God's love.
- **Fourth week:** We meditate on Jesus' resurrection and his apparitions to his disciples. We walk with the risen Christ and set out to love and serve him in concrete ways in our lives in the world.

### **THE PRAYER STRUCTURE:**

The two primary forms of praying taught in the Exercises are meditation and contemplation. In meditation, we use our minds. We ponder the basic principles that guide our life. We pray over words, images, and ideas.

Contemplation is more about feeling than thinking. Contemplation often stirs the emotions and enkindles deep desires. In contemplation, we rely on our imaginations to place ourselves in a setting from the Gospels or in a scene proposed by Ignatius. We pray with scripture. We do not study it.

The discernment of spirits underlies the Exercises. We notice the interior movements of our hearts and discern where they are leading us. A regular practice of discernment helps us make good decisions.

All the characteristic themes of Ignatian spirituality are grounded in the Exercises. These include a sense of collaboration with God's action in the world, spiritual discernment in decision making, generosity of response to God's invitation, fraternity and companionship in service, and a disposition to find God in all things. Spiritual integration is a prominent theme of the Exercises: integration of contemplation and action, prayer and service, and emotions and reason.

*Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, Jesuits Sources website*

## C. THE DYNAMIC OF THE FOUR WEEKS of the SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

### TO REFORM, TO CONFORM, TO CONFIRM, TO TRANSFORM

What is deformed? What is reformed? What is conformed. What is confirmed?

- conversion to Christ
- repentance for making up for sins committed or sins of omission
- following Christ
- increase perseverance in perfection
- union with Christ
- dying to self; rising of self hidden in God; sent in service

**To reform what is deformed:** The First Week of the Exercises, as Ignatius himself indicates, is the stage for beginners and features purgation. Exercitants come to it with their burden of sin and disordered attachments. They may be in need of a profound conversion from the disordered attachments which have enticed them away from God; or they may want to re-enter the conversion space so as to give their spiritual life a greater impetus. Thus, they come with what is deformed in their being, and they open themselves to the grace of reformation.

**To conform what is reformed:** The Second Week of the Exercises, as Ignatius suggests, is linked to the stage of *Illumination*. Having undergone an experience of reformation in the first week, exercitants are now ready to build on their conversion,



to foster the growth of virtuous activity which expresses the graces they have received.

Since they have received forgiveness without any merit of their own, how can they return God's grace by a life of service in accord with God's will? More particularly, what concrete choices do they need to make, of a state of life, of a form of service, of ways of bettering their lives, in accord with God's will for them? This will be their response. The example given by Christ in his earthly life is their model, and from that model their path forward is illumined.

**To confirm what is conformed:** The Third Week of the Exercises moves exercitants to the stage of confirming whatever choice they have undertaken in the Second Week, that it might be not just an empty choice for the moment but a life-long commitment, like that of Jesus who chose a path in his ministry of faithful witness to the truth which led him to his passion and death. To implement any decision regarding the course of our lives requires patience and perseverance, the ability to meet and to surmount obstacles and temptations, and readiness to give up our lives. Here the model proposed for us is the passion and death of Jesus, which is featured in the third week.

**To transform what is confirmed:** The Fourth Week of the Exercises moves exercitants to the other side of the paschal mystery, and they are invited to share the Christ's joy in rising from the dead, and to contemplate him as he exercises the role of consoler. The choice they have made and confirmed is transformed by the dynamic of the resurrection, in which Christ consoles his disciples, transforms them by giving them his Spirit of love, and missions them to bring consolation to one another and to all those they serve. This transformation is enhanced in the contemplation for obtaining love which immediately follows upon the fourth week and is intimately connected with it. Our chosen state of life, ministry, form of service is transformed in that we recognize that ultimately it is not us who act, but Christ. He is present, acting, even toiling in all those who with him are builders of God's reign.

*"Even if I had on my conscience every conceivable sin, I would lose nothing of my confidence. My heart overflowing with love, I would throw myself into the arms of the Father, and I am certain that I would be warmly received."*

*Therese of Lisieux, Story of a Soul*

## D. PRAYING THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Although the Spiritual Exercises are divided into 4 weeks in a 30-day retreat, with Annotation 19 each week could last a month or more. Following is an overview of the GRACE, CONTENT and DYNAMICS of each of the 4 Weeks.

Prior to moving into the Exercises, some preparatory time helps get one into the rhythm of praying with scripture. These days are called *Disposition Days*.

The Spiritual Exercises (Sp. Ex) open with the Principle and Foundation meditations on which all else is to rest.

**1<sup>ST</sup> WEEK** of the Spiritual Exercises is devoted to PURIFICATION and CONVERSION (putting one's INNER life in order).

The GRACE is:

- To know that I am loved by God unconditionally
- To know what it means to be a creature
- To know that I am a redeemed sinner

The CONTENT includes:

- The Principle and Foundation
- Creaturehood Sinfulness: personal, cosmic, social
- Redemption and mercy
- The Kingdom Exercises
- Rules for discernment-1<sup>st</sup> week

The DYNAMICS:

- From unloved person
- To loved person
- To being a needy creature
- To being a forgiven sinner
- To participating in the building of the kingdom

**2<sup>ND</sup> WEEK** of the Sp. Ex. is dedicated to ILLUMINATION (meditations on Jesus' public life)

The GRACE is:

- To know Christ better so that I may love him more passionately and follow him more closely

To put on the heart and mind of Christ  
To know the patterns of light and darkness in me  
To face the cost of discipleship  
To make decisions as I am called

The CONTENT includes:

The Incarnation and birth of Christ  
The Hidden life of Christ  
Two Standards  
Three degrees of Humility  
Times of Choices  
The Public Life of Christ  
Discipleship  
Rules for Discernment- 2<sup>nd</sup> week

The DYNAMICS:

From a willing participant in building the kingdom  
To one who understand the poverty and limitations of  
Discipleship  
To a careful observer of Christ  
To a willing disciple through discernment, no matter what the  
cost

**3<sup>RD</sup> WEEK** of the Sp. Ex. is focused on Confirmation of Suffering (passion and death of Christ).

The GRACE is:

To deepen my gratitude and sorrow that Christ suffers for me  
To be confirmed in the willingness to accept the cost of  
discipleship  
To practise self discipline

The CONTENT includes:

The Passion of Christ  
Rules for eating (expanded to addictions)

The DYNAMIC:

From sorrow at Christs suffering  
To confirmation of my discipleship

**4<sup>TH</sup> WEEK** of the Sp. Ex. is focused on Confirmation of peace, joy, and unity in Christ's risen life.

The GRACE is:

To rejoice and be grateful because of the joys of the Lord  
To be confirmed in the joy of discipleship  
To have a grateful heart

The CONTENT includes:

The Resurrection narratives  
Notes concerning scruples (especially 351)  
Focused resolutions for the apostolate in my life  
The Contemplation to Attain Love  
Rules for Almsgiving  
Rules for Thinking with the Church

The DYNAMIC:

From a willingness to die for Christ  
To a willingness to live for Christ  
To a desire to use my freedom for creatively by taking  
initiatives in my apostolic life to discover God in all things

In the 4th Week WE PRAY FOR THE PERFECTION OF THAT ULTIMATE GRACE AS WE PRAY WITH  
IGNATIUS:

*“TAKE LORD AND RECEIVE all my liberty my memory,  
my understanding and my entire will,  
all that I have and possess.  
You have given all this to me, I return them to you Lord.  
Everything is yours.  
Dispose of it all according to your will.  
Give me the grace to love you and that is enough for me”. (234)*

## 2.2 TWO KEY PRAYER EXERCISES

### A. PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION

#### A Contemporary Translation [23]

We are created to share in God's love and life for eternity. The experience of this love is manifested in our response of praise, reverence, and service, that is, loving God with all our heart, all our mind and all our will.

All of God's created order is intended to reveal this sharing of God's life and love. Therefore, with all of humanity we are called to be one with the rest of creation; and with it, we are invited to move together into a deeper relationship with the loving Creator.

Whenever we are hindered, by another part of creation, from deepening this relationship, it becomes necessary to examine our connection with that part to ensure that we are not hindered in pursuing our call. Often, we may need to choose to separate ourselves from such barriers.

It is true that we can only grow in our relationship with God by cooperating with other members of the human family in caring for each other and for creation itself. Nevertheless, it is also true that we are not to become so dependent on any part of creation that we would be distracted or separated from our fundamental relationship with our God.

This means that whenever we make choices concerning any aspect of work and life, we are to be interiorly free with respect to those concerns that make obstacles of creation - long life or short life; health or sickness; riches or poverty; comfort or discomfort; being accepted or rejected; status or non-status.

Therefore, our highest priority is to be this relationship with God shining through all our choices and everything that flows from these choices.

*Adapted for Orientations by JOHN VELTRI SJ*

## **\*AN OPTIONAL CHOICE: A Communal Adaptation of the Principle and Foundation**

So that we may better fulfil the divine purpose of human existence, the common task assigned to us in creation is to build on earth, co-creatively with God, new ways of living together in justice and love. With the help of God's grace, this will draw humanity closer to God in this world and in the next.

At present, it means that the Creator calls upon us to give our best efforts to the common task of striving for better (more loving and more just) ways of living on earth.

Lest our common destiny and all that human beings need to do together may seem too vast, too much beyond our vision, perhaps we can start by focusing on our families, our work and our personal ways of coping, of affirming others and of sharing one another's struggles.

We should be ready, however, to take part in larger affairs whenever an opportunity arises, in spite of our fears and limitations.

Whatever the task presented to us, we choose that which contributes more to the coming of God's Reign and turn away from what impedes that Reign. Our desire should be to allow our life work and every practical task to receive value from the larger destiny God has given to us.

*By John Wickham SJ*

## **B. TWO STANDARDS EXERCISE: THE SIGN AND STRATEGY OF JESUS**

**SPIRITUAL EXERCISES [91-98] THE SIGN AND STRATEGY OF JESUS: *To Labour and Work in the Mission of Christ Jesus and to Serve with Him Under His Sign.***

After the intense purification of the First Week exercises, the Call of Christ the King has brought us to the entry of the Son of God into our actual history. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Jn 1:14

Now in the Second Week, we renew our personal union with the Divine Lord who has drawn so near.

As a follower of Jesus, I am involved right now and throughout my life in a struggle with the enemy of the human race - the power of darkness. From this influence, no country, no city, no state of life, no individual is overlooked. Weeds grow alongside the wheat and remain until the end ... Mt 13:24 ff. This influence takes place in the depths of my being (the area of my desires, fears, attitudes) where I desire to possess and to have security where I desire to be worth something or to be accepted and loved, where I desire to exist. I can even imagine the enemy laying plans to trap me at these more vulnerable parts of my person as Ignatius describes with the following images:

The enemy acts as a military leader ... first, inspecting the strength and condition of the fortification and then, attacking it on the weakest side. In the same way the enemy of our human nature .... explores all our defences to discover where and how we are most vulnerable and there initiates the attack and strives to take us.

During the age and culture of his time Ignatius understood this entry as following a generalized pattern. The first step is riches as a means to attain the empty esteem of others that will lead eventually to pride - riches, honours, pride. For many persons even today, this pattern helps to understand the approaches of the enemy. Therefore, though one possesses the noblest of intentions, a person's deepest desires can be skewed. Good persons unwittingly walk down the 'garden path'. The desire to possess for oneself (riches), turns into the desire to be worth something in oneself (esteem of others). These turn into a false kind of independence or pride, by which a person comes to exist only for oneself. From this state of false independence, the evil one leads one to all other disorders.

Unique persons living in different cultures may have different points of strength and weakness. The enemy usually will establish a foothold in those vulnerable spots with those basic temptations that appear to achieve some good or fulfil some need. After the first foothold, temptations come in a variety of ways. A gradual seduction or a torrent of exaggerated fear or through some innocent-looking seemingly good suggestion can all lead into a web of deceit. With serious reflection (such as the consciousness examen), prayer, and dialoguing with a wise counsellor, one can discover the personal patterns of temptation by which one repeatedly may be seduced. Repeatedly - yes, because our more subtle character and personality traits usually remain the same throughout life.

Therefore, there are other deceptive patterns that initially differ from the Ignatian "riches." However, in time they ultimately lead to the same end, some form of pride. Here are some examples:

- (a) the child from a dysfunctional background may start out in life with the learning that 'it is not good to feel' and so, in later life, that person is usually

tempted by 'don't feel', which leads to the temptation 'always follow the others' expectations to gain their acceptance, which can lead to different temptations such as doing good things for others repeatedly until one reaches a state of emptiness and gives up ... or putting oneself at the centre of attention to be constantly affirmed as worthwhile and thus becoming self-absorbed...

- (b) a woman reaching adulthood around the mid-twentieth century in North America typically was raised not to say what she was really thinking. She learned a definite secondary role in her patriarchal-type society. So, she initially enters into temptation by 'hiding' her real thinking and feelings about things to seek approval. This might lead to the temptation to 'put herself in second place' (by trivializing herself) that can lead her into several forms of self destruction ... such as letting others define her role and through such limitation the possible good that she can do for God's household decreases ... or she becomes secretly self-righteous.

### ***Grace For Which I Will Ask***

Here it will be to ask for a deeper knowledge of the deceits of the enemy and help to guard against them. Also, to ask for a deep-felt knowledge of Jesus' strategy since he is "the way, the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6) and to ask for a growing desire to imitate him by adopting his strategy and following the lead of his Spirit.

### ***Ways Of Disposing Myself for This Grace***

1. I turn to Jesus, my Lord and my God, and with him I examine the traps and deceits that have already been and are even now operative in my life.
2. Watch Jesus choosing the disciples and apostles. He desires to establish a new human community, sending the Spirit throughout the world - sowing the seeds of his teaching in the hearts of people everywhere. He is teaching all people to serve 'Abba' with him with his own strategy - complete dependence on one's Loving God, leading to the cross. His life manifests the very way that we can arrive at this complete dependence on God. "I have given you an example, that as I have done, you also should do" Jn 13:15. It is the way of poverty, insults, humility - these are the very ways that touch the basic needs of the human heart.
3. Consider the address that Jesus our Lord makes to all his followers and friends whom he missions to help the human family. He recommends: "Make it your



aim to help everybody. Lead them first to perfect poverty of spirit, and even to a lifestyle of poverty in reality, if this is God's gracious desire for them. Secondly, lead them to a desire for insults and contempt. From these two come humility and total dependence." Notice the three steps: poverty (against riches) so that they come to desire to possess nothing except for God, being laughed at and looked down on (as opposed to empty esteem) so that they desire to be worth something only because of God, humility (as opposed to pride) so that they exist only for God who is All in all, the Divine Mother, Father, Lover, Creator and so much more.

### *The Three Dialogues*

Carry on a discussion with our Lady, asking her to obtain for me from her Son this grace (or if you prefer carry on this conversation with a saint or some wisdom figure) that I may labour and work with him in his mission of saving the human family and serve with him under his sign:

1. At first in the highest spiritual poverty then in a lifestyle of real poverty, should this be my Gracious God's desire for me.
2. Next, in putting up with insults and treated unjustly, so that I may be more like him - provided I can bear these without offense to my Divine Sovereign.
3. Then pray the Hail Mary.

Then I will enter into conversation with Jesus asking him to obtain the same favours for me from his Abba. Then I will say, Soul of Christ...

*Soul of Christ, sanctify me.  
Body of Christ, save me.  
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.  
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.  
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.  
O good Jesus, hear me.  
Within your wounds, hide me.  
Let me never be separated from you.  
From the malignant enemy, defend me.  
In the hour of my death, call me,  
And bid me come to you,  
That with your saints, I may praise you forever and ever. Amen*

**Soul of Christ, sanctify me.** Jesus, risen one, let your soul, which is as vast as the universe, invade my whole being and make me holy. Breathe your Holy Spirit, the sanctifier, upon me just as you breathed upon the first disciples after you rose from the dead. Set me free of sin and fill me with the holiness that fills your own soul.

**Body of Christ, save me.** I open myself to your love. Embrace me with your healing and transforming power. Jesus, this prayer moves me especially when I say it after receiving your body and blood in holy Communion or after Mass has ended. But the prayer is meaningful at any time. I believe you are with me always and ever standing at my door knocking (Rv 3:20) — inviting me to open the door and enjoy a mystical union with you, the risen one.

**Blood of Christ, inebriate me.** You have redeemed us, Jesus, by your blood shed upon the cross. At the Eucharist, we receive that blood in the form of wine. Your burning love is so overwhelming that one becomes intoxicated by the intensity of your care for each one of us. Such love prompted St. Anthony of Padua to proclaim, “The humanity of Christ is like the grape because it was crushed in the winepress of the cross so that his blood flowed forth over all the earth... How great is the charity of the beloved! How great the love of the bridegroom for his spouse, the Church!”

**Water from the side of Christ, wash me.** Yes, Jesus, let the water flowing from your side cleanse me, as did the life-giving water that flowed over me at baptism. And this saving stream never stops flowing through me — unless I separate myself from your love. You are the vine; I am the branch. If I remain in you, your abundant life continues flowing into me. As St. Paul attested long ago, “I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20).

**Passion of Christ, strengthen me.** It is your power, and not my own, which heals me and makes me strong. As the psalmist says, “Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it” (Ps 127:1). Your strength alone is my source of hope.

**O good Jesus, hear me. Within your wounds hide me.** There is something so mystical, and dare I say intimate, Jesus, in our hiding in those holy wounds through which we are saved. As Isaiah tells us, “... by his bruises we are healed” (Is 53:5). Draw us into this most loving mystery — this sacred fountainhead of our salvation!

**Let me never be separated from you.** Loving Savior, this expresses, perhaps the most central theme of *Anima Christi*. Keep reminding me that the best part of prayer is not so much gaining *information* about you, O Jesus, as it is growing into a more intimate *love union* with you. So, loving Savior, hold us close to you.

**From the malignant enemy, defend me.** This line is similar to the closing line of that special prayer that you yourself taught us—the Our Father: “Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.” We rely on your healing power, O Lord,

to set us free of any malignant force that might cause us to be separated from you—  
from life itself.

**In the hour of my death, call me, and bid me come to you, that with your saints I  
may praise you forever and ever. Amen.** Jesus, I need your help to reach my final  
destiny in your Kingdom. Stay with me to the end—until I can join in singing your  
praises with all those saved by your immense love.

*(a paraphrase and adaptation of the Two Standards #'s [136] through [147])*

**Finally, I will dialogue with my Creator God who is so much more than a mother or  
father to grant me these favours. Then I will say, the prayer that Jesus taught.**

## 2.3 CONTEMPLATING THE THIRD WEEK EXERCISES

The third degree of humility in the Spiritual Exercises [165 to 168] in the Second Week is most fully understood while contemplating the Passion of Jesus in the Third Week. The grace of the Third Week requires a change in our whole attitude to life. It calls us to share in the sufferings of Jesus. In a paradoxical way we pray to see the cross as glory and sweetness. The grace calls us to move beyond our self-centred fears.

We pray for the grace to be fully free. This calls us to learn to contemplate in a new and humbler way. We seek something we cannot snatch by our own doing. All we can do is wait and be attentive. We can enter the Passion of Jesus only as we would keep a vigil at the bedside of a dying friend.

Mary, as she stood by the cross is our great model of the compassionate one. She was there, living in her son, yet helpless, incapable of relieving Jesus' pain. She was experiencing his pain in herself, not by substitution but by extension from him. We too wish to experience what it was like for him, not for us, sharing in friendship.

In this sense, compassion is more than sympathy. The hymn expresses it well: "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" It was not "they" who crucified Jesus - it was I. Yet, there is a danger that if we concentrate on the sufferings, we miss or lay less emphasis on the love with which he bore them.

Freely, Jesus has to will his Passion. Until Christ says 'yes' with his human will, the Passion cannot begin, and God cannot compel him. Unless Jesus says 'yes', the Passion will have no meaning.

Grace is not an anaesthetic. Jesus had no personal love for, nor any desire to suffer. He accepted sufferings because they were the will of the Trinity, and the strength to accept them came to him from the Trinity (Heb. 5: 8-9). I reflect on myself, and I learn from Christ how to give meaning to my sufferings and how to help others to give meaning to theirs.

**Jesus suffers alone. Healthy compassion requires that we should not imagine we are alleviating or reducing what he then suffered. All is owed to Christ. Contemplation of the Passion demands self-abasement.**

*From CLC Formation Phase III*

## 2.4 CLC DEVELOPMENT AND THE ACTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*In the Spiritual Exercises, the preparatory prayer [46] we note: We ask that all our intentions, actions and operations be directed solely to the praise and service of the Divine Majesty. This is really about God's one intention and action. We attribute to Ignatius the following: "Pray as if everything depended on God; work as if everything depended on you." Once we get that as clear as we can **in prayer** about God's one intention and action in a situation, then we **work** as if everything depended on us. In other words, we do the best we can and leave the rest to the Father (like Jesus did) – leaving the success or failure of our actions to the one action of God. (Wm. Barry SJ). Discerning the action of the Holy Spirit is part of this 'doing the best we can'.*

In the First Week Rules for discernment [313-327], Ignatius gives us a clear description of two major 'spiritual' movements which he calls spiritual consolation and spiritual desolation so that we can notice them, understand them, and accept or reject them' as we make progress as followers of Christ in furthering the Reign of God.

**Spiritual consolation** (Rule I:3 and Rule II:2) has its source in God and is intended to help us make progress in the Christian spiritual life according to God's "one intention and action".

**Spiritual desolation** (Rule I:4) implies that some part of our "affectivity" is under the influence of the 'evil spirit', (a source that is not God.) This makes it difficult to 'perceive' how God is with us and leading us (as individuals and as a group).

One of the basic aims of the 'enemy of our human nature' is to destroy the life of faith, hope, and love ... or failing that, to stunt its growth and progress- especially through **discouragement**. Another way is through **deception**. Jules Toner SJ, in his book, *Discernment of Spirits* (p. 63) says: "*Before we take up Ignatius' Rules about spiritual consolation and spiritual desolation, let us consider two 'effects' of the Holy Spirit which Ignatius holds are more fundamental than consolation and desolation. These are **courage and energy, and clarity and truth**. These are effects (and proofs) that the Holy Spirit is indeed active within the depths of a person*" (or the combined depths of a CLC group).

### COURAGE AND ENERGY

*Courage and energy* is a phrase which occurs more than once in the Spiritual Exercises but it is also something basic to Ignatian spirituality. In Ignatius' thinking, it has

special significance to our response to temptations and desolation or to any kind of obstacle to spiritual growth that leads us to **discouragement**. Sp. Ex. [324] *"In the actual time of desolation we should consider that we can do much with God's grace, which always remains with us, to resist all spiritual enemies, drawing **ENERGY** from our Creator and Lord."*

Growth or regression depends on whether the Christian (or CLC group) cooperates with the Holy Spirit and puts out this courage and energy to overcome selfish inclinations and fears that lessen love for God and God's glory. This courage and energy can carry a number of overlapping meanings: *force, vigor, strength, power ...* but they are all related to 'acting' – whatever, what moves us forward and acting against what holds us back. Ignatius puts this 'effect' of the Holy Spirit **FIRST** in the list of the effects of the 'good spirit' and is very clear that this has no necessary bond with a felt experience of spiritual consolation! This has **GREAT SIGNIFICANCE** for group guides as they learn how to discern spirits in individuals and in groups!

## **CLARITY AND TRUTH**

The second work of the Holy Spirit intended to overcome the work of the 'enemy of our human nature' (to destroy or stunt our growth in Christ) is **clarity and truth**. This work of the Holy Spirit opposes **deceptions and confusions** in our experiences. The influence of the evil spirit is to thrust obstacles in our way, to disquiet us with false reasons for the sake of impeding progress. To remove these kinds of obstacles involves conquering false reasons with true ones, confused reasons with clear ones. The power to think truthfully, clearly and comprehensively about situations that stir spiritual movements (like courage and energy) is a gift of the Holy Spirit – not only during consolation but **ALSO** during desolation, deception and even during times of calm. The unmasking of fallacies and deceptions are of essential importance for the Christian spiritual life. This action and 'effect' of the working of the Holy Spirit (clarity and truth) is, in fact, more important in times of desolation than consolation.

## **IGNATIUS FIRST TWO RULES AS A BASIS FOR DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS**

Given this understanding of these fundamental principles of how the Holy Spirit works (before even considering spiritual consolation and spiritual desolation), it is also important for CLC guides to understand *how to apply* Ignatius first two Rules [314, 315] (1:1 and 1:2) related to the 'spiritual condition' of the person or the group.

In Rule 1:1 (the one who goes from sin to sin) the spiritual "thrust" towards God may be still there though it is weak. This must be taken into account because the action of the Holy Spirit will be harmonious **IN SOME MEASURE** even as the predominant experience of the Holy Spirit will be painful as it clashes with the more dominant 'carnal' life "thrust" predominating in the person or the group. That is, the carnal or 'way from God' thrust will tend to **DROWN OUT** the more subtle harmonious

movement in a person or group that is still open or desiring to respond to God/God's call.

In the same way – and more importantly – for guiding individuals or groups is that Rule 1:2 (the one going from good to better) means that they can ALSO have a weaker or carnal “life thrust” in a more *hidden* but still functioning way. We often notice this rearing its ugly head in a person or a group in more subtle ways. As a consequence, the maturing Christian (or CLC group) can experience movements from both sources (those that are harmonious with God's lead, otherwise temptation would be impossible) and spiritual movements from the Holy Spirit which are disturbing or are manifested as a subtle dis-ease (because of the more hidden ‘carnal’ thrusts).

Consider the Rich Young Man ... Jesus' call to him touched the ‘carnal’ aspect of his being – his **attachment** to wealth which CLASHES with this ONE thrust of the young man's life that was not aligned with God's one intention and action for his life. Because he was a spiritually maturing person, he felt SAD because he was unwilling to do what in his inmost self wanted to do - he did not WANT ENOUGH to conquer this aspect of his carnal self. If he was not a *maturing* person, he would not have experienced sadness in turning down Jesus' invitation. All this points to the need to discern ‘SADNESS’ as to its source. Sadness or discouragement is usually a sign of the activity of the evil spirit... but here, good discernment understands it as the natural RESPONSE to being acted upon by the good spirit in a yet unredeemed part of his heart. **THIS CAN ALSO HAPPEN IN A GROUP!**

*Notes taken and adapted from: Spiritual Direction & The Encounter with God: A Theological Inquiry by William Barry SJ*

#### FOR REFLECTION:

What difference will these insights have on my role as guide in helping my CLC group(s) discern the presence and action of God?

## 2.5 A COMMUNAL SPIRITUALITY

### A. SPIRITUALITY IS MULTIDIMENSIONAL

*For as in one body, we have many members, and not all the Members have the same function, so we, who are many, are One body in Christ, and individually we are members one of Another (Rom. 12:4-5)*

Spirituality concerns our life in the spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the source, the inspirer, and the sustainer of our spiritual life - in which we attempt to fulfill the spirit of the Gospels and the spirit of Jesus in every aspect of our lives. "There is one body and one Spirit... one hope... one faith... one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all". (Eph 4:4-6)

In the broad sense, *spirituality* describes the way that we approach life in terms of our relationship to God. It includes our sense of identity (who we are), vocation (how we are to be and what we are to do), mission (what we are to accomplish), and celebration (how we relate to others and to the earth). It includes qualities of our being such as honor, justice, love, and faith; the way we know ourselves, others, and God; and our communion with others and God. Spirituality embraces the various movements of spirits that are present within us at all times and draw us to God who is the One, the Beautiful, the True, and the Good. These movements can come from observing the stars or a beautiful sunset, esteeming the insights of a scholar, or admiring a person dedicated to humanity's well being. Spirituality takes seriously the inducements and motivations that determine our decisions and actions.

Fundamentally, spirituality is related to our personhood. Our person includes our body, psyche, and spirit. *A person is a being in relationship with other persons, which necessarily includes a personal way of relating to the environment (plants and animals)*. This means that there is no person who is in total isolation. However, individuals can experience themselves as totally isolated from other persons and the earth through independence or being ignored. They can also feel a sense of isolation in suffocating or oppressive situations.

In such instances the healing process requires individuation so that persons recognize and accept their importance and, through this, discover their own identity and sense of self-worth. *This is properly done in a communal setting through affirmation of relationships with other humans, the earth, and God*. The process of healing includes an integration of the individual with others. Gradually individuals come to a greater appreciation of themselves through a free, responsible inter-change with community.



Spirituality is multidimensional in concept and experience. It builds on one's basic belief in God and a spirit-filled world. It includes the images one has of God, self, other humans and the rest of creation, expresses meaning and motivation, and discovers interior responses and reactions that lead to external action. Spirituality is ideal and motivational and not necessarily achieved at all times. It influences a person's sense of identity and governs the preferred way he or she wishes to live human life. Spirituality affects a person's image of self as he or she operates in personal prayer, lifestyle, and activities with other humans. "One's spirituality is the basic perspective, horizon, motivation, desire, ideal or image from which a person finds personal meaningfulness and energy in a God-centred life. These elements influence judgements about life, decisions in response or reaction to life and actions taken to live out one's life"

*John J. English SJ, Spiritual Freedom 1995 pg. 275*

## **B. THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF OUR CLC VOCATION**

**Relates to:**

- **Being with Jesus**
- **Living as the People of God**
- **Living an Ignatian Identity**

### **PREAMBLE**

Growth in the spiritual dimension of our CLC vocation can be both a joyful and challenging journey. At times we find ourselves mostly encouraged. At other times we seem to return to a "familiar" place and wonder if we have grown all that much. At other times we become confused about the meaning of what we are living and don't know quite how to move forward.

We know that our CLC way of life holds the Spiritual Exercises as the specific source and characteristic instrument of our spirituality (GP 5). Therefore, at times, the Exercises can provide a helpful frame for us to reflect on where we are. The dynamic in which we find ourselves can often point to a simple next step or to the next phase of our journey. With such awareness, we can cooperate more fully with God's grace leading us and transforming us into men and women for others.

## PREPARATORY REFLECTION:

Given the above preamble, please read the following article, The Four Seasons and the Spiritual Exercises, (adapted from an article by Joseph Tetlow SJ). Please **ponder** the descriptions of the four seasons correlated to the spiritual growth dynamics of the Exercises. Then respond to the two questions below.

## QUESTIONS:

1. With which season of growth do you most identify personally? What is happening in your prayer and life that invites you to say that?
2. With which season of growth do you most identify the group you guide? What is happening in the group's life or way of proceeding that invites you to say that? (Note: *If you are not currently guiding a group, please use your home CLC group for this question*)
3. I may find myself or the community I guide- straddling two seasons of growth at a time, if so, what invites you to say that.

## C. THE FOUR SEASONS AND THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

*The Guide helps to discern the communal growth of the CLC.*

### PREAMBLE

*When we are serious about spiritual growth and the call to serve others, we sometimes wonder 'where we are'. It is somewhat like looking at the topological map of a mountain - but the map does not tell you which country or which hemisphere it is in. Discovering 'where we are at' with Christ can be like that. It might be helpful to think of our interior life in terms of **four seasons**. The "seasons" here mean both our internal dynamics as well as the actualities of our life world. This does not mean they are necessarily "long term" phases but that they are more indicators of our current growth dynamic. The following uses calendar seasons to invite growth in self-knowledge as disciples on mission.*

## SEASON OF SUMMER

During this season of growth, we seem to be growing day by day. We are aware of our need and desire for God. Life is 'humming' along as we lean more and more into God with growing trust, and we do not feel any great pressure to have life all figured. Our days move along with helpful routines that support and enliven us. We enjoy whatever nurtures our faith and especially like being with others who have similar desires. Our following of Jesus is marked by a growing perseverance and faithfulness. We attend to the Spirit speaking to us in the everydayness of our lives - in the hiddenness of our family life or in the more public manifestations of our discipleship. During this season of coming summer, we come to know more deeply that we are loved and valued, we begin to be aware (again) of our limitations. We even find ourselves open to be shown what needs to be changed in us to become more who we are called to be. We are noticing strong desires that are about the new heart God wants to give us, especially in our way of seeing and acting in our life world.

*The season of Summer is like the growth dynamic of the Principle and Foundation or the disposition days which prepare us for the graces of the First Week.*

## SEASON OF FALL

And then there are the seasons of growth when we feel the *weight* of our own weaknesses, limitations, and sinfulness - and that of others. We might even do something we thought we had truly put behind us or we fail to do something that we had determined to do. We begin to get in touch with obstacles to being what all we desire to be. We may discover that our motives for serving are less noble than we thought or that we are caught up in our defensive ways of seeing or acting. We may find we have been making decisions that really distract us from our deepest desires or that we have been deliberately deceiving ourselves. Sometimes it feels as if we are stuck. Yet even as we give in to our weaknesses, we know we will come through the struggle because the God we have come to know forgives again and again and sets us free. This is the season of Fall when we join the cycle of life and death that belongs to this earth of ours. Some things have to die in us to find new life. When we pass through this dynamic of spiritual growth, we are set free to follow Christ in a deeper way.

*The season of Fall is like the growth dynamic of the First Week of the Exercises.*

## SEASON OF WINTER

We all go through times of change, loss, confusion, or darkness. Our inner world and our life world seem to match. We may be in turmoil at some level in our family/community, career/ministry, health, economic situation. We may be suffering from the sin/self-centeredness of others, or from unjust situations/structures. During

this season of growth our discipleship may be lived in a kind of depression or doubt. In such a season of life we are walking with Jesus-Christ in his Passion. It's important to understand that this is not merely metaphor: Jesus warned His disciples that they would feel rejected, experience discouragement, even be hunted down and persecuted. During this season of growth, we are called to let the power of the Cross, produce fruit in us. St. Paul said that we are to fill up the sufferings that Christ Jesus has still to undergo for the sake of his body, the Church. And so sometimes we live in the Passion of Jesus, feeling the terrible weight of taking up our cross daily.

*The season of Winter is like the growth dynamic of the Third Week of the Exercises.*

### SEASON OF SPRING

In this season of spiritual growth, we experience ourselves 'sprouting' new life. We go along working hard, co-labouring with Christ and praying easily. Discerning the beckoning finger of God about where to labour with Christ feels natural to us. Our desires and energies for mission are in harmony and our life world seems filled with promise. We notice a joy in us - joy in our prayer, in our work, in our ministry, in our family/community, in our friendships... we experience a kind of 'in the flow'. This is a highly energized season of growth as disciples and apostles.

*The season of Spring is like the growth dynamic of the Fourth Week of the Exercises.*

*written by Fr. J. Tetlow*

## 2.6 WHAT IT MEANS TO HAVE FAITH

### A. FAITH IS...

Faith is belief that God is leading us to become in tune with the universe, however different we see ourselves to be.

Faith is trust in the unknown goodness of life without demand for certainty in the science of it.

Faith is belief that the God we call "Our God" is either the God of all or cannot possibly be God at all.

Faith is confidence in darkness, for the willingness to trust in the deep-down humanity of others as well as in our own may be the deepest act of faith we can possibly devise. Faith is the willingness to see God in others---in their needs and ideas, their hopes and plans---as well as well as in ourselves.

Faith is the certainty that God is working through others just as certainly as God is working through us for the good of all humankind, indeed all of the community of life. (For these things are surely the only things that can possibly save the globe from our own unmaking of it.)

Faith, real faith, real willingness to forgo our own need to either understand God's ways with humankind or control them ourselves, is the real reason for celebration. Because faith is not about understanding the ways of God. It is not about maneuvering God into a position of human subjugation, making a God who is a benign deity who exists to see life as we do.

Faith, in reality, is not about understanding at all. It is about awe in the face of the God of all. And it is about awe that inspires jubilation in the human soul.

Faith is about reverencing precisely what we do not understand---the mystery of the Life Force that generates life for us all. It is about grounding ourselves in a universe so intelligent, so logical, so clearly loving that only a God in love with life could possibly account for it completely.

When we centre our power outside ourselves, which is the essence of faith, we have something greater than our smallness. We take our lack of control as a sign of God's

presence in the world. It is precisely because of our smallness that we can come to see and trust the greatness of God that surrounds us. It is only then that we can really see the face of God in the face of others.

Faith in what we cannot control, do not see, cannot understand, destroys the idol that is ourselves. It is the deep-down belief that we are not the be-all and end-all of the universe that can save us from ourselves. It is the awareness of being part of something vast and intelligent and well intentioned that gives purpose to life, that leads us to seek beyond the horizons of our smallness to the hope that tomorrow, warped as we may be today, we can all be better.

Faith in God is the only ground we have for faith in ourselves, in humanity, in life itself. Then, we may care enough about others, about the purpose of God for all life, to go beyond the kind of religion that turns God into a local deity and life into a zero-sum game in which the winner takes all and losers abound.

Faith is one long song of gratitude, sung into a dark night, the only end of which is another challenging dawn.

***Someone said to me "Our mission is not to survive the storm but to learn to dance in the rain"!!!***

*Taken from "Uncommon Gratitude" by Joan Chittister and Rowan William*



*'Faith is the bird that feels the light when the dawn is still dark'*

*Rabindranath Tagore*

## B. ACTING WITH HOPE IN THE WORLD TODAY

The larger Church is the worldwide faith-community which humanly mediates our joint witness to the reign of God. The Church is immersed with all the people in the sinful world and must again and again seek forgiveness and renewal. But despite all the wrongs in the Church, and all the sufferings of the Church's people, there is a continual hope in Jesus Christ, who calls the Church every day to new tasks, who overcomes all enemies, who frees the people from all false involvements and remains ever true to this People in compassionate love.

### LET'S CORRECT OUR WAY OF THINKING

*Jesus didn't come to solve a problem; he came to reveal the true nature of God as Love. It is not the world that is sinful because it did not create sin. But humanity creates sin in the world.*

*Jesus did not come to change the mind of God about humanity. It did not need changing. Jesus came to change the mind of humanity about God! God is not someone to be afraid of but is the Ground of Being and on our side.*

# SECTION THREE

3.1 DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES #1 - #9 .....	81
A. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #1 .....	81
B. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #2 .....	85
C. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #3 .....	91
D. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #4 .....	96
E. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #5 .....	99
F. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #6 .....	103
G. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #7 .....	107
H. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #8 .....	114
I. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #9 .....	119
3.2 THE CLC CHARISM.....	125
A. CLC CHARISM: VISION, COMMUNITY, MISSION .....	125
B. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY .....	126
3.3 OUR COMMON MISSION .....	130
A. THREE AREAS OF MISSION .....	130
B. CHRIST AND SOCIAL REALITY .....	131
FOR A MORE JUST WORLD.....	132
WITNESSING TO OUR WAY OF LIFE .....	132
STANDING AS PROPHETS IN OUR WORLD .....	132
FORMATION THROUGH EXPERIENCE AND ACTION .....	133
NETWORKING AND COLLABORATING .....	133
C. CHRIST AND CULTURE.....	133
D. CHRIST IN DAILY LIFE.....	135
E. MEANS FOR MISSION .....	137
3.4 A REFLECTION .....	139



## 3.1 DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES #1 - #9

### THE GROUP GUIDE UNDERSTANDS that...

The CLC Group Guide has broad felt knowledge of the spirit, intent and vision of CLC presented through the CLC General Principles:

*"The General Principles are a very rich text inspired by current theology and the tradition of CLC. They are, however, expressed in a very condensed form. Their richness becomes evident only after careful reading and reflection. Whoever reads them carefully, and this is what a guide should do, will realize how their spirituality flows from the Kingdom and the Incarnation contemplations of the Exercises. Moreover, familiarity with the G.P. is a guarantee that the guide is not simply doing his or her own thing or assisting his or her own group, but collaborating with groups of lay people, helping them to become what they want to be and to live their vocation within the Church. This seems to be a basic attitude for a genuine guide, and one of its expressions is the knowledge, understanding and identification with the G.P."*

*From Progressio Supplement #33, Formation of Group Guides pg. 20*

## A. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #1

### GOD'S GIFT AND THE GIFT OF SELF

The love and well-being with which God endows us is the starting point of the General Principles. GP 1 reminds us that CLC came to birth around the mystery of the Annunciation and Incarnation, the loving initiative of the Trinity which finds a welcome in Mary. From the Incarnation unfold the dynamics of walking in the path of Jesus and identifying with his options, which are at the root of the CLC vocation.

### ***A contemplative and compassionate God***

The solemn and three-dimensional framework of the Contemplation of the Incarnation, in St Ignatius's little book of the Spiritual Exercises (101, 110), is the opening of what is going to constitute the heart of the retreatant's experience at the central stage in the process of these Exercises. It is also what introduces the text of the General Principles of the Christian Life Community, who consider the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius to be the "specific source and characteristic instrument" of their spirituality (GP 5).

At the heart of both, there is the mystery of the gift of God, of the Three Divine Persons who contemplate "the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions" (GP 1). The God presented by Ignatius in this contemplation is, therefore, a contemplative and compassionate God, a Trinity who, on the basis of what they want, contemplating humanity lost and sinful, choose and, anew, make up their mind to give themselves totally, in a saving and liberating praxis, to this lost and divided humanity.

The love of God is unconditional and eternal. This compassionate concern and the decision that follows from it are the expression of this love which is "faithful forever"... and has been since the beginning of time.

### ***Humanity divided***

What God contemplates is humanity "divided by sin". Today we can express this "division" of humanity in terms of the breaking up of the three basic relationships: Our parent and child relationship with God, since we have made ourselves the children of other gods (children of power, of money, of pleasure); the sister/brotherhood relationship amongst ourselves, since we preferred being self-sufficient, and exploiting each other; and our relationship of stewardship with nature, since we preferred to take its gifts for ourselves (finding ourselves ensnared by them) instead of being its guardians. God's healing and reconciling gaze lets us rebuild these three broken relationships. This decision, this choice by God, means identifying with humanity in every way, even in the most painful and negative situations, in order to assume and redeem the human condition from inside. Humanity is given the real possibility of beholding God through this gift of Jesus Christ, and so of "taking part through Him, with Him and in Him in this loving initiative which expresses God's promise of faithfulness for ever."

### ***God takes on poverty***

Assuming the narrow limits of the human condition, the infinite God is incarnated and placed at the centre of history. Abandoning all the riches of divinity to be placed "among the poor", God takes flesh and is born of Mary, "the poor Virgin of Nazareth." God accepts and takes on the limits of what is human, the basic principle of the dynamics of the Incarnation: in Jesus, nothing that is human is unfamiliar to God.

We can confirm that in the Incarnation, God "takes seriously" the concrete, daily reality of that which is human, with its dramas and its difficulties. In the "God who contemplates" we see a God who yields to being touched by the history of humankind. The universal God, at this instant in human history, puts divine love into action and surrenders everything - the Almighty humbled at one particular moment lost in history, where the Incarnation of the Word took place in Jesus of Nazareth. "His state was divine, yet he did not cling to his equality with God, but emptied himself... and being human, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death" (cf. Phil 2:5-11).

In the infinite expanse of the universe and of all humanity, in the divine infinity of the glorious throne of the Eternal Trinity which St Ignatius puts before the dazzled eyes of the retreatant (Sp. Ex. 101-104) there follows the house, the dwelling and the body of Mary in the scorned little town of Nazareth in Galilee, as the history of the theme to be contemplated and a Composition of Place. These particular circumstances, humble and so human, are to be the circumstances of the Incarnation, the focal point of the indivisible whole of Christian experience.

Amongst the men and women whom the Incarnate Word calls us to meet, the poor have a privileged position. It is amongst them that the Word is placed in its Incarnation, "sharing with them their condition" (GP 1). Because of this, it is beginning with them - in whom the gift of God is most brightly and strongly manifest - that "Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity within our human family.

It is out of the weakness and oppression suffered by the poor, out from where life is most threatened, oppressed or crushed, that the power and glory of God, the Lord of Life, can shine and sparkle most brightly. It is in the short and hard lives of the poor of the Earth that the full dimensions of what God is are shown: Creator and source of life, who can make the desert flower, raise dry bones to make a fighting army and make the virgin and the barren woman give birth (cf. Is 65:1, Ez. 37, Lk 1:36-48).

God does this, not by imposing from above, passing over time and the human condition, but by taking all this on from the inside, becoming a complete gift of love, stripped of glory and majesty, in all poverty, obedience and humility, in the form of Jesus Christ, Yahweh's servant, "Obedient unto death on the cross" (cf Phil 2:5-11), in whom the primitive community and the first witnesses recognized the Lord, the Anointed One of God (cf Acts 2:22-36).

### *Our surrender to God*

The dialectic between the **universal** of God and the **particular** of the human condition marks not only the moment of the Incarnation of the Word in Mary, but also the process of the Incarnation lived by Jesus. The Incarnation, though it was a mystery

of universal dimensions, can only be seen, contemplated and lived in the particular that is to the extent that it is made concrete in history.

Thus we, 'members of the Christian Life Community', who have 'composed these General Principles', are called to open ourselves to this gift of God which is brought to us in Jesus Christ and makes us capable of the gift of ourselves. We will live these dynamics in the particularity and the poverty of our lives, 'in each situation of our daily life', open to 'the needs of our times' (GP 2), in a 'freely chosen local community' (GP 7).

The **gift of self** is the vocation of the CLC member. CLC is a path which enables us to respond to God's gift to us with a gift just as total, fervent and radical, though limited. This fervour and this radicality are expressed when we make our own "the options of Jesus Christ" (GP 1), when we take on poverty and humility in our lives (GP 8d), when our lives are centred on his paschal mystery (GP 5), when we participate frequently in the Eucharist and are nourished by his Body and Blood (GP 12a).

All of this will mean that each of us lives our vocation intensely in a world marked by injustice and poverty. It means living in such a way that the contemplation of the "mysteries of the life of Christ" - as offered to us by Ignatius in his Exercises - will lead us to share and feel for the situation of the poor, where Jesus continues today to be incarnated, to live his passion, and be resurrected in an Easter still possible thanks to the love of God the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit.

### *Under the movement of the Holy Spirit*

It is this same Spirit which continues today to bring about God's gift to us and to make it possible for us to give in return, "in all our particular circumstances" (GP 1). This same Spirit, who touched Mary in all fullness at the Annunciation, and who made Jesus proclaim his mission in the synagogue in Nazareth, is the one who will make us into "witnesses before all people by our attitudes, words and actions", making ours Jesus's mission "of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, setting the downtrodden free and proclaiming the Lord's year of favour" (GP 8).

Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, is the real possibility, given to humankind for ever, of making history over again. He gives history back a new logic that can draw it back towards God, with that same God as its starting point. Human life - our life - founded on the Incarnation of the Word, is Christ-like life, a life of discernment in the Spirit, following in the path of the Son, and doing the will of the Father.

### *Contemplatives in action*

Seeing history "in a contemplative way" has meant, since the Incarnation, seeing it through the eyes of the poor and exploited. The Incarnation demands of us and

pushes us towards a change of view, a change of "from where" we see and understand history. God's power is only seen with the eyes of weakness, with the eyes of those who wait to be freed and to be recognized in their original dignity. The experience of love which brings about the salvation of humankind and of history, which recreates history starting from God, becomes an experience possible for us. God offers it freely, the Incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and asks us to take part "Through Him, with Him and in Him" in this experience of love and service. And so, the task put before us in following the path of Christ is the continuing of his work: to **bring people back** to God, to create and recreate the bonds of **sisterhood and brotherhood**, and rediscover **stewardship** of nature, putting it at the service of God's original plan.

The challenge thrown down to us is to make this present and operational in our social, economic, religious and cultural realities, so different and so changing. To put it another way, meditating on the Incarnation finds its natural continuation in the Meditations of the Kingdom (Sp. Ex. 91) and the Two Standards (Sp. Ex. 136).

Beginning with the love and service we receive from a God who promises and shows us everlasting faithfulness, we too, in CLC, can launch ourselves into the fascinating adventure, the continual apprenticeship of *loving and serving in all things*.

## B. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #2

### THE SPIRIT IS OUR GUIDE

GP 2 is a fundamental text, which gives primacy to the Spirit and at the same time recognizes the necessity for intermediate structures, showing that there is no conflict between these two dimensions. In this sense, it could be said that GP 2 constitutes a key to reading the whole of the General Principles, since it indicates the attitude and tone with which they should be read. Because of this, failing to take in this Principle could lead to understanding the GPs and GNs too rigidly, and to an incorrect interpretation of the CLC process outlined in the General Norms.

GP 2 also contains a rich summing-up of the CLC vocation and introduces from the start such important themes as discernment, freedom, and being at God's disposal, presenting the CLC style as an active opening to the Spirit of the Lord.

## GP 2 IS A FUNDAMENTAL TEXT...

### *The primacy of the Spirit*

This is a fundamental text because it provides us with the key to understanding the whole of the General Principles: they are not to be understood literally, but spiritually, that is under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, with a permanent attitude of discernment.

In comparison with the text of the GPs of 1971, a fundamental change can be perceived, present throughout the whole text, which makes a strong impression. Where it was said in 1971 "our Movement", we now say "our Community", showing how far we travelled before and after Providence '82 with the near-unanimous approval of that World Assembly: CLC is a World Community (see, further on, the commentary on GP 7).

The final phrase "for progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all people" did not appear in the revised text put forward by the Executive Council. At the Bolivian community's suggestion, the Alternative Text, the one approved in this case, retained this phrase from the GPs of 1971. The Guadalajara World Assembly voted almost unanimously for the alternative version, which demonstrates the feeling of the assembled community about the CLC mission.

Saint Ignatius, in the Preface to the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, writes "for our part, more than any exterior constitution, the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Spirit inscribes in our hearts must help towards this" (that is the service of God our Lord). With this, he gives the reason for and sense of the written Constitutions and establishes the balance between the external and internal law, giving priority to the latter. This is also the point of our GP 2.

### *A necessary intermedium*

A possible trap we could fall into here, in particular the younger ones amongst us, would be to see the GPs (and the General Norms) as a "construction" imposed on life, as a "bureaucratisation" of life itself, failing to take account of the fact that fulfilling great ideals also requires organisation. A general allergy to the institutional is one of the signs of our times.

In the light of this text, a sense can be grasped of the kind of means necessary to live our ideal of life: to live it in relation to the Spirit, who dynamizes us from inside. Without this it is not possible to understand the deep meaning of the GPs.

### ***How to read them: a book for praying with***

The text of the GPs is a spiritual text rather than a legal document. More than something to be studied and analyzed, it is a text to be inwardly absorbed, a book of personal and community prayer. One of the deepest and most gratifying experiences of the World Assembly in Mexico, for many, was the "Communal Reading Groups" in which ten to twelve people from different countries read together the main articles of the GPs. After personal prayer, we shared whatever struck a chord inside us about some passage or phrase. Through sharing and listening to what each person felt inwardly, we would learn how the Spirit itself was leading us to come together in close union.

### **THE CLC VOCATION SUMMED UP *"Let yourselves be led by the Spirit" (Gal 5:16)***

CLC is a brother/sisterhood of the Gospel. What unites the Community is not a legal code but the spirit of the Gospel, which creates a way of life - a life experienced together and separately. It is the sharing of fundamental convictions, a system of gospel values, a way of going about things, priorities. These cannot be written down, but they are so deep and latent within us that they constitute our own vocation and identity, "unity in love and action" (GP 7).

Being a Christian way of life, it can only be centered on that which constitutes the centre of Christian life: love. Love is the Spirit of Jesus which lives in each one of us and inspires us from within to the way of following Christ. We are "Christians... who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with him..." (GP 4).

The GPs are no more than an aid - a necessary means - to following this path. Without the interior law of love, though, they are meaningless. The Christian option can only be a way of freedom: the freedom of the Children of God. "Christ freed us so that we would remain free" (Gal 5:1).

This *interior law of love* is a prompting inside of every person which drives us to do good through love. Thus, human beings are free, autonomous, and at the service of others. "Serve one another in works of love" (Gal 5:14). Formed in this way is the principle of interiority which was born with the preaching of the prophets in the Old Testament (cf. Jer. 31:31-34) and extended by Jesus.

We cannot, however, ignore the conflicts. Humankind is a remorseless idol-maker. We all have this tendency in us. The external and written rule is the kind of thing we often make into an idol. Our Community, everywhere and at all levels, could often suffer from the bitterness of these conflicts, but what God asks of us is love, not legal formulations, nor external observances.

Because of this, the personal, inward digestion of these GPs can help by purifying and balancing out, seeking, before all else, the Spirit of love and freedom. This Spirit lives

in us, speaks in our hearts and expresses itself in our lives, in the communication of each one of us, and deep in every word of the GPs.

It is here that a listening attitude - characteristic of the way we run group meetings, encounters, courses and assemblies, and our own lives - comes into its own. It is here that it is meaningful and necessary.

### ***The Spirit of freedom in ordinary life***

The "interior law of love... which the Spirit inscribes in our hearts" is the source and the principle of our creativity and our bearing of the fruits of Christian and apostolic life, since it "expresses itself anew in each situation of our daily life." If we allow ourselves to be moved by the Spirit, we will discover how the Spirit respects "the uniqueness of each personal vocation" - of every kind of man and woman (cf. GP 4) - and makes us "open and free, always at the disposal of God."

So daily life becomes a place graced with the experience of the Spirit. Our CLC vocation has as its peculiar characteristic the call to be lived and fulfilled in the everyday and the actual, because we are called to seek and find God in all things, including and above all in the humdrum, in the ordinary, in the tangible, those things in which we are most involved, and not just in the exceptional, the extraordinary or the most remarkable.

CLC spirituality, because it is Ignatian, is a spirituality of the real. God can be revealed to us in all things. We must seek and find God in all things. This pedagogy leads us to love God in all things and all things in God. "We try to give an apostolic sense to even the humblest realities of daily life" (GP 8c).

### ***Being at God's disposal: the key to our charism***

The interior law of the Spirit of Love makes us "open and free, always at the disposal of God." These are the results of the action of the Spirit.

Such is the fruit of the Principle and Foundation of the Ignatian Exercises: indifference or inner freedom, which is not just freedom from all that is not God, but also freedom for all that God wants.

This emotional balance, which is Ignatian indifference, and which puts us truly at the disposal of God's will, is the fruit of our emotional commitment to Jesus Christ as the Lord of our lives. "Now this Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom", says St Paul (2 Cor 3:17).

The task of every CLC member, no matter what stage of the process they are at, is growing in being at God's disposal. This is the result of the grace of the Spirit but is also very much a part of what each of us "wants and desires" truly and deeply. The



goal or the end of our vocation and mission is "to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with him...", "to become committed Christians" (GP 4); "to become more competent workers and convincing witnesses" (GP 12). It demands that we "put ourselves at God's disposal". Without being open and available in this way, we cannot make those radical choices which our vocation prompts us to make: "to work for justice through a preferential option for the poor and a simple lifestyle" (GP 4). All of the General Principles ask of us this openness, this freedom and this availability. Without this, we will be able neither to hear nor to live out what they put forward as a Christian way of life.

### ***Our task: to answer, with Christ, to the needs of our times***

It is the Spirit itself who "challenges us to see our serious responsibilities and to seek constantly the answers to the needs of our times".

When Jesus proclaims his mission, we hear him saying "The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour" (Lk 4:18-19). It is in this way that Jesus answers the needs of his time and those of all time. We are called like him and with him, to make our response. We have been anointed and consecrated by the Spirit, to bring "the good news to the poor". Like Jesus himself, we must say each day "this text is being fulfilled today". "Our life is essentially apostolic" (GP 8). We must work with "all those of good will for progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all people" (GP 2), "struggling to change oppressive structures" (GP 8).

In the contemplation in the *Exercises* of the "Eternal King", we listen to the call of the Lord to work with him, that by following him in suffering, we may follow him in glory. We ask, "not to be deaf to his call, but prompt and diligent to accomplish his most holy will" (Sp Ex 91,95). In "To Attain the Love of God", we ask that with "intimate knowledge" of the many blessings received, we may "love and serve in all things" (Sp Ex 233). Accepting the spirit of these contemplations, we recognize that the encouragement and help to live everything in our life as a mission, announcing Jesus in word and deed, comes to us from the Spirit.

### ***With discernment***

It is the Spirit who guides us to permanent discernment "to seek constantly the answers to the needs of our times". "Personal and communal discernment" (GP 8c) is the tool which our spirituality gives us.

We should have mobility in mission; we can't turn what we achieve for others into an idol. Rather we should review it on the basis of analysis and discernment of the needs of our time, remaining open to the changes which the Spirit keeps prompting in us.

One of the dangers that can kill the life and creativity of our CLC groups, especially among adults, is settling down into a routine, into the routines of life; the routine of the group meeting, of its rhythm and frequency; the routine of our past experiences; the routine of what we have always done. Routine blocks the spirit of discernment and smothers the life of the Spirit.

***At the heart of a Church that is communion***

Union is also a fruit of the Spirit: "to work together with the entire People of God and all those of good will" (GP 2)

Our vocation is communal, ecclesial. We are companions of Jesus in his mission. Our charism and our spirituality are of and for the Church. We must know how to share within it, opening ourselves to working together with others.

This working "together" is what makes sure that CLC is not and cannot be a sect or a closed group in the Church. One of the most common risks is of turning our groups into cozy circles, which people feel good about because it gives them a feeling of security, so they get settled. This leads some to glorify their own particular group. The Spirit militates against this kind of settling-in. We are not there for ourselves, but for mission, to work in union with others, and to open ourselves to what others are doing in collaboration with us in our initiatives and institutions, for the building of the Kingdom.

## C. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #3

### A HISTORY OF GRACE

GP 3 helps us to see the persistence of the action of the Spirit. It invites us to rediscover our Ignatian origins, and to value the many gifts received over the centuries. It suggests to us an attitude towards our history and towards the present moment: gratitude, humility and faithfulness to this grace, a communion which transcends the limits of space and time, and a capacity for renewal in the Church. The text also has a juridical value, pointing out the fact of Pontifical approval and setting CLC within the visible fabric of the Church. It also has a practical, pedagogical value in that those groups who have not taken part in the renewal process may define their vocation and their service in the Church, either in the CLC World Community as expressions of such, or outside of it, as diocesan or national associations.

### *Ignatian origins*

No.3 of the General Principles of the Christian Life Community sets the movement in a long history, underlining its continuity with the Sodalities of Our Lady, set up by the Society of Jesus and first received papal approved in the sixteenth century. It is not possible to understand the CLC of today without knowing this thread of their history, in particular their origins around the charismatic personality of St Ignatius of Loyola, and his Spiritual Exercises.

The GPs, first approved in 1968, correspond to an attempt at a renewal of the rich tradition of the Sodalities. It was, on the one hand, an attempt to return to their original inspiration, lost over the course of time, particularly in virtue of their separation from the Society of Jesus from the time of its suppression in 1773. On the other hand, it was sought to adapt them to the present day, most of all to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and the modernisation it gave rise to, though the idea of renewal was developing even before the Council.

The Sodalities are the fruit of Ignatius's Exercises. His first companions, as their missions in different Italian cities came to an end, formed groups of laypeople, with the aim of helping each other to follow Jesus and to put into practice the attitudes of prayer and service awoken by this spiritual experience. Father Tim Quinlan SJ, in *Progressio* of May 1988, set out the experience of Peter Faber in Parma, and suggested that in this and similar happenings we could find what could be called the "prehistory" of the Sodalities, today CLC. Set in the same perspective was the address of the World Ecclesiastical Assistant, Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, to the World CLC

Assembly in Guadalajara, particularly in the paragraphs relating to the first "companies" of Ignatian laypeople. There is no doubt that it was also part of this tradition when the Belgian Jesuit Jean Leunis, regarded as the founder of the Sodalities, brought together a group of students at the Roman College, with the aim of preparing them for apostolic work in the city of Rome. The particular characteristics of his group set it in continuity with these first "companies": the close union of faith and life; the emphasis on the community and apostolic dimension; and the Marian inspiration coming from the contemplation of the Incarnation.

Generally, in the Church, life is a step ahead of structures, and Church approval is the confirmation of an action of the Spirit which has already borne some fruit. Thus, after nearly twenty years, by virtue of its exceptional quality, and its location in the Roman College, model for the Jesuit schools which were springing up all over the place, the community founded by Leunis had become an example and a norm for the groups in the new colleges. This privileged position was recognized by Pope Gregory XIII in 1584, when he conferred on the Roman College Sodality the qualification of "Primary Group", which the others should reproduce and to which they should affiliate themselves.

This rich evocation of Ignatian origins and subsequent development is put together in GP 3 and confirmed by the authority of the Church in the decree of approval. It is interesting to note that GP 3 was the only one to be explicitly quoted and reiterated in that decree.

### *The persistence of grace*

Having reaffirmed the richness and the originality of the "prehistory" and the first developments, GP 3 invites us to consider the centuries that followed, in an attitude of openness and recognition towards our history.

Indeed, following the approval of the Prima Primaria, the Sodalities multiplied rapidly, as a lay movement at the service of the Church, animated by a deep spirituality and a great apostolic dynamism. This growth was founded particularly on the young vitality of the Society of Jesus itself, who offered just what the problems of the time demanded. The Jesuit college of that time, as an official institution of free public education, was in some way the heart of the town, and at its very heart, the Sodality and the Spiritual Exercises constituted the basic tool for the deepening of faith and apostolic service offered by the Jesuits to all those who aspired to keep growing in their Christian commitment.

Besides student Sodalities, there were also some from different social and professional groups. The importance of their contribution to the Church of that time is reflected in the enthusiastic words of Pope Benedict XIV in the bull "Gloriosae Dominae" of 1748: "The incalculable benefit that people of all classes of society have

drawn from these Sodalities, gifted with holy and wise rules in keeping with the different circumstances of the sodalists, is incredible".

But in the course of the second half of the eighteenth century, the suppression of the Society of Jesus by Pope Clement XIV was to change decisively the course of Sodality history. Until that point, they were all guided by Jesuits. With the disappearance of the Order, the Pope entrusted their supervision directly to local bishops, allowing them to create new groups. This decision gave rise to considerable growth. During the first two centuries, up until the suppression of the Jesuits, there were two and a half thousand groups. Afterwards, in the period up to the appearance of the GPs, over eighty thousand groups affiliated.

However, this evolution progressively distanced the Sodalities from their authentic spirit, not solely because of a massive expansion and a lack of selection and formation, due to the huge number of members, but also because of the abandoning of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, the guarantee of their specific charism. They turned into pious associations, given principally to encouraging devotion to the Virgin Mary. Their Marian devotion had itself changed for the most part. Initially Mary, contemplated in the scene of the Annunciation, was seen as an inspiration for the Sodalists' life of faith by her self-offering in service to the Lord and her mission on Earth. Later on, though, she came to be seen as more of a protector against the perils of the world.

With the reestablishment of the Society of Jesus in 1814, the Jesuits again began encouraging the Sodalities, but the movement as a whole had escaped their control. Halfway through this century, only one in twenty Sodalities was under their guidance, although the Holy See had newly entrusted them with the task of inspiring the movement and maintaining its original spirit. Not everyone realized what a change in identity had taken place in the Sodalities, but little by little, an awareness spread among the leaders of the need to return to the original Ignatian spirit. This was already being expressed in 1948, in Pius XII's Apostolic Constitution "Bis Saeculari".

In the time before the Second Vatican Council, a great number of Sodalities passed through periods of crisis. Many had started to use other names. At the request of the hierarchy, they became Catholic Action in many places. Others began to founder, and their activity diminished considerably. What was lacking was a more universal spirit, which is why it was necessary to recover the universality of the original charism, without jeopardizing effective involvement in local churches and local realities.

The GPs of 1968 represented the formulation in universal terms of this renewal plan. Ratified by the Holy See, they constituted the new framework in which the Sodalities of the whole world were to move forward from then on. This was a deep-rooted change, symbolised by the discarding even of the traditional name of "Sodalities", now re-christened CLCs. Mistakenly, many were determined to see this as a break

rather than a renewal, especially those who were ignorant of the first part of our history.

It is certain that the renewal weakened those Sodalities which were not already weakened. Among them, many kept legally to the new pattern, and how things went subsequently varies very much from one part of the world to another.

### ***An attitude to our history***

The spirit of the GPs is universal. It invites us to draw lessons from our history, to grow in relation to it, in the continuation of time-honoured grace and to live "in communion with all those who have preceded us". Communion will be possible if we place ourselves before our spiritual tradition "in love and prayer", with a view to the Church who has suggested sound models to us, "friends and valid intercessors who help us to fulfill our mission." With confidence, we can ponder the examples of Saint Ignatius, of Saint Francis Xavier or of Blessed Peter Faber; of St Francis of Sales, Saint Alfonso Maria Liguori or Saint Claude la Colombiere; or more recently Pier Giorgio Frassatti or Victoire Rasoarimalala. Long is the list of men and women canonised by the Church over the centuries, with whom we are in communion.

Today we find ourselves where the Spirit of the Lord has led us, which doesn't mean we have made no mistakes, nor that we won't continue to make them. The text and the spirit of GP 3 value positively the path that has been followed and the capacity to be renewed in faithfulness to a grace. In this sense the decree of approval which recalls the necessity for "renewal, in the Spirit, of the apostolic life, both personal and at the community level", is more explicit, having positively appreciated the origins and subsequent developments.

It is useless to go outside this dynamic process to look "from outside": from an idealized past, or a present seen in absolutes, with false dichotomies and spurious comparisons, by universalizing a local situation or rigidifying the universal; with unfair questions or hasty judgments; or by underestimating the demands of a vocation. Rather, GP 3 invites us to consider our own experience "from within" a time-honoured process guided by the Spirit, "from within" the Church and its successive confirmations, "from within" the difficulties and successes of the path we are following.

### ***The juridical value***

It is certainly true that the juridical aspects are not the most important and should not be overstated. Nevertheless, it is important not to fall into the trap of putting spirit and structures in opposition to each other. The Church, animated by the Spirit, has found and set up certain forms to contain the great richness of the gifts which the Spirit pours on the baptized. The juridical forms are neither perfect nor absolute, but they allow a clear and effective involvement in the communion and the mission

of the Church. As expressed in GP 3 and confirmed in the Decree of Approval, the Christian Life Community is "a public international Association of faithful, of pontifical right". The decree is clear about being a "confirmation" and not a new canonical establishment or approval, so reaffirming the continuity with the origins themselves and with the initial approval given in 1584. Being "of pontifical right" is a form of words which demonstrates the universal value of CLC, and which doesn't need to be closely examined in each case to see whether or not it is an authentic ecclesiastical expression. It was along these lines that numbers 30 to 38 of the General Norms were drawn up, dealing with the setting up and development of national communities and their sub-sections.

### *The pedagogic and organizational value*

GP 3 - establishing the continuity with tradition, positively valuing the renewal and clarifying the ecclesial aspect of CLC - has some important implications from the point of view of pedagogy and the development of organization.

It is clear that no one can use the CLC or Sodality name itself unless they belong to the one international organization which is in this tradition, according to the judgment of the authority of the Church. However, the international organization which we have in front of our eyes does not set out to subdue or stamp out the life and richness that exists locally. One can play a part in this international organization 'pleno jure' by the true acceptance of the GPs and the guidance of the World Community (cf. GN 3). But one can also contemplate having working relations on different levels, without usurping anyone's pastoral role, thereby creating a rich reserve of apostolic collaboration and means of formation. One could consider, for example, recognized associations in one diocese or more, necessarily subject to the bishops who approved them, who wish to be linked with CLC in order to gain from certain aspects of this tradition. Their belonging would have to be in line with General Norm 12 and its specific implementation in each country's national statutes (cf GN 35).

All in all, GP 3 is rich in spiritual and ecclesial content, and hence also rich in possibilities for planning future developments for giving better service.

## D. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #4

### THE PURPOSE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY

GP 4 is one of the best short presentations of the whole of our identity. When inviting people to approach the GPs for the first time, it is helpful to begin with this, because it transmits the core of what CLC means to its members. In step with the logic implicit in our name "Christian Life Community", GP 4 first focuses on the following of Christ, then invites us to witness in our lives and finally highlights the meaning and importance of community. Work for justice and simple lifestyle are shown as distinguishing marks of our CLC.

#### *Christians: building the Kingdom*

We are Christians, in other words, people who follow Jesus and work with Him in building up the Kingdom. This is the core of what CLC is all about. "Jesus was not a Christian", is the rather provocative title of a recent book. It is worthwhile to reflect on this title, though the book itself is not of interest to us. It is true that Jesus was not Christian, true in the sense that his purpose was not Christianity, but the fullness of life for all people. Jesus dreamt of God's Kingdom - all exegetes agree on this point. Perhaps we don't always realize how the Kingdom is connected with our daily experiences, even the most profane ones. At his first appearance in Nazareth, Jesus reads from the book of the prophet Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, and to proclaim the Lord's year of favour", and further on, "This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen." (Lk 4:16-21). Jesus was an incorrigible "world-improver", and this is also clear from his programmatic speech - the Sermon on the Mount. Maybe, though, it is even clearer in the description of the Last Judgment. It is by feeding the hungry, giving the thirsty something to drink, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned (Mt 25:31-46) that you will reach God - and these are all rather profane actions!

Jesus' purpose was the Kingdom of God. In the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius lets the Three Divine Persons look down from heaven to earth and conclude that the Second Person will become human, in order "to bring about the salvation of the human race" (cf. Sp. Ex. 102, GP 1). Again, Jesus' purpose is the salvation of all men and women, and our faith is related to this purpose. This purpose must also be, right from the start, the purpose of CLC. A spirituality only interested in or focused on its own inner development is false. Our being in CLC, our being in the Church, our Ignatian heritage, everything that we are, is for the service of the Kingdom of God.



When we bear in mind Jesus' purpose, we can understand what it means to follow Him more closely. In Jesus, God's Kingdom has dawned. Not only does He make the Kingdom closer to us, but He is the Kingdom of God right amongst us. It is not just a coincidence that the expression "Kingdom of God" disappears from the Acts of the Apostles and from St Paul's Letters. It seems that it is to give space to the spirituality of the imitation of the Lord. For Paul, true life means life in Christ.

So far, the text of GP 4 is simply about being a Christian. The purpose of CLC is indeed simply to form Christians. Ignatius never wanted the Jesuits to be called "Ignatian" after him, like the Benedictines after Benedict and the Franciscans after Francis. Ignatius' disciples were to be called after Jesus, because they were "Companions of Jesus". Perhaps for the same reason the General Assembly in Rome 1967 decided to choose the name Christian Life Community, relating it to Christ our Lord and without other references, for example to Ignatius.

And yet, CLC is a particular vocation within the Church. Even though it is always about the same Gospel, there are many windows through which we can see that Gospel. The proper charism of CLC can perhaps be defined by two elements. On the one hand, there is the dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises (see GP 5, on our sources) that determines the way in which we work for the Kingdom. On the other hand, there is a real-World Community to which we belong, normally through our belonging to a small particular group in which we exchange about our faith and our life. CLC as a way of life rests on those two pillars.

Before going on to the second paragraph of GP 4, let us consider the importance of one or two passages in the first paragraph.

No restrictions are foreseen on membership of our Community -"Men and women, young and adults, from all social conditions". While at the world level, e.g., at any World Assembly, we can find this diversity, at the national level this is not always true. Sometimes we forget the youth or are not able to reach them. At other times, the number of men and women is not well balanced. Very often, our membership reflects only one kind of social background. GP 4 is a challenge in this sense. Finally, it is important to understand that the expression "more closely" is related to the Ignatian sense of "magis", and does not contain an implicit comparison, in the sense of better or worse, with other vocations within the Church.

### ***Living: everything is possible, and yet not everything***

How do we actually live our being Christian? How do we try to make the Kingdom present among us? That is what the second paragraph of GP 4 is about.

We aim to become committed Christians in witnessing to those human and Gospel values within the Church and society. The sentence could just stop here. The CLC call

cannot be restricted because it comprises every area of life. The highlighting of the dignity of the person, the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation is not intended to be restrictive, as everything can be included in these areas, but rather wishes to be inspirational. In fact, CLC doesn't have a specific content to develop, but should touch the whole of our life. Our engagement can be social, political, scientific, cultural, ecclesial... and in any area CLC will provide us with a method and an attitude.

However, this non-restrictive approach does not mean neutrality. "We are particularly aware of the pressing need to work for justice through a *preferential option for the poor*". The Spiritual Exercises, and the CLC way, help us to find out what is God's will in our lives. They enable us to make choices in the Spirit of the risen Lord and to remain open to any possibility in front of us. But this is always from the perspective of the poor and humiliated Christ and His gift of self on the cross (Philippians 2:6-8). This key element will protect us against a "neutral" reading of the Gospel, which often hides a desire for riches and power. There is an unbreakable bond between authentic faith and work for justice, and this is what this sentence of GP 4 reminds us of.

In the Meditation on Two Standards (Sp. Ex. 136-146), Ignatius puts in front of us the choice of riches or poverty. He warns us that the spirit of evil will first tempt us with material wealth and then will invite us to undertake the next two steps: honour and pride. The Lord, though, invites us to the highest spiritual poverty and, if God chooses us, even to actual poverty. Humiliation and dishonour will follow, and from here true humility can grow. All our other choices flow from our choice of one of these directions. Just as the adoration of riches is at the beginning of many other and perhaps more serious evils, detachment from everything you own is a basic Christian attitude out of which will grow a true confidence in God, and only in God.

Our preference for the poor becomes concrete in our simple lifestyle. Each of us lives in a particular culture and milieu, and it is part of our spirituality to live amidst our own world. Within this, however, we choose simplicity, which is more than just sobriety. The simple lifestyle is first of all an expression of our freedom for God - Ignatian indifference, inner freedom. The simple lifestyle expresses also our solidarity with the poor, as we try to look at our world and society through their eyes.

### ***Community: in service of our mission***

The third part of this text brings together all that has gone before in the Community: a gathering of people who want to integrate better their faith and their daily life in all its dimensions, and who can recognise themselves in our charism. This gathering in community is immediately related to "apostolic service, especially in our daily environment", and to the "response to Christ's call from within the world in which we live".

Community is formed only with a view to the Kingdom of God, which grows through our being with Christ and working with Him, and through our being together with other companions in this great enterprise. The group, and the wider community therefore are never goals in themselves, but they are indispensable for us to develop a CLC way of life aiming at the growth of God's Kingdom. Like Ignatius and his first companions, we also want to remain united and permanently connected with each other for the sake of Christ's mission, which is ours.

The reason why the group - the local group and the World Community - are such powerful tools for the Kingdom becomes clear further on in the GPs. The group is "a concrete experience of unity in love and action" (GP 7). The group is thus a community of love. The group is also a faith community, i.e., it is for the members "a primary means to continue their growth", a place where a deep sharing of their faith and their life occurs on a permanent basis (GP 11).

## E. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #5

### SOURCES OF OUR SPIRITUALITY

*The basic point of GP 5 is the spirituality of CLC. It realises that, like all Christian spiritualities, CLC spirituality centres on Christ as presented in various bearers of the Christian tradition. It delineates this Christian spirituality, though, in accordance with the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. GP 5 reminds us that we are people of process and discernment and, to sustain this vocation, recommends some well-proven means of growth in the Spirit.*

### *Ignatian sources throughout the text*

To a certain extent one can read and recognize different elements of Ignatian spirituality in the GPs which precede and follow GP 5. Let us look at the GPs in terms of Ignatian spirituality.

**GP 1:** The first GP recalls the way St Ignatius has the exercitant pray with the contemplations of the Annunciation and Incarnation. We are to continue the work of the Trinity's initiative in sending Jesus and take up his options.

**GP 2:** That the GPs are not to be understood as formal laws but as responses to interior inspirations of love (from the Spirit in our hearts) for the good of all in our world.

**GP 3:** CLC follows the example of Ignatius who inspired small groups of women and men to grow in love for God and all humanity.

**GP 4:** Ignatius related to all manner of people who felt a sense of Christ's call. CLCs come together for the spiritual good of their own members and to bring gospel values to all humanity, especially the poor.

**GP 5:** Ignatian spirituality is the basic theme of this GP.

**GP 6:** Ignatius was always somewhat suspicious of his own motivations. For this reason, he constantly discerned his interior movement of spirits and he referred with great deference to the larger faith community's directives. Reading the signs of the times in tune with the Church's desire for the progress of all peoples fits Ignatius' spirit very well.

**GP 7:** Ignatius saw the Church as the extension of Christ in our world. He would appreciate the image of each local CLC relating to the World Community as a cell of the mystical body of Christ.

**GP 8:** This GP expresses the basic insight of Ignatius when trying to determine our apostolic missions, i.e., "Grace flows from the interior to the exterior." Thus, our own conversion of heart and the conversion of hearts of those we relate to apostolically are primary, and from this flow all other goods.

**GP 9:** Mary, Our Lady to St Ignatius, is a very significant person in the Exercises. This is especially so in the Triple Colloquies. Ignatius asks the exercitant to seek Mary's intercession when being challenged in various spiritual ways. Of course, she is a notable person in the contemplations of the Incarnation, Nativity, Hidden Life, Passion and Resurrection. Interestingly enough, the chapel of the Annunciation at the Jesuits' Roman College was the site of the first officially recognized Marian Congregation under John Leunis.

### ***The Paschal Mystery***

GP 5 emphasizes that CLC spirituality centers on Christ and in particular the Paschal Mystery - Christ's Life-Death-Resurrection.

Spirituality includes people's attitudes, desires, motivation, and spiritual energy which helps them to live the Christian life in this world. Basic to Christian living is a personal relationship with Christ and the following of his example of selfless dedication to humanity.

The concept of Paschal Mystery refers to the Hebrew Testament "Passover". There is the Passover of the angel in Egypt and the paschal lamb as the symbol of God's concern for the Hebrews. There is the passage through the desert under Moses' leadership and the Hebrews' crossing over the Jordan under Joshua, from Babylon to Jerusalem. For the Israelites these Passovers were a passing over from slavery to

freedom, from wandering in the desert to the Promised Land, from exile in Babylon to a return to Jerusalem. In Christ's case it is the passing through suffering and death to resurrection. Recognizing God in each moment calls for recognition of the ever-present life cycle - the birth, death, and regeneration of life.

### ***Revelation and Tradition***

Basic to any authentic spirituality is the tradition from which it comes. So, GP 5 insists that the spirituality of CLC is based on Scripture, the liturgy and the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. The CLC understands tradition as a living legacy influencing our lives. GP 5 also draws attention to the historical elements in our faith by pointing to the doctrinal development of the Church and the presence of God in the events of life.

All CLC are expected to learn how to pray with Scripture and use Scripture to understand and live their lives. They are expected to have a deep appreciation of the Church's communal worship of God, the Eucharist, recognizing that it is the place for their full participation in the Paschal Mystery. They are to bring their personal lives, concerns and activities with them to the Eucharist frequently.

CLC spirituality takes seriously what has happened historically and what is happening in individuals' and humanity's ongoing life experience. It is important to appreciate the ways the Church's interpretation of the events of Christ's life develops down the centuries to meet the constant changes in the experiences of humanity. We believe that God is constantly relating to all of us, even adjusting to us and calling us forth to love each other. This belief that God is active and working in our world calling us forth in responsibility to build a realm of peace, justice and love requires that we become discerners of the Spirit's activity both internally and externally as individuals and communities. CLC spirituality demands that we do social analysis in concrete situations and read the signs of the times as the human race lives through its various crises, successes and failures.

### ***The Spiritual Exercises***

It is important that the spirituality that flows from the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius be experienced and understood by CLC. The Exercises were first experienced by Ignatius at Manresa. He kept notes of his experiences and then gave some of them to different women and men whom he thought would be helped by doing his spiritual exercises. Only after observing their effect and constantly rewriting them did he make the final composition now known as the Spiritual Exercises of *St Ignatius Loyola*.

Ignatius saw how much his Exercises benefited those who made them. He saw how they helped people to recognize God in their lives and assisted them to discern how the Holy Spirit moved them to decide and act.

The full Spiritual Exercises are a series of about 120 prayer periods done intensively in 30 days or extensively over a 10-to-15-month period. The one performing them is accompanied by an experienced spiritual guide. They are designed to bring a person through various conversion experiences of creature hood, sinfulness, call and intimacy with Christ in his birth, public life, passion, death and resurrection. Within these conversion experiences the person gains appreciation of God's love and the necessary freedom to respond to the love of God moving her/his being in a manner of companionship with Christ.

### *People of process and discernment*

Vocation is a significant description of CLC's approach to their life. This life is not approached as a drudgery to be endured, a task to be accomplished or a career to be fulfilled. Rather, life is an ongoing relationship with God who is constantly drawing us beyond ourselves in an 'I-Thou' relationship. This relationship involves mutual sharing on the part of ourselves and of God. As the Trinity give themselves to us and call us forth to participate in the ongoing work of salvation, so we are to give ourselves and respond (cf. GP 1). But both the call and response are in a historical, developing world filled with many good and many bad ways of influencing the future. Discernment of spirits is imperative in a free global society in which we are partners with God and each other in building a better world.

GP 5 lists a number of practices to assist us in cooperating with the life-giving influence of the Holy Spirit. They are basically instruments to heighten our awareness of the interior movement of spirits as to whether they are from God or from our own selfish spirit within, or a deceptive spirit from beyond us.

Prayer for a CLC is always within the concrete world situation of life. It builds on a true sense of identity, that we are the beloved of God and, although limited creatures and sinners, we are called to be companions of Jesus. At times it will focus on our needs as dependent creatures caught in our sinfulness, begging forgiveness, or seeking the grace to forgive someone else. At other times it will focus on helplessness as we face an apostolic call or suffering in mission. But, for the most part, it is prayer, especially the contemplation of gospel events that is the way to develop a relationship with Christ. Such prayer also assists the disciple in today's world to take on the mind and heart of Christ as the basis for decisions in today's world.

Such experiential knowledge of Christ is the basic criterion for personal and communal discernment so necessary to live the CLC way of life. The communal dimension of CLC emphasises the truth that no personal discernment takes place without communal discernment and no communal discernment takes place without personal discernment. The distinction between personal and communal discernment comes from who is in fact making the final decision. Communal evaluations and suggestions as well as actual prayer about a member's situation are important for personal decisions. Similarly, personal prayer and discernment are necessary in all aspects of

communal decisions from the discussion of an issue to the evaluation, the recommendation, the decision and the action.

What makes the process Ignatian discernment is the use of the knowledge of the interior movement of spirits gained in prayer by both the individual and the community. There are two types of movements. One type is basically the spiritual sense of being united with Christ in love received and given. The other type is the experience of being separated from Christ and all alone - desolation.

GP 5 then refers to two important instruments for gaining such discerning knowledge, the examen of consciousness and a spiritual guide. Building on the experience of personal prayer mentioned above, they heighten awareness of one's interior experiences of desire and motivation as inspired by "the love of God flooding our hearts" (Rm 5:5), or disordered affections such as Paul lists in Galatians (5:16-26).

GP 5 ends with Ignatius's well-known phrase, "seeking and finding God in all things" The phrase picks up the grace desired in the Contemplation to Attain the Love of God of the Exercises. It is an expression of CLC spirituality which calls us to be Contemplative in Action, using the dynamic of remembering Jesus' constant love for us in our history, of focusing on the very presence of God's Spirit in all things, recognizing the patient, vulnerable labour of God, bringing the world through freedom to completion and raising our sensitivity to the simple but sublime way that God's love keeps coming to us in everyday experiences "like water flowing from a fountain, and rays of light."

## **F. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #6**

### **SENSE OF THE CHURCH**

Il the General Principles and their evolution over the years can only be together as a community of the faithful, guided by the Spirit of the Lord. GP 6 understood in the context of the church. GP 6 is intended to be an ecclesial text, to make clear where it recognises the Lord in the Church, where Christ has touched our lives and has called us to follow him in ways that we cannot predict, where we have been called, however, invites us to encounter Christ in all people and all situations, to reach outside the Church, with a concern for the progress of all.

### ***The unity of Christ, the Church, and the Spirit***

In describing the CLC charism, the GPs devote the whole of no. 6 to the Sense of the Church. Not surprising, given the place this occupies in Ignatian spirituality. At times,

Sense of the Church is seen too narrowly, connected solely with the "Rules" which Saint Ignatius suggests in the Exercises (Sp. Ex. 352-370). It is better and more authentically understood in relation to the experience of loving and following Christ: of this Lord who saves me through his cross (Sp. Ex. 53), who calls me to work with him on the building of the Kingdom (Sp. Ex. 91 ff), whom I desire to know with all my soul, better to love and serve him (Sp. Ex. 104).

In its basic structure, Ignatius's spiritual journey ties together the Church, Christ and the Spirit - inseparably. There is no other way to the Father. To make the election in the Exercises, the retreatant discerns the different spirits (Sp. Ex. 176), whilst continuing to contemplate Christ (Sp. Ex. 135), and such things as s/he chooses must be "such that they are lawful within our Holy Mother, the hierarchical Church, and not bad or opposed to her" (Sp. Ex. 170). The Rules for the Discernment of Spirits and the other Rules for Thinking with the Church are aids to keeping the Church and the Spirit united in the apostolic following of Christ, in order to work for the Kingdom.

Given this threefold connection which underpins and dynamizes the sense of the Church, we can see how the General Principles deal with the Church in the apostolic perspective of the Kingdom. The Exercises make us accompany the Lord who builds the Church with actual people and real actions. Hence, the growing identification with Christ leads to a progressive growth in identification with the people and the deeds of the Church. The "true sense" of the Church - which the rules indicate - is not just a question of intellectual knowledge but of an instinct for adapting which springs from love and an inner sense.

It is a question of an "intimate knowledge", of "tasting and relishing" (Sp. Ex. 2, 104). This is the trusting faith in the whole of Christ, Head and members: Credo Ecclesiam. It is in love for the Church and the people who form it that the love of the Lord Jesus Christ is ever extending to the point of wishing to embrace all the men and women in the world. However, being rooted in the sequela Christi, the following of Christ, it is a love which sends you to work and to serve. We can see this by analyzing the text of the GPs.

### ***The Church on mission***

We have already drawn attention to the important emphasis placed on mission which we find throughout the GPs of 1990. The passage concerning the sense of the Church already dwelt on this in the 1968 version, and the 1990 formulation restricted itself to some fine adjustments. Let us see how the idea of mission is presented in the new text, summing up what has always been, and looking at the new elements.

In the Church, "Christ here and now continues his mission of salvation." Being part of this is not something static, but a call to become "sensitive to the signs of the times and the movements of the Spirit". Being called becomes being sent to "encounter Christ in all persons and in all situations."



The richness we get from belonging to the Church moves us to take part in the liturgy, meditate on the Word of God and learn about Christian teaching. Immediately, though, this richness becomes mission: "We work together with the hierarchy and other ecclesial leaders, motivated by a common concern for the problems and progress of all people". In this last phrase, there is quite a significant modification: To the clear and determined wish to work together with Pastors, the expression "and other ecclesial leaders" was added, so giving a better account of the complex origin of many apostolic ventures.

### ***At the Church's furthest frontiers***

The last part of GP 6, sharpens the focus of the whole paragraph on mission, putting our sense of the Church in terms of the work of "advancing the reign of God on earth". Immediately after this, almost as a logical consequence, there comes a clause which was a new addition in the 1990 text: it affirms that the sense of the Church "includes a readiness to go and serve where the needs of the Church so demand."

This phrase, which is perhaps the most significant change to the paragraph, can be understood in the light of the life of the Community over the last years. Since Providence'82 there had been examples of people who gave up their ordinary lives and jobs to respond to the needs of the Church. This was endorsed strongly at Loyola'86 and has continued to spread, be it a case of service abroad or in the home country. This is also a response to the missionary drive the laity have been urged to by the hierarchy at every level.

The idea of "going to serve" should not be reduced to the sense of a merely geographical displacement. It may be enlightening to read the expression "what the Church needs" as "what the Church lacks", for there is no need to restrict the sense of "need" which always includes that of "lack". Thus, it is a question of concerning ourselves with reaching where the Church doesn't reach, to the frontiers of the faith, to the least evangelised areas of culture, to men and women who reject or criticize the Church, to the least evangelised aspects of Church life itself. This idea could give a great impulse to CLC collectively and to its individual members.

### ***Formation and mission***

The Church and CLC find their meaning in mission, as has already been brought out. But this doesn't take away the importance of its being a place of formation and growth - and a sign. Where previously only "spreading Christian doctrine" was talked about, the new text says we "learn, teach and promote Christian doctrine." In this way, we express the twofold call to be formed and to go out on mission, to drink from the sources and be sources for others. In this context we come up against what is today a fairly widespread phenomenon - the lack of awareness about aspects of doctrine on the part of CLC members themselves.

This connection between formation and mission should not be understood as one of continuity, but more as interactive exchange, as this is how we live in the Church and how Jesus formed his apostles.

### *A demanding charism*

Sense of the Church is, therefore, constant attention to the Christ of the Gospel, to the needs of the Church and of people, and to the movements the Spirit stirs in our hearts to "love and serve in all things". It is a will committed to being faithful to the call to be with Christ and to work with him for the Kingdom of the Father, accepting - with all our hearts - emotional, doctrinal, disciplinary, and missionary communion with the Church. This requires our discernments of every kind to be brought before the Church for confirmation.

There is no doubt that the sense of the Church is something very demanding. It could not be otherwise, rooted as it is in the following of Christ, carrying his cross with him every day.

With this, we must recall the need to use the Ignatian pedagogy of steady growth. Because it is a pilgrim attitude, the sense of the Church develops bit by bit, and is closely connected to the different stages of development of CLC members and communities. Ripe like the corn of the parable, it goes through temptations against which the rules for discernment of the Second Week warn us, and we must struggle to maintain this sense of the Church in times of crisis.

The Contemplation to Attain the Love of God places us in front of God our Lord, "the lover" who wants to communicate with us: giving to us and self-giving; coming close to us, to the point of making our hearts into holy temples; working in the world and in us through love. For CLC, this contemplation is the normal path towards enrichment and growth in the sense of the Church.

## G. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #7

### COMMUNITY BONDS

GP 7 explicitly deals with community life. It can be read, lived and understood in different ways by people at various stages of growth and at different times. The fact that we have chosen to be one World Community, the meaning and implications of this fact, the role of the small local community in relation to the wider community, the elements that bring us together, the way in which we build community and reach out to meet others, are some of the points which GP 7 puts to us for reflection and action.

#### *The journey towards World Community*

The journey to the CLC World Community has taken just over 400 years! The first part of this journey has already been commented on, in the section on GP 3. Now it would be worthwhile to consider the most recent part of this journey, which is very much the inspiration of GP 7.

In 1953 the Sodalities throughout the world decided to form The World Federation of Sodalities of Our Lady and set up a process of renewal that, inspired by Vatican II and its emphasis on the role of the laity, eventually led to some very significant changes. At the World Council (Assembly) meeting in 1967, they declared that the Sodalities were henceforth to be known as The World Federation of Christian Life Communities; that they were now an autonomous lay movement, whose charter for living was no longer the Common Rules promulgated by the General of the Jesuits, but their own General Principles and Statutes; and that the World Federation replaced the Prima Primaria as "The Mother and Head of all Sodalities" and the guarantor of their authenticity.

As time went by, and the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius had more and more impact on the life of the CLCs around the world, there was a growing experience that the CLCs were much more a World Community than a World Federation, for, as contacts between CLC members grew more frequent on the local, national and international levels, they began to discover, whenever they met, that they were sharing a common journey, a common way of life that was actually a worldwide experience.

At the risk of oversimplifying: in a World Federation structure, the primary commitment is to the local group; and then, through a series of affiliations, to the

World Federation. So, delegates at a General Assembly of a World Federation tend to be representatives of their national Federation. In a World Community structure, the primary commitment is to the common worldwide way of life - the World Community - through belonging to a local group; and delegates at a World Assembly do not represent their national Community, but are the World Community in operation, ie. the governing body of the World Community.

Part of the genius of the CLCs - which comes from their Ignatian heritage - is that structures evolve to reflect people's experience, and so, at the World Assembly in Rome in 1979, the theme for the Assembly was "Towards a World Community at the service of One World". The delegates were asked to vote on the question "Should we now actively strive to become a World Community, to which a majority of delegates replied 'Yes'.

At the World Assembly at Providence (USA) in 1982, the delegates were asked the question "Do we feel called, now, to become a World Community?" Though the previous Assembly in Rome had voted to strive actively to become a World Community, the vote had not been unanimous. The point of the present question was very much in the nature of an Ignatian repetition and evaluation - it was the opportunity for the delegates present to review the decision taken in Rome, to reflect on their experience since then, and, in the light of all this, to express whether or not their feelings resonated with a call to World Community. Of the 39 delegates eligible to vote, 37 answered 'Yes' and 2, for different reasons, abstained. No one answered 'No'. Many of the delegates declared they felt the breath of the Spirit in such an extraordinary expression of unanimity.

At Loyola, in 1986, it was simply taken for granted that the delegates at the World Assembly were the governing body of the CLCs throughout the world, not representatives of the people who had sent them - a very moving experience, and a privileged one, of what it is to be a World Community.

The movement from a World Federation to a World Community called for a number of substantial changes in the General Principles, since their first appearance in 1967. A special committee was established to draft revised General Principles; and after a lengthy process of worldwide consultation, the revised General Principles were approved by the World Assembly in Mexico in 1990, and subsequently confirmed by the Holy See. Number 6 of the General Principles of 1967 states: "Our gift of self finds its expression in the commitment to a particular freely chosen community", whereas number 7 of the new General Principles begins: "Our gift of self finds its expression in a personal commitment to the World Community, through a freely chosen local community" - clear evidence of the long journey travelled to World Community.

### *Ignatius' experience of community*

In reflecting on the 1971 text of the GPs, Fr Louis Paulussen SJ spoke of the insistence on community life as a new aspect, and yet of our historical sources revealing a strong communal spirit in the first group in Rome in 1574 - a spirit which progressively diminished across the common rules (1587, 1855, 1910) to become quite authoritarian. It seemed important at this stage of CLC that our experience and understanding of the community of GP 7 resonate with St Ignatius's own personal and communal journey, especially before the first Ignatian community, "friends in the Lord", decided in the deliberations of 1539 in Rome to maintain unity by a vow of obedience to the superior, thereby transforming the nature of the community and making it a religious congregation - the Society of Jesus. Until then we can see them as the first Christian Life Community in essence - they were laypeople for much of this time.

Ignatius was led from the purely personal service of God to the communal. The meditations on the King (Sp. Ex. 91-100) and Two Standards (Sp. Ex. 136-148), the heart of the mystery of Christ, gave Ignatius a new vision of the Eternal Sovereign and the call to service - he came to understand the invitation of the Father in Christ to a life of apostolic co-operation. No longer a Christ to imitate, but a living and active King who looks for generous co-workers and friends in the world today. Like Ignatius, this is the call of Christ and GP 7 for us - "*our life is essentially apostolic*" (GP 8). Experience soon taught Ignatius that speaking with people was of use to them and that giving of what he had received did not diminish his store but was beneficial to his spiritual life (Autobiography 29). As a result of his experience, he responded by abandoning his former excesses and cutting his nails and hair. Encounter with others led him and later the early Ignatian community to shape themselves for the purpose of the apostolate. God led them by means of their experience and historical circumstances. Each reflected on their experience, noticed the movements within them, sifted and discerned those movements in community and then responded to God. This is the core of CLC formation for mission.

Ignatius's first attempt at community in Barcelona was short-lived. When Ignatius left for Paris, the group languished, and each went their own way. In Paris, Ignatius met Faber and Xavier and a deep friendship developed among the three. Here the "process of exchange" which was to become a feature of that first community of ten was initiated. Each gave what they had to the others. Others joined them, and Ignatius gave the Exercises to each one separately after a long preparation time. Ignatius had learned from his experience in Barcelona. Each of them independently, voluntarily and spontaneously came to the same decision to consecrate their life to God in the service of others in line with the way of life they had experienced. Their preparation had meant four years living together with Ignatius as spiritual father - they had experienced a process of spiritual growth in community - they had known the life, lived and tried it, and come to identify themselves with it. This spiritual maturity was

inspired by the spirit of the Exercises which they had lived as a group under Ignatius' guidance.

Two distinguishing characteristics of that first Ignatian community are especially important for us. Firstly, their close association with the poor, and secondly the unity in their "way of proceeding" which constitutes the peculiar charism of their apostolic vocation.

### ***A vocation matured in community***

This same "way of proceeding" underpins everything in CLC. The CLC communal process of the Spiritual Exercises in community, the way of discerning love in action is core and key to our way of life. It is first introduced, experienced and learned in the local community 'in formation', and it is here and in the wider community that a person's vocation to this "way" is tried, lived and discerned over considerable time (General Norms 1, 2, 3, 4). People not called to this way should be helped to find another group or way. "We are bound together by our common commitment, our common way of life and our recognition of Mary as our mother" (GP 7). Our vocation is to a way of proceeding, a way of life - this is our particular vocation (GP 4). Our community is born of people living a common vocation. It is our common call and engagement with this way that binds us together, unites us in community. This is experienced in that sense of belonging and moving in a common way that CLCs have when they are with the wider community.

Mary is our model of loving response in faith to the Father's initiative - not always understanding, sometimes afraid, but open, listening, attentive and actively responding.

We are centered on the Eucharist, where we grasp the 'World Vision' that the Eucharist fosters, which is also a reminder that the CLC is a World Community: Jesus's Kingdom - the Reign of God - crosses all barriers and embraces all peoples.

### ***The sense of process into an apostolic community***

World CLC is generally young in terms of Ignatian apostolic formation - CLC formation for mission takes years. Fr Osuna in "Friends in the Lord" distinguishes between apostolic community and the "community of formation which is obviously of a provisional kind and directed to the preparation of the definitive apostolic community", which "ought to adapt itself to the latter and receive its inspiration from it". We do not have many "formed" or experienced CLCs or communities from which communities in formation can "draw inspiration". "Formed" does not mean finished or "there", but it would seem that there is a maturing of becoming a "person of CLC process" when one's way of proceeding becomes Ignatian in nature. (We are always being formed!) In other words, we have few models of apostolic Christian Life

Community. This is not to say we do not have persons in many CLCs who live apostolic lives. We can say from experience that *there is a difference between a CLC where some or all members are apostolic and an apostolic CLC.*

An *apostolic* CLC is a community which in response to an experience or situation, is able truly to discern a decision in community with all members participating, to wait for confirmation, and then to follow through or live out the decision openly. This way of proceeding then becomes their way of operation.

In an apostolic CLC, there is a deep desire to seek God's will, a relating in the Spirit, a meeting on a level which transcends differences. Our gift of self is expressed in letting go of my own ideas and wants to be free to accept, in fact desire, the greater glory of God in the communal decision - to know and believe that the Truth of the Spirit lies within the community and trust that the Spirit will speak to the group discerning in common. This requires tough love, honesty, deep trust, listening and a degree of spiritual freedom. The community would have already experienced the redemptive or group sin stage of community at deep levels. The meditations of the King and Two Standards, key to understanding the apostolic community of CLC and GP 7, are situated at the end of the first week and mid second week of the Exercises. The person or community comes to these key meditations and graces only after experiencing the first week - the Redemptive stage - which often we avoid, and little understand on the communal level (See Survey). Just as that experience of deep gratitude of the loved, forgiven, saved sinner on the personal level leads to desire to be with Christ on mission, so too in the communal experience of deep gratitude for the acceptance and love I receive from God and others, is contained the *energy for mission.*

It is in this deep communal experience of our sinfulness and utter dependence on Christ for salvation that we come to "know" unity in our diversity, Christ as the source and focus of our community, and our union in and with Him as co-labourers, as Eucharistic people.

The Christian Life Community of GP 7 at its deepest or most mature level is an apostolic community. The way of proceeding is that of the early Ignatian community. CLCs in formation are provisional in a sense and need to be guided towards, and receive their inspiration from, apostolic communities. This does not mean that any stage of CLC is superior to any other, but it recognizes that there are different levels of living this graced way of life.

GP 7 can be read, lived and understood in different ways by people at various stages and at different times. This is as it is in the life of the Spirit. All is gift and grace. Our "gift of self" will be expressed in different ways as our commitment to, i.e., our engagement with, CLC deepens in our drawing into that spirit of gratuitousness, of mutuality of giving and receiving, which is at the heart of the Exercises and our way

of life. We are never "there". There is always "more" as we are drawn deeper and deeper into the love and mystery of the Trinity and one another.

At the beginning of the journey to CLC, the new member will express their gift of self by attending meetings and sharing something of their life and prayer in a new community. To the experienced CLC in a "community becoming apostolic", this gift of self can mean a deep commitment to a community of people in the process of discerning love and dialogue with the Spirit, sharing lives and prayer (i.e. touches of the Spirit and disturbances of the evil one), reacting to and responding to one another, sifting the movements and discerning the way of the spirit in the reality of this situation/event, little by little becoming more attuned and sensitive to the Spirit and finding God in more things. The quality of presence and capacity of the person to love changes, as opening to the Spirit occurs and they become vehicles of Christ facilitating and enabling others to touch into or recognize that place of the Spirit within themselves, attuned to the movement of the Spirit in others and in groups, becoming persons of CLC process - finding God in all things.

### ***Reaching beyond... to people of good will***

How do we understand our responsibility to develop bonds of community, with *all* people of *good will*? *Good will* comes from the Spirit. All goodness comes from God even though the "person of good will" may be unwilling to use the term "God". Many are rejecting church and our "God language" as irrelevant and meaningless, but many are also expressing a hunger for meaning and goodness - for a deeper dimension to life - for God! There is a huge block between people's perception and the reality of God. Ignatius was a master at both spiritual conversation and discernment. This way of interaction seems to be a call of "bonds of community" and of this GP. It is a deeply listening, enabling attitude of the person of CLC process (an attitude which has been experienced, learned and practised in the community over a period of years). It seems that listening to another for expression (in that person's own language and way) of that deep level and place of the Spirit, hearing, resonating with and being attentive to the movements of the Spirit elicited within oneself, then responding by enabling the person to articulate a little more of what is almost inexpressible - all this is deeply Ignatian and apostolic.

What is more liberating and encouraging of the truth and love of the Spirit than to have another "hear", and then, in resonance with it, confirm? People of "good will" at every level of society can be helped to recognize their being drawn towards God/Good and to respond.

This may seem to be an elementary, secular-level type of discerning, but I believe it is real for our day. The peace and life and energy of the Spirit once experienced and recognized give a base with which other movements can resonate and be compared. With help, people can be encouraged to notice what leads them away from that



goodness. This is a way of "transforming the criteria by which judgments are made in our society" (Josefina Errazuriz, in *Progressio* no.4, 1990)

The facilitatory, listening attitude of the person of process would seem to embody both the Ignatian characteristics of spiritual conversation and discernment. It is a deeply communitarian attitude, it can also be profoundly apostolic. It is also contemplation in action. (GP 8 a, b, c & d can also be read in the light of this).

We believe that God is being revealed in our day in cultural expressions which are not traditional God-language, but which nevertheless are of God. We have the means, and in these GPs, the call to listen and respond. The harvest is great, and the way is radical, deeply challenging and rewarding. Is this a way of communal mission?

The early Jewish Christians had to find new language when the Greek converts came into the early church. Ignatius and his companions were led to a radical, unprecedented way of proceeding as an apostolic community in the sixteenth century. I believe with Fr Osuna that the truly Ignatian understanding of community contains the seeds of an updating to respond to our day and world. One of the "seeds" of updating lies in our CLC process and people of process who little by little can become free to allow others to express their experience in their own language and way, "to go in at their door" (see Clancy) and facilitate a greater awareness of and response to God. Our process offers a way of enculturation and deep dialogue of finding truth in differences, of evangelization and universality. This way of the Spirit is limited only by our refusal to respond!

GP 7 is a principle to be deepened and lived wherever we are in our CLC journey - not an ideal we can never attain. The deep call to apostolic community of GP 7 is profound, relevant and prophetic today.

## H. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #8

### APOSTOLIC LIFE

"I have chosen you, and have commissioned you, to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last". It was under this passage of Scripture that the General Assembly that approved the GPs was gathered. The common concern was mission, and it was clear for everybody that this was not a problem of adopting a programme, but of remaining with Christ to be able to bear fruit. GP 8, the longest text in part one, succeeds in defining our mission as participation in Christ's mission and in challenging us as individuals and communities. It also gives some helpful guidance for evaluating and extending our apostolic involvement.

#### *GP 8 in context*

GP 8 is in *Part One: Our Charism*. This serves to remind us that apostolic work is not merely an activity of the CLC: it is an intrinsic part of its charism. That charism contains three inseparable elements: Community, Spirituality and Mission. When the CLC ceases to be apostolic, it ceases to be CLC. The CLC can never be merely a prayer group, a spirituality circle or a discussion group.

Neither can the CLC be merely a social action group, a pressure group or a work unit. By virtue of these General Principles, the CLC is committed to the work of removing all the obstacles to the reign of God in the world, whether those obstacles be personal, social or structural. As such, the CLC believes, and must believe, that it can only effectively do this through its charism, what GP 1 calls the influence of the Holy Spirit. A charism is experienced as enlightenment, imperative and promise.

The sequence of the various principles in Part One is no accident: the sequence itself reveals to us some of the deeper elements in each principle.

GP 8, on Apostolic Life in CLC, picks up the themes which open and close GP 6. GP 6 opens with the theme of Christ's continuing "mission of salvation". It concludes with the themes of "advancing the reign of God on earth" and "readiness to go and serve where the needs of the Church so demand".

While there is one universal Church and one mission, there is a plurality of charisms given by the Holy Spirit. Hence there is a plurality of lay, clerical and religious vocations in the Church. We must read GP 8 in the light of Jesus' choice to found an open and flexible community as the main instrument for continuing his work on earth.

Between these two General Principles dedicated to the "Sense of the Church" (GP 6) and "Apostolic life" (GP 8) comes GP 7, dedicated to the notion of "Community bonds". As a Community with a sense of the Church, the CLC must appropriate its own particular charism and cherish its own gift of bonding. Only then can it be a fit instrument for the work of the Gospel.

GP 8 is, in turn, followed by the "Marian Principle" (GP 9) of CLC mission, where we look to Mary as the model of our mission.

***Pilgrimage and apostolate "As members of the pilgrim People of God"***

In greater fidelity to a model of the Church proposed by Scripture and by Vatican II, GP 8 adds the word "pilgrim" to describe the people of God. This word reminds us constantly that we do not have here a lasting city but are seeking one that still lies ahead (Heb 13:14). Working for the establishment of the reign of God on earth is not a contract that we can complete within a certain time or with certain desired results. As a pilgrim people, we must be prepared to move on beyond whatever point we have reached, beyond the achievement of the moment: we seek the God who is always greater (cf. 1 Jn 4:20). Schooled in Ignatian discernment and "sensitive to the signs of the times and the movements of the Spirit" (GP 6), we will often be called to go beyond "the letter of this text" (GP 1), to listen to the Spirit speaking with new voices in the Church and in our world.

***Vocation from God: Mission from Christ "We have received from Christ the mission of being his witnesses before all people"***

Whereas the main body of GP 8 says that our mission is from Christ, section (a) below tells us that "each of us receives from God a call". Each personal vocation comes from God, from whom "all that is good, all that is perfect" comes (James 1:17; cf. Sp. Ex. 237). In virtue of the Incarnation, which is the -"work" of the Trinity (Sp. Ex. 108), every vocation blossoms in a mission received from the hand of Christ, for he himself is the primordial "mission" of the Trinity to the World.

***Conversion and apostolate "...by our attitudes, words and actions"***

In renewing the Covenant, Jesus taught us that external actions and words are not the only areas where we are touched by sinfulness: we must also learn to look to the heart and mind (Mt 5:20-48). Similarly, in the Preparatory Prayer for each meditation of the Spiritual Exercises we pray for "grace that all my intentions, actions and operations may be directed purely to the praise and service of the Divine Majesty".

It is in this spirit that GP 8 now adds the word "attitudes" to the former text, which spoke only of "our words and actions". We can often be painfully aware of a dichotomy between our words and the inclinations of our hearts (cf. Isaiah 29:13, Mk 7:6): It is

from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions emerge (Mk 8:20). My own heart is an important part of the battlefield where the struggle for the Kingdom of God takes place. Personal conversion is an integral part of apostolic engagement.

***Prophetic and messianic apostolate** "...mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, setting the downtrodden free and proclaiming the Lord's year of favour."*

The source of these words is both prophetic and messianic, both Old Testament and New Testament. In the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus read this passage from the prophet Isaiah (Is 61:1-2; cf. Lk 4:16-22):

*The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,  
for he has anointed me.  
He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,  
to proclaim liberty to captives,  
and to the blind new sight,  
to set the downtrodden free,  
and to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.*

We must suppose that Jesus deliberately chose this passage to read, fully conscious that in these words he had found his own messianic mission. In different contexts and in different ways, Isaiah repeated this fundamental conception of the mission of the Suffering Servant of God. Similarly, Jesus returned to these words at other times in his life to convey again the character of his mission (Mt 11:1-11). He must have considered that these words were the best and most succinct expression of his life's purpose.

A similar sense of deliberation drives the CLC to use these same words to express its own appreciation of the meaning of the mission received from Jesus. The prophetic and messianic background of these words is an important element of their inclusion in the General Principles. The text is not a list of civic or social duties, not a programme for involvement. Primarily, the text cannot be seen as inclusive of everything that mission means: **The field of CLC mission knows no limits.**

Like every word of God, the text of Isaiah used by Jesus is revelation, invitation, command and promise.

The text is revelation, for God enlightens our way with a revealed and revealing word. God has the power and the right to command, to show us the imperative at the heart of concerned love. Still, divine love always respects the freedom given to us at creation as a part of our heritage, and so divine commandments are heard as an invitation (cf. Sp. Ex. 91-98), a vocation, a call from God (GP 2, GP 8a). The text is, finally, promise, because it is always God who crowns all our apostolic efforts with fruit which is purely gift.

The text is revelation because all Christian mission is ultimately God-given. God's revealed word points beyond merely human wisdom to call attention to the world as the Blessed Trinity sees it, with its "great diversity of persons, places and situations" (GP 1, GP 8a, Sp. Ex. 101-109). There is no one "strategic plan" which will always and everywhere bring justice either to a particular society or to a particular individual.

The first sentence of GP 8 does not contain the opening words of the passage from Isaiah as read by Jesus, "The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me". The CLC is nevertheless conscious that those opening words proclaiming the presence of the Spirit are important. This importance is reflected in the words of GP 8, our life is essentially apostolic, and then in the words opening our hearts to conversion. Jesus does not send his Apostles out without the gift of the Spirit (Jn 20:21-23, Acts 1:8). It is as anointed Christians, open to ongoing conversion, and possessing a special charism, that CLC members can experience the imperative in the words of Isaiah.

### ***Orientation for CLC apostolate***

It is against this background, and in the light of the principle of discernment intrinsic to Ignatian spirituality (GP 2, 8c), that we must understand GP 8 (d). This more "programmatic" section spells out some of the areas of modern human experience that ought to claim our attention. Though this section can very easily and fruitfully form the basis of an effective and productive programme for promoting mission, it nevertheless is meant to be a "principle" and not a programme. Individual Communities might well need to spend time discerning the relative importance of any particular "item" in the section.

It is very significant that section (d) opens and closes with the same principle: the Word of God, the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ. The General Principles once again remind us of the essential difference between a mere programme of social action and a Christian involvement in preparing this world for the coming of the Kingdom of God. The affirmations of Section (a) about the indispensability of the personal apostolate are balanced by Section (b). The word "Community" in the name of the CLC reflects another intrinsic element in the charism of this "Way of Life". Hence, in fidelity to the charism, part of the mission exercised by members of the community must have a corporate or group dimension. While a CLC member may show great initiative in individual apostolic work, he or she must at some point experience what it means to work for the reign of God in union with others.

The General Principles allow a wide liberty: communal mission may be experienced outside the CLC as well as within. Whether one's mission, apostolate or service area is a matter of individual involvement or a matter of communal effort, each of us needs to stay attentive to the voice of the Spirit. We do this mainly through the "Review of Life", as it is called in GP 8 (c), or the "daily examination of consciousness", as it is

called in GP 5 (cf. Sp. Ex. 43). Even when members find themselves engaged in structures that do not belong to the CLC, they will still draw their apostolic strength from the Community and its spirituality.

Section (c) of GP 8 also encourages us "to be always open to what is more urgent and universal". Expressed in different words and images, this theme occurs strongly in the Spiritual Exercises and in other writings of Ignatius. Anything that is narrow and confining, anything that is too local or parochial, too self-regarding, is incompatible with the mystery of the Trinity contemplating the universe.

***Conclusion*** *"Our life finds its permanent inspiration in the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ."*

This final sentence of GP 8 serves as a recall to the basic principle of all apostolic mission and service, the person of Jesus of Nazareth. In the General Principles, the word "humble" occurs for the first time in GP 8, and it will be helpful to link together the two sentences in which it does occur: the final phrase of section (c) and this final phrase of the whole GP 8. While it is true that the historical life of Jesus of Nazareth is a past event, we must realize that it is never simply past: the self-emptying of Jesus continues in our lives as we engage apostolically "even in the most humble realities of daily life." (GP 8c).

Seen in this way, such things as "work for the reform of structures of society" are not mere additions to proclaiming the Word of God: they are, rather, some of the more potent ways in which we bring the Gospel to today's world.

## I. DEEPENING AND UNDERSTANDING GP #9

### MARY, MODEL OF OUR MISSION

No. 9 of the General Principles stresses our union with Mary, and the Marian dimension of our spirituality. Mary is for us a vivid model to follow. She is included in the story of Christ. She leads not to union with Christ, as we are already united with Him in Baptism, but to a deepening and intensification of that union as we contemplate her in the Annunciation and Incarnation, in the Spiritual Exercises.

Louis Paulussen, SJ, of revered memory, in his foreword to Jose Gsell's *Companions of the Road with Mary*, tells us "...that we cannot penetrate the mystery of Mary without Christ, the light of the world who illuminates all mysteries of faith. Marian devotion for example is inexplicable without the light of Christ, without the vision of our incorporation in Him." This is what the beginning of our GP 9 seeks to establish. Again, in the same foreword he says, "The well-known group of Leunis (called the *Prima Primaria*) chose the name of the Annunciation because it was the title of the chapel of the Roman College. The mystery of the Annunciation and Incarnation is the point of departure, the foundation and the heart of the General Principles."

#### *Mary's cooperation with God begins with her "Yes"*

Jose Gsell gives a beautiful meditation on Mary's 'Yes'. Her 'Yes' is a **faith-response**. She is called. And she should respond. It is a total 'Yes' to her Lord. It is the placing of herself in the hands of God. It is the accepting of her vocation, who's meaning and consequences the passage of time will trace out concretely. There is a unity between the person that she is and the mission that she receives. The uniqueness of her person and her participation in the mission, "being" and "doing", are now forever one.

#### **Her 'Yes' is a love-response**

Touched by the Love that gives of itself, she becomes love that receives and transmits Life to the world. In her is brought about the union of God who saves and humanity that is saved. The mission that she receives links her to the salvation history of the world. Mary becomes the hyphen between heaven and earth, the earthly spot where the source of life has now welled up, and from which it will pour out in floods upon humanity, for in Mary there are no obstacles to block its passage. She is total availability, totally at the disposal of God. She is the Lord's servant. It will happen to her as the Lord said it would.

We may add to Jose Gsell's meditation a further point. Her 'Yes' is a **life-response**. It is an expression of her total abandonment to God, through which she surrenders her body to God, and all her possessions are also included in this one act of abandonment.

Uttered in a moment, it is spelled out in her lifetime. Mary understood the meaning of life and lived it in its fullness. Being fully human and totally free, Mary becomes for us a living presence and a climate of life which promotes and sustains us in the search for the glory of God. The glory of God is men and women fully human, fully alive (St Ireneus).

As a sheaf is bound in the middle and fans out towards the ends, so the life of Mary, in all its bounty, is held together by this little word 'Yes'. All her years before this moment flow into it and all the rest of her life flows from it. God's grace enables her to say it, and in saying it, she enables God's grace to work in her. It directs her whole being towards God and away from selfishness and self-concern. It makes her completely transparent so that through her the Light in its fullness can come into the world. It creates the room God needs to become human. Jesus is the embodiment of Mary's 'Yes', the fruit of her fiat; greater fruitfulness is inconceivable. Her fiat in no way stymies her personality; in fact, it brings her utter fulfillment and is the prototype of all Christian fruitfulness.

*We come to you, Mother of our Lord and Mother of us all,  
to thank you for your Yes  
that gave us the incarnation of God's own Yes  
and brought life to its fullness.  
We ask you,  
teach us to follow you in saying our Yes  
with faith and courage.  
You know the cost of living the Yes,  
protect ours in integrity and joy.  
Ask your Divine Son for the grace always to repeat our Yes  
with an ever-growing surrender  
and to experience how this increases  
the meaningfulness of our life.  
Under your inspiration  
may we help to build the Kingdom of God  
today and every day, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Rev. Fr Peter Hans Kolvenbach SJ, commenting on Mary's 'Yes', has this to say: "To accomplish this mission of mediation the Lord God has asked Our Lady for her 'Yes' in His work of salvation. In the prayer of the Kingdom, Ignatius does nothing but trace the contours of this invitation and this 'Yes'. In encouraging us to pray the mysteries of Christ, to seek for the intimate knowledge of the Lord to be able, in His Spirit, to



make the choices and take the decisions which incarnate our 'Yes' in daily living, Ignatius always makes us have recourse to Our Lady, to learn how to enter into a colloquy with her Son and to grasp how to say 'Yes' to God the Father.

How does this fellowship with Our Lady inspire the Christian Life Communities in the way they go about translating the Kingdom into daily reality? Of course, nothing in the Gospels tells us about evangelization as practiced by Our Lady. She does not belong to the Twelve and she only speaks through her simple presence among them. The Lord does not call us to copy the manner in which Our Lady has concretely expressed her 'Yes', not even to imitate her. However, the concrete manner of realizing the Kingdom to which the Lord calls each one of us and the Christian Life Communities will always be inspired by the dynamism which is fundamental to Our Lady's way of acting. This dynamism is first and always marked by the radical character of the Yes. This radicality impels the Christian Life Communities, following Our Lady's example, to know nothing except the Gospel, and the whole Gospel. We do not get caught up in slogans and ideologies, with secondary problems and doubts for the pleasure of doubting. Of course, our lives are complex, and our organizations complicated, but this is one reason more for returning to the radical sense of this 'Yes' of Our Lady, that Ignatius situates amidst the turmoil that marks the life of men and women."

Our devotion to Mary has begun to take a new meaning as CLC are growing to be more mature Christians. The attitudes of Mary which keep growing in meaning are her openness and pure receptivity, transparency, her unconditional acceptance of God's will which makes her an extraordinary woman in the ordinary, her poverty of spirit. Our Lady, as St Ignatius calls her, is a woman of deep faith, trust, and prayer (Lk 2:19), interiorly free and able to discern God's will continually. By means of Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises, Mary brings us to understand the true meaning of our devotion to her and the true requirements of our CLC commitment. She invites us to deepen the meaning of her Yes to God's plan and she presses us to make our lives a Yes to our mission.

### ***The Visitation and the Magnificat: Her 'Yes' becomes visible***

Her moving in haste, her greeting, the proclamation of her faith was at once affirmed by Elizabeth, her cousin. Her presence and help for three months (until John the Baptist was born) were concrete and visible signs of her effective service to Elizabeth. Her hymn of praise to God on that occasion, the Magnificat, gives us insights into Mary as model for mission today. The first part (Lk 1:46-50) deals with what God has done to Mary, a woman of low estate. The second part (Lk 1:51-55) moves out from that single experience and universalizes it. How God has acted in regard to Mary is typical of the way God acts towards humankind and creation. This is the God faithful to promises, who exalts the lowly, fills the hungry with good things, scatters the proud, puts down the mighty from their thrones and sends the rich away empty. We can see here a call to justice - to be like our Father and his Son who have a preference

for the poor. This second part of the song is of a God who punishes injustices and rectifies the situation of the oppressed. This God reverses the situation in which worldly might and wealth, however gained and maintained, are the sole determinants of one's standing before God and one's neighbour.

What enabled Mary to a total offering of herself, in her poverty as a simple creature, was her strong faith in the steadfast love of God. From the scriptures she learned that it is God who is the Lord of history, whose ways are not the ways of men and women, and for whom nothing is impossible. By calling herself a lowly servant of God, Mary has really participated in the brokenness of the people of her times. We too are called to participate in the brokenness of the oppressed, the marginalized and the needy. We must struggle with them to promote the values Jesus held and to establish the Kingdom of God. Mary is thus our embodiment of hope and joyful expectation in helping us understand the plight of the poor, by counting herself among the poor.

Mary identified with the mission of her Son to liberate people from all bondage, and succeeded not through agitation, aggression and violence, but through her total commitment to Jesus and to His mission, using only the means of self-giving, loving service and compassion for the needy. Mary incarnates the attitudes of which our society has great need today - to be attentive and to listen to what the life around us is telling us, whether in our family life or life within society, and in a most special and preferential way to the needs of the weakest among us, the marginalised, the despised and scorned, the voiceless, helpless and powerless. Mary challenges us in CLC who long for a new and just world to focus our attention on Jesus to bring about a radical change in the world. In our evangelical approach, the emphasis is on the urgency of personal assimilation of Christ. By sharing in the life of Christ, as Mary did, we shed away our false selves and we become free to discern and grow in truth, by the power of the Spirit who dwells in us and who builds up our communities of love and service.

Fr Kolvenbach, in his *Mary in the Spiritual Exercises*, says, "The response that Our Lady graciously gave to the invitation of 'The One Whose Name is Holy' has been an endless source of inspiration, in terms of some particular aspect, for so many personal and communitarian initiatives in the building up of the Kingdom."

### **Mary's mission and CLC spirituality**

In this sense, the Marian dimension of the spirituality of the Christian Life Communities has been fashioned by the particular characteristics of Our Lady's mission, which struck Ignatius of Loyola in a deeply personal way. Ignatius always respects the spiritual 'taste' of each person in their encounter with the Lord and imposes no particular devotion.

In the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius is content to exhort us to pray the Hail Mary with the Church, and he invites us to discover to what extent her mission in the work of

salvation of her Son continues today thanks to our labours and commitment - because that is the way God wants it.

If the CLCs draw their inspiration from the spirit of Ignatius, the criterion for the authenticity of their spirituality is the concrete commitment to the service of others which incarnates that spirituality. Ignatius does not invite us to plumb the depths of the mystery of Mary, the feelings of her heart, but to receive from the Lord, as she did, our mission today in the Christian Life Communities. Whoever moves with Ignatius through the mysteries of Christ constantly discovers Our Lady in her mission of mediating life.

This mission of Our Lady emerges all the time from a hidden and obscure life; it emerges from the humdrum, impoverished existence of some poor woman from an obscure corner of Palestine, far removed from great history, high politics and refined culture. However - very significant for our mission - Our Lady knows herself to be an intermediary; she knows she is mediating salvation, life for others. Each one of us is very much aware that we have received all that we are through the intermediary of others.

In our modern society so many incidents and accidents confront us with the fact of our mutual dependence and show us how our lives, and even our salvation, are mutually linked. This 'solidarity' is inscribed in our human nature because it is a reflection in every person of the Trinitarian communion. Still in our own days, in the case of a disaster, we assist at and share in gestures, reactions of generous and spontaneous solidarity. However, in general, it is still extremely difficult for us to share, to communicate to others what we owe to others, what we have received, thanks to others.

Illuminated by Mary's example, CLCs have felt a greater desire to live the spirituality of Mary: belong to the poor of Yahweh, trust in God, be open to God's plan and available to God. Mary, as we see her in the Passion, accompanying Him on His journey to Calvary, sharing His pain, with her tears, her sorrows and her solidarity, freely shoulders all with Jesus in order to bring redemption, expiation and liberation.

After Jesus, no one is more closely united to all human beings than Mary is. Living in glory as she is now, she is not indifferent to the human drama. Even as in the Magnificat, she took sides with the lowly against the proud, the poor against the powerful, so now she continues to offer us especially as CLC, strength and encouragement, with her look of understanding, support and approval, to be committed to achieving freedom and justice for all.

Accompanied by such a loving mother, we find the strength and inspiration to show the same loving compassion to all those laden with life's burdens, grief, heartaches, sicknesses and crosses, until we reach the point where suffering will end, and liberation will break through.

Our experiences of faith in CLC and the Spiritual Exercises, especially through Annotation 19, have led many of our CLCs to a greater consciousness of Mary as a precious gift to us!

*Progressio Supplement #38-39 Sept 1992*

## 3.2 THE CLC CHARISM

### THE GROUP GUIDE UNDERSTANDS that...

"... the key to the CLC way of life is prayer – prayer that flows out of daily life and back into it; it is here that the process of conversion and integration takes place."

So – a most helpful formation for guides is to be 'prayer guides', so that they can help members of the group get in touch with their prayer and help them see/experience the link between their prayer and daily life' (*Progressio Supplement #33*).

The CLC Charism publication (*Progressio Supplement #56*) was developed to further help CLC understand and appreciate the General Principles, which remains the core of the CLC vocation and way of life.

### A. CLC CHARISM: VISION, COMMUNITY, MISSION GP #4

#### **VISION**

*Our Community is made up of Christians: men and women, adults and youth, of all social conditions who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with him for the building of the Kingdom, who have recognized Christian Life Community as their particular vocation within the Church.*

#### **MISSION**

*We aim to become committed Christians in bearing witness to those human and Gospel values within the Church and society which affect the dignity of the person, the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation.*

#### **COMMUNITY**

*We are particularly aware of the pressing need to work for justice through a preferential option for the poor and a simple lifestyle which expresses our freedom and solidarity with them.*

*To prepare our members more effectively for apostolic witness and service, especially in our daily environment, we assemble people in community who feel a more urgent need to unite their human life in all its dimensions with the fullness of their Christian faith according to our charism. We seek to achieve this unity of life in response to the call of Christ from within the world in which we live.*

## B. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY

GP 4 is one of the best short presentations of the whole of our "charism". When inviting people to approach the GPs, for the first time, it is helpful to begin with this, because it transmits the core identity of what CLC means to its members. In step with the logic implicit in our name "Christian Life, Community", GP 4 first focuses on the following of Christ, then invites us to witness in our lives and finally highlights the meaning and importance of community. Work for justice and simple lifestyle are shown as distinguishing marks of our CLC.

### CHRISTIANS: BUILDING THE KINGDOM.

We are Christians, in other words, people who follow Jesus and work with Him in building up the Kingdom. This is the core of what CLC is all about. "Jesus was not a Christian" is the rather provocative title of a recent book. It is worthwhile to reflect on this title, though the book itself is not of interest to us. It is true that Jesus was not Christian, true in the sense that his purpose was not Christianity, but the fullness of life for all people. Jesus dreamt of God's Kingdom - all scripture scholars agree on this point.

Perhaps we don't always realise how the Kingdom is connected with our daily experiences, even the most profane ones. At his first appearance in Nazareth, Jesus reads from the book of the prophet Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, and to proclaim the Lord's year of favour", and further on, "This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen." (Lk 4:16-21). Jesus was an incorrigible "world-improver", and this is also clear from his programmatic speech - the Sermon on the Mount. Maybe, though, it is even clearer in the description of the Last Judgement. It is by feeding the hungry, giving the thirsty something to drink, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned (Mt 25:31-46) that you will reach God - and these are all rather secular actions!

Jesus' purpose was the Kingdom of God. In the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius lets the Three Divine Persons look down from heaven to earth and conclude that the Second Person will become human, in order "to bring about the salvation of the human race" (cf Sp. Ex 102, GP 1). Again, Jesus' purpose is the salvation of all men and women, and our faith is related to this purpose. This purpose must also be, right from the start, the purpose of CLC. A spirituality only interested in or focused on its own inner development is false. **Our being in CLC, our being in the Church, our Ignatian heritage, everything that we are, is for the service of the Kingdom of God.**

When we bear in mind Jesus' purpose, we can understand what it means to follow Him more closely. In Jesus, God's Kingdom has dawned. Not only does He make the

Kingdom closer to us, but He is the Kingdom of God right amongst us. It is not just a coincidence that the expression "Kingdom of God" disappears from the Acts of the Apostles and from St Paul's Letters. It seems that it is to give space to the spirituality of the imitation of the Lord. For Paul, true life means life in Christ.

So far, the text of GP 4 is simply about being a Christian. The purpose of CLC is indeed simply to form Christians. Ignatius never wanted the Jesuits to be called "Ignatian" after him, like the Benedictines after Benedict and the Franciscans after Francis. Ignatius' disciples were to be called after Jesus because they were "Companions of Jesus". Perhaps for the same reason the General Assembly in Rome 1967 decided to choose the name Christian Life Community, relating it to Christ our Lord and without other references, for example to Ignatius.

**And yet, CLC is a particular vocation within the Church.** Even though it is always about the same Gospel, there are many windows through which we can see that Gospel. The proper charism of CLC can perhaps be defined by two elements. On the one hand, there is the dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises (GP 5) that determines the way in which we work for the Kingdom. On the other hand, there is a real-World Community to which we belong, normally through our belonging to a small particular group in which we exchange about our faith and our life. CLC as a way of life rests on three pillars: Community, Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, and Mission.

Before going on to the second paragraph of GP 4, let us consider the importance of one or two passages in the first paragraph. No restrictions are foreseen on membership of our Community - "Men and women, young and adults, from all social conditions". While at the world level, e.g., at any World Assembly, we can find this diversity, at the national level this is not always true. Sometimes we forget the youth or are not able to reach them. At other times, the number of men and women is not well balanced. Very often, our membership reflects only one kind of social background. GP 4 is a challenge in this sense.

Finally, it is important to understand that the expression "more closely" is related to the Ignatian sense of "magis", and does not contain an implicit comparison, in the sense of better or worse, with other vocations within the Church.

## **LIVING: EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE, AND YET NOT EVERYTHING**

How do we actually live our being Christian? How do we try to make the Kingdom present among us? That is what the second paragraph of GP 4 is about. We **aim to become committed Christians in witnessing to those human and Gospel values within the Church and society.** The sentence could just stop here. The CLC call cannot be restricted because it comprises every area of life. **The highlighting of the dignity of the person, the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation is not intended to be restrictive, as everything can be included in these areas, but rather wishes to be inspirational.** In fact, CLC doesn't have a specific content to develop, but should touch

the whole of our life. Our engagement can be social, political, scientific, cultural, ecclesial... and in any area CLC will provide us with a method and an attitude.

However, this non-restrictive approach does not mean neutrality. **"We are particularly aware of the pressing need to work for justice through a preferential option for the poor"**. The Spiritual Exercises, and the CLC way, help us to find out what is God's will in our lives. They enable us to make choices in the Spirit of the risen Lord and to remain open to any possibility in front of us. But this is always from the perspective of the poor and humiliated Christ and His gift of self on the cross (Philippians 2:6-8). This key element will protect us against a "neutral" reading of the Gospel, which often hides a desire for riches and power. There is an unbreakable bond between authentic faith and work for justice, and this is what this sentence of GP 4 reminds us of.

In the Meditation on Two Standards [136-146], Ignatius puts in front of us the choice of riches or poverty. He warns us that the spirit of evil will first tempt us with material wealth and then will invite us to undertake the next two steps: honour and pride. The Lord, though, invites us to the highest spiritual poverty and, if God chooses us, even to actual poverty. Humiliation and dishonour will follow, and from here true humility can grow. All our other choices flow from our choice of one of these directions. Just as the adoration of riches is at the beginning of many other and perhaps more serious evils, detachment from everything you own is a basic Christian attitude out of which will grow a true confidence in God, and only in God.

Our preference for the poor becomes concrete in our simple lifestyle. Each of us lives in a particular culture and milieu, and it is part of our spirituality to live amidst our own world. Within this, however, we choose simplicity, which is more than just sobriety. The simple lifestyle is first of all an expression of our freedom for God - Ignatian indifference, inner freedom. The simple lifestyle also expresses our solidarity with the poor, as we try to look at our world and society through their eyes.

## **COMMUNITY: IN SERVICE OF OUR MISSION**

The third part of this text brings together all that has gone before in the Community: a gathering of people who want to integrate better their faith and their daily life in all its dimensions, and who can recognise themselves in our charism. This gathering in community is immediately related to "apostolic service, especially in our daily environment", and to the "response to Christ's call from within the world in which we live".

Community is formed only with a view to the Kingdom of God, which grows through our being with Christ and working with Him, and through our being together with other companions in this great enterprise. The group, and the wider community therefore are never goals in themselves, but they are indispensable for us to develop a CLC way of life aiming at the growth of God's Kingdom. Like Ignatius and his first



companions, we also want to remain united and permanently connected with each other for the sake of Christ's mission, which is ours.

The reason why the group - the local group and the World Community - are such powerful tools for the Kingdom becomes clear further on in the GPs. The group is "a concrete experience of unity in love and action' (GP 7). The group is thus a community of love. The group is also a faith community, ie. it is for the members "a primary means to continue their growth", a place where a deep sharing of their faith and their life occurs on a permanent basis (GP 11).

## 3.3 OUR COMMON MISSION

### A. THREE AREAS OF MISSION

This document is the outcome of the XIII General Assembly of the Christian Life Community in Itaici 1998. It presents a common mission as it was discerned by the delegates, put into words by a mandated commission and amended and received by the whole assembly. It is now offered to all national and local communities, all individual members and Ecclesiastical Assistants of CLC all over the world.

This XIII Assembly inscribes itself in the line of all - and especially the last four - World Assemblies. In Loyola 86, it became clear that, as we were a World Community, we were community for mission. In Guadalajara 90, we felt ourselves sent to bear fruit as an apostolic body. In Hong Kong 94, we recognized and integrated the context from and into which we are sent. In Itaici we defined our common mission in the context of our world. The mission of CLC comes from Christ himself who invites us to join him in preparing the world to become the complete Kingdom of God. He calls us to be at the very heart of the world experience and to receive God's gift in its fullness.

In the review of our graces over the past four years we found the hand of Christ and His love and in gratitude for so much good that is accomplished in our lives in CLC. We offered ourselves to follow Him in pilgrimage and labour like Ignatius did.

We discerned about the most urgent needs of world today and from there tried to give flesh and blood to the desire of the Lord for us here and now.

In our review of needs we faced our limitations, weaknesses, our lights and shadows and our sinfulness. But we also found much that was wise and good especially the powerful and pervasive effort to pursue the struggle for mission.

And so we take on our mission with confidence that the Lord takes us as He did with Ignatius, not because we are strong, but because his "love and grace are sufficient for us".

In this process of discernment which began already in our National Communities we went through four areas of our life following the Ignatian charism: Christ and growth in Christian life; Christ and culture; Christ and social reality; Christ and daily life.

The process resulted in discovering three areas of mission and a set of necessary means for this mission.

**First**, we want to bring the freeing power of Christ to our social reality.

**Secondly**, we want to find Christ in all our varied cultures and to let His grace illuminate all that needs transformation.

**Thirdly**, we want to live Christ so as to bring him to every aspect of our daily life in the world.

These three areas of mission were enlightened by the spiritual source, which nourishes and empowers us for mission: the Spiritual Exercises, which help us to grow in Christian life.

In addition, we must attend to our own formation for mission, so that our community may ever become a more effective instrument of service.

We suggest to everyone who receives this Mission Statement to read it not from a merely intellectual viewpoint, searching for information, but as a wording of the strong desire of the World Christian Life Community as gathered in the Assembly.

We invite the reader to join our pilgrimage so that Christ may gain his full stature. That is what we passionately yearn for and wholeheartedly commit ourselves to.

## **B. CHRIST AND SOCIAL REALITY**

Side by side with the Poor. Our personal relationship with God, which arises from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. is the inspiration, which fires us to participate in the struggle for a just world. We prize the church's prophetic stand against poverty itself and against all that causes poverty. Rooted in Christ and in his love for us, we want to make the option for the poor, not as an idea, but by making serious analysis and adopting a responsible and effective attitude towards poverty and its causes. We are called in our communal life to encourage one another to look at the world and to work in it from the perspective of the poor, and to grow in our capacity to meet them, to know where they are in our societies, and which are the best forms to take part in their struggles. We are also called to examine our own lives from this perspective.

### **FOR A MORE JUST WORLD**

We need to work against the greed and the misuse of power for evil in political and economic structures, often exercised so effectively by the multinationals.

Just as the causes of poverty and injustice are linked among themselves and support one another across national boundaries, we as CLC are called to witness to a world community that empowers its members to be prophets of justice and hope, able to take bold stances and positions in order to bring about more justice to this world. We are ready to establish networks, to undertake social action: we will become social entrepreneurs, with the same intensity that business entrepreneurs employ.

We want to participate in different forums at the national and international levels, bringing to them the voice of the poorest in issues such as the problem of international debt. In different ways all of us are called to active participation in the economic, political and social structures, not only from a critical point of view but also through providing solutions. In this the community empowers us so that we truly believe that we can work to change sinful structures.

We care for the integrity of God's creation in all its manifold blessings. We appreciate sound relationships in every area of human life - family, work, public life and church - and hold in high esteem a culture of dialogue within the human family.

### **WITNESSING TO OUR WAY OF LIFE**

We recognize that our main contribution to our world is to live fully our vocation, as it is expressed in our General Principles, as individuals and as a community.

We feel particularly called to live in solidarity with all, in a simple life style, searching every day for our own conversion to God and sharing the actual experience and the pedagogy of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. We believe that one of our great contributions to our world today, especially in resolving conflicts and taking good decisions at all levels of life, is the process of discernment and those listening and dialogue skills that we learn in our community.

### **STANDING AS PROPHETS IN OUR WORLD**

We feel CLC is called to resist the growing consumerism and individualism and the resulting cultural erosion. Our spirituality forms us to be proactive, and this will give us the confidence we need to be counter cultural when necessary. We do not want to be "burned out" prophets in the world, but to rejoice in Christ's presence in it and to return frequently to nourish our essential relationship with the Lord, and we also need to learn how to serve as leaven in a silent and profound way, promoting and living

out just relationships in the family, in the workplace, in public life and with Church issues.

### **FORMATION THROUGH EXPERIENCE AND ACTION**

CLC needs to act. CLC needs a formation/training programme to help it be active in the world. Many or all of the social needs that we want to address need formation to be dealt with. But action should not wait for full formation. We need from the very beginning to learn to be contemplatives in action, to promote insertion experiences in deprived or oppressive situations, and to foster a model of experience-reflection-action in our formation programmes. We want to develop an active, progressive, continuous and adaptive formation in the Spiritual Exercises, and find specific ways in which their richness can be shared with people in all circumstances of life.

### **NETWORKING AND COLLABORATING**

We feel that today there is a big opportunity to collaborate with others and find flexible and dynamic structures to ensure effectiveness in the service we want to bring to the world. We want to collaborate within CLC and beyond, and to humbly join others and help in their initiatives. We see a particular call to do this with the Society of Jesus in many different sectors, according to local realities and personal skills: education, refugees, social concern, NGOs, etc.

## **C. CHRIST AND CULTURE**

We have encountered Christ in the Gospels and choose to follow him. Our enrichment not only by our own cultures which provides so much for the unique identity of each but also by what we receive through the cultures of one another is one of the profound blessings of our lives. Yet we abhor the harm, which the sinfulness of each culture can cause in breaking persons and in splitting community. Furthermore, in its drive towards uniformity, the emerging world culture seems to be having the negative effect of destroying the uniqueness of each culture more than the positive one of drawing peoples of different cultures together in one world which respects the unique contribution of each culture. It is from these perspectives that we commit ourselves to the fuller realization of the presence of Christ in all cultures in the following ways:

***1. Working in word and deed as prophets who foster the growth of all that is good and transform all that is harmful in the cultures in the world where we live.***

### **Regarding the dominant world culture:**

We oppose its individualism with the concern for dialogue found at a deeper level in this culture, its marginalization of the poor with its concern for human rights and for the dignity of all and its consumerism with its more fundamental affirmation of life.

We affirm a simple lifestyle which places the emphasis never on things but always on who we are, on what we can share and on what will serve the human person.

We commit ourselves to lives of witness emerging from our CLC form of community life focused on receiving and giving, and our effort is to draw others into this way of living.

### **Regarding local and regional cultures:**

We support all that is unique in the realization that all humanity is finally enriched by every perspective, the concern for community which often needs to be expanded beyond limited horizons and the rich symbolic life which enables us to dream and to create even as we recognize the symbolic can be used to demean and destroy.

The various media and means of social communication, and especially the mass means, have tremendous potential for good and for evil. We commit ourselves to learning to use them effectively and to be critical of what is presented to the consumer. We must employ them extensively in our desire to communicate our Christian faith and the values for which we stand.

### ***2. Incarnating Gospel values in every situation so that every culture can realize its potential to bring humans fully alive.***

We shall incarnate ourselves in our own culture while still having the strength to be counter-cultural in our criticism and witness.

We attend especially to those who are searching that they may find meaning and to those who are hopeless that they may find a way.

We search for better forms of education so that true values may be appropriated and lived. We recognize today that every stage of life has its crises and challenges, and we support everyone on their journey, most especially young people who can face special difficulties because of the relativity of values presented to them.

We bring skills for dialogue and commitment to reconciliation in every situation.

***3. We commit ourselves to becoming involved to find a new way of being universal Church drawing to itself from all that makes today's reality so rich in its diversity.***

We promote dialogue in the Church and between the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations, other religions, people who are searching and all of good will.

We work for authentic inculturation in local Churches, helping Church in promoting what is positive in the local churches and challenging their negative aspects, and applying this to pastoral service, to catechetics, to liturgy and to theology.

We work to integrate with our faith every aspect of our reality, including family, marriage and work.

We promote the values of authentic human relationships in the Church, which implies attention to healing our brokenness and working for the transformation of sinful structures.

## **D. CHRIST IN DAILY LIFE**

As we want our belonging to CLC to run through everything we do in our daily lives, we desire to live fully according to who we claim to be as an Ignatian lay faith community on mission. This desire clearly has two important aspects, which can both be connected with our commitment to seek and to find God in all things. On the one hand, we can miss God in the ordinary thereby missing both richness in God's presence and many opportunities to serve. On the other hand, we can blind ourselves to God's presence in some aspect of our life, in this way neglecting a challenge to grow and the potential to serve in this aspect of our life. We discern the following four strong desires and make them our priorities in our mission today with regard to bringing the presence of Christ to our daily lives.

***We desire to nourish the absolute value of every human person and of authentic human relationships in the community of humankind.***

Throughout our entire world, the forces of death are strongly at work and have an impact on all our daily activities. We want always to affirm the human person created in the image of God.

We want to live lives that are unafraid to be affectionate in our relationships and to appreciate this world as gift of God.

In the faith conviction that no one is expendable, we want to have a special care for the poor and to include this perspective in the decisions we make in every aspect of our daily lives.

We include a critical Christian understanding of globalisation, environmental problems and militarisation in our interpretation of the world.

***We desire to promote family life as a basic unit in building the world into the Kingdom of God.***

Concern for the area of family in its variety of manifestations moves us very strongly since it is so threatened today even to the point of decay. We will cultivate authentic relationships and affection in couples, between parents and children and between the generations.

We are committed to living marriage and family life in a discerning way in order to integrate them with our faith so as to live these dimensions fully as vocation of the Lord in the Church.

We give ourselves specially to care for families suffering from any kind of brokenness.

***We desire to accompany young people on the way to meaningful lives and to invite them into contact with the Lord who offers them fullness of life.***

Young people are especially vulnerable to consumerism and other anti-values. Each young person stands at the crossroad of choosing a way of life, and we work to ensure that the way of Christ may be seen as attractive and challenging. We will listen to young people in their hopes, desires and generosity and foster their growth in every way we can.

We will offer young people an enculturated faith initiation, meeting them where they are and going together on the way towards a deeper encounter with Christ with the effective help of Ignatian pedagogy.

***We desire to integrate professional and other working activities into a truly human life and into our Christian faith.***

The pressure of an overarching concern for profit must be resisted in all areas of professional life.

While affirming that work is not an end in itself, we want to value work and the dignity of the worker.



We want to overcome the distance often present between our faith commitment and our professional and working activities so as to live these activities as a part of our personal vocation.

We also want to find ways to deal with unemployment and underemployment, even in circumstances where we cannot solve this problem.

## E. MEANS FOR MISSION

### *Spiritual Exercises*

As a world community, CLC is to actively support all its members by providing the means and resources to fully experience the grace of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, in offering them models that are dynamic, progressive and continuous. Since all Ignatian Sources are integral to our spirituality, we wish to read them all from a lay perspective. In this spirit we support the attempts to adapt the Spiritual Exercises.

### *Formation*

CLC will provide formation teams, at regional, and world levels, who will develop and propose formation programs, which intellectually and affectively integrate the spiritual, communitarian and apostolic dimensions of CLC life. Special assistance ought to be given to developing programmes that will enable our members to be proactive and counter-cultural whenever needed.

CLC will offer its expertise in the development of persons, integrating faith and life, touching all dimensions of daily life, with a special sensitivity to the poor and marginalized. We wish to provide formation and education programmes that will enable persons and/or communities to listen actively, to deal with conflict resolution and promote sincere and open dialogue among our members and with other persons in society.

CLC will assist all its members in learning the process of personal and communal discernment, which will lead to more effective personal and communal apostolic activities. To achieve this, we will provide meaningful programmes and training for leaders, guides and coordinators in the spirit and method of the Ignatian pedagogy. We also wish to provide means and resources to all our members, at every stage of human development, so as to attain awareness of personal vocation and be affirmed in their identity in the community.

### *Collaboration in mission*

CLC feels a particular call to collaboration in mission with the Society of Jesus and other Ignatian family members. CLC is especially interested in the creation and actively supporting apostolic networks within the Church and with other international groups.

### *Finances*

CLC is especially concerned with the financial support given by all its national communities, for dealing with its expenses at the world level. Financial responsibility should always be discerned by each member in his/her small community and is clearly seen as a sign of mature commitment with World CLC.

*Live with simplicity and courage using your imagination. These are some characteristics of Jesus ...not to be inhibited.*



### 3.4 A REFLECTION

*We are living in a time of grace – The Lord is being incarnated...be a specialist of incarnation!*

*Remember there is no call without the cross. It is accompanied by the empty tomb.*

*As an Apostolate, we are disciples of the Lord, ready to be sent as World energy.*

*Look beyond at the eyes of Jesus looking at you. God in all things, all in Him.*

*CLC is more than a prayer group – for service, not activism, with Ignatian Spirituality toward a common mission.*

*Mission leading to a dead end is not of the good spirit and will lead to spiritual desolation. Beware of both too little and too much action.*

*Discern the concrete steps.*

---

**LIVE WITH RADICALITY - DO NOT LOWER YOUR STANDARDS.**

*Adapted from the notes from Fr. Eddie Mercieca's sj address the World Assembly, Fatima 2008*

# SECTION FOUR

4.1 COMMUNITY LIFE DIMENSION .....	141
A. COME AND SEE.....	141
B. CHRISTIAN MATURITY THROUGH CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY .....	142
4.2 STEPS, STAGES AND PROCESSES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT .....	143
A. STEPS IN GROUP DEVELOPMENT.....	143
B. THE FIVE FORMATION STAGES and PROCESSES in CLC CANADA .....	145
C. THE CYCLE OF GROWTH THROUGH THE DYNAMICS AND THE GRACES OF THE SP. EX.....	147
D. CONNECTING THE STAGES OF CLC DEVELOPMENT .....	152
4.3 PROCESSES FOR ESTABLISHING CLC GROUPS .....	154
A. THE EARLY STAGE OF CLC DEVELOPMENT.....	154
B. GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES .....	156
C. FAQ - WHAT DO WE DO WHEN AND IF...? .....	159
4.4 DYNAMICS OF A DEVELOPING CLC .....	166
A. THE GIFT OF SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION .....	166
B. EVOLUTION, PURPOSE, IMPORTANCE OF SECOND ROUND SHARING ..	169
C. PRAYER LED BY THE SPIRIT .....	171
4.5 SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION .....	172
A. PURPOSE.....	172
B. ACTIVE LISTENING AND INTENTIONAL SPEAKING.....	173
C. IMPORTANCE of CONTEMPLATIVE LISTENING: 2ND ROUND SHARING .	176
4.6 'TOWARDS' MISSION IN EACH PART OF A CLC MEETING.....	178
A. TOWARDS MISSION' IN PART I OF THE CLC MEETING.....	178
B. TOWARDS MISSION IN PART II OF THE CLC MEETING .....	180
C. 'TOWARDS' MISSION IN PART III OF THE CLC MEETING.....	180
D. CONTEMPLATIVE LISTENING FOR MISSION IN THE SECOND ROUND ..	181
E. DISCERNING THE MOVEMENT OF SPIRITS IN THE SECOND ROUND ....	182
4.7 GUIDING THROUGH PARTS II AND III OF A CLC MEETING .....	183
A. GENERAL COMMENTS PART II & III of a CLC MEETING.....	183
B. EVALUATION AND APPROPRIATION: CONTEMPLATIVE ACTIVITIES .....	187
4.8 THE ROLE OF THE GUIDE IN THE STAGES OF 3, 4, 5, 6 .....	190

## 4.1 COMMUNITY LIFE DIMENSION

### A. COME AND SEE

*The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?" "Come," he replied, "and you will see."*

*John 1:38-9*

*"We long for relationships of meaning. We long to be connected, for healing, for vocation, and for mission.*

*The spiritual logic of a community of faith is that they can live a smaller but living version of what they seek for the larger world. When I say community, I mean a community that makes very intentional commitments, including engagement with those on the margins, justice education or formation, simplicity, prayer, and peacemaking.*

*Our tradition suggests that it is very difficult to live a life of integrity apart from the support, encouragement, witness, challenge and celebration of a community. Community is, if you will, the medium in which so many other important things of the Gospel can happen. Community is an engine for peace, it is fuel for justice. We are made for each other. As a species we have always known we could not survive, could not flourish without each other. Whatever is to prosper, grow, or multiply will only happen with the nourishment of people who are for each other in a significant way."*

*Extract from Jack Jezreel founder of Just Faith Ministries*

## B. CHRISTIAN MATURITY THROUGH CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY

Bill Plotkin speaks of the first half of life as doing our "survival dance." The second half of life can then become our "sacred dance." Most of us never get beyond our survival dance to ask the deep concerns of the soul. We always seem to be too busy "saving" our souls (whatever that means) to do our sacred dance.

Money, status symbols, group identity, and security are of limited value, but to the soul they are a distraction, and finally they become the very problem itself.

However, as Ignatius in his spiritual exercises leads us through the 3 stages of Christian growth; Purgation, Illumination, and Unity, as well Richard Rohr, a Franciscan priest, tells us in his book, "Loving the Two Halves of Life", we in CLC Canada put in plain words the principle of Christian maturity through, what we have come to know as, Fundamental Stages of Growth.

That is why we train Group Guides to be attentive to the first stages (Ignatius Purgative, Rohr's first half of life) and its concerns because every level of growth (Pre-Community, Initiation, Redemption, Deepening, and Apostolic Community) builds on the previous ones.

The principle is this *transformation (maturing in Christian Life) means including the previous stages*. Then you can see the limited, but real, value of the early stages. But you will no longer put too much energy into just looking good, making money, feeling secure at all costs, and making sure you are right, and others are wrong.

*You begin the 'sacred dance' through stages of growth, each building on the previous stage. Living and growing together in community is to mature in the spiritual journey.*

*Bill Plotkin, Ph.D., a depth psychologist, an agent of cultural transformation and founder of western Colorado's Animas Valley Institute in 1981. Slightly adapted for CLC.*

## 4.2 STEPS, STAGES AND PROCESSES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

### Preamble

*What turns a group of individuals into a community  
and what turns a group into a CLC group?*

*The following article was used as input and working material at the International Formation Encounter in Johannesburg, South Africa. The participants found the material very helpful for their reflection and understanding of the CLC way of life and growth process. We, therefore, publish it here.*

The way people are introduced to CLC differs from place to place. However, the stages of developing from a group of individuals into a group with a common goal, and of a faith group into a Christian Life *Community*, follows a certain dynamic which is the same everywhere.

For those who want to guide a group, or help as coordinators, it is important to have some knowledge of the phases a group has to go through in its development. Each phase has its own challenges and problems. It is, therefore, important to recognize the stage in which a group finds itself, in order to handle the situation adequately and help the group to grow. Those who feel called to be group guides are advised to find adequate formation for this important service in CLC. The following is a brief outline of the phases a group has to go through in its development to become a community at the service of others. This just gives a general idea and cannot replace proper formation for group guides.

### A. STEPS IN GROUP DEVELOPMENT

#### 1. The Orientation - or Pre-confidence phase

In this stage there is a readiness to have great confidence in the other members before even knowing them well. There are great differences regarding the background of experiences of each member and there is little common experience. The group participation might not be regular.

The facilitator is the unifying power and centre of the group. Often a member with strong leadership qualities unconsciously takes over the internal leadership of the group. Conflicts will not be allowed to be worked through.

The relationship among the group members is polite and everyone only shows his/her "good sides". Relationships are still insecure. Disappointment or tensions will be suppressed. The apparent harmony and unity of the group is enjoyed and can prevent members from taking the next step.

## **2. The Crisis - or power struggle phase**

Now the suppressed conflicts appear. In this stage the group can break up if it does not get help. If the group avoids this painful phase, it will not grow. Good group guidance will help the group to live through this phase and to understand its importance.

The actual difficulty in this stage is to bring to light and to accept the diversity of the members, their limitations, weaknesses, different attitudes and behavior. The group members may get on each other's nerve. An experienced group guide can help a group to become aware of the situation and to face the challenge.

At this point there is a chance for all the group members to accept and support each other and to see the richness of their diversity. At this stage it can happen that a member leaves the group.

## **3. The intimacy phase**

The members have reached the point where they have really developed into a group. They feel closely united, and everybody contributes to the group. There is the danger that the group could become an end in itself, separated from the outside, enjoying a sense of well-being with each other, refusing to continue the journey into the next stage.

## **4. The differentiation phase**

The friendship and closeness of the members makes this step possible. Familiarity with one another and mutual trust allows changes within the group. At this stage, the different inclinations, needs, capabilities, etc., can be seen and be accepted by the members. Each member has found his/her place in the group and will be strengthened by the group in her/his individuality and specific talent. The members have been helped by the group in their human and spiritual growth. They feel free to let each other go in different directions if an individual chooses to go another way. Whether this group continues becomes a question at this stage.



## 5. The final [concluding] phase

At this point, the group faces a new beginning. Now it is faced with the task of deciding whether they want to continue their way towards a common goal, e.g., to become fully a CLC group. If the group decides to continue, it is necessary to define a new goal which is accepted by all members.

*Note: In the beginning of a group, the different phases are usually not clearly marked, as they rather blend into each other. The initial insecurity yields to a first harmony and atmosphere of confidence which will slowly be disturbed again and again by symptoms of tensions and dissatisfactions bringing up conflicts. If the group faces these conflicts and continues, a new confidence and assurance will grow until it allows the individual and the whole group to discern whether a common future is possible.*

As the journey of the group continues, the phases are still lived through but are not as clearly visible as in the beginning stage. It can happen that a group falls back to an earlier stage of development if it does not accept the challenge to make the necessary step towards a new phase. Therefore, the help of a group guide is essential for the growth of a group.

Only a group who has lived through these phases of group development is ready to become fully a CLC group, which is a community for MISSION.

A CLC group comes fully into existence when all the group members in one way or the other understand that a community is not simply made up of common interests but of each member's giving of self to the other members.

*CLC forms men and women for others.*

## B. THE FIVE FORMATION STAGES and PROCESSES in CLC CANADA

The Five Formation Stages are a dynamic process that could take from four to six years with the guidance of skilled leadership. "Stages" refers to a series of communal graces.

## **STAGES of CONTINUED GROWTH**

### **STAGE 1**

PRECOMMUNITIY (desire for community)

### **STAGE 2**

INITIATION (disposition & desire for the CLC way of life)

### **STAGE 3**

REDEMPTION (to experience/evaluate this way of life & see CLC as one World community)

### **STAGE 4**

DEEPENING (deepening personal & communal levels of daily living focusing on mission)

### **STAGE 5**

APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY (living mission, a DSSE community)

### **GOALS**

- (Stage 1) To discover whether or not members are drawn to move further in this way of living out their Christian faith by forming community
- (Stage 2) To know and experience the CLC charism on a personal level and as a Community.
- (Stage 3) To discover & develop awareness of personal & collective sinfulness & limitation and the need for Christ's redemptive love & God's mercy to accept one another's and the group's limitations
- (Stage 4) To have the group operate as a discerning apostolic body by introducing diagnostic tools (2nd Week Rules for Discernment, Power Cycle, Social Analysis)
- (Stage 5) Permanent Commitment: To live in a communal discernment stance of DSSE ... on mission, moving from a community of apostles to an apostolic community where each member of the group sees his/her apostolic activity in light of the group's apostolic commitment.

## PROCESSES

### PHASE 1 MANUAL

<b>Sessions 1-13</b>	<b>Section 1:</b> Journey of CLC
	<b>Section 2:</b> Experiencing Prayer Temporary Commitment to be considered
<b>Sessions 14-18</b>	<b>Section 3:</b> Sense of Discipleship Temporary Commitment
<b>Sessions 19-37</b>	<b>Section 4:</b> Experience of Identity
	<b>Section 5:</b> Called to Work with Christ
	<b>Section 6:</b> Owning One's Experience

### PHASE II MANUAL

*The movement is from Second Week groups (community of apostles) towards Third/ Fourth Week groups (apostolic community).*

### PHASE III MANUAL (Communal Sp. Ex. - Annotation 19)

*Growing into a mission group through the communal experience of the full Sp. Ex., the group may re-live and deepen the insights and attitudes of earlier stages of CLC growth.*

**Disposition Days**  
**Principle & Foundation**  
**Weeks 1-2**  
**Weeks 3-4**

## **C. THE CYCLE OF GROWTH THROUGH THE DYNAMICS AND THE GRACES OF THE SP. EX.**

A CLC group is determined by the common desire to:

- continue sharing together and deepening the experience of a life in faith

- to open oneself to be transformed by the grace of the Lord
- to become more acquainted with the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises
- to become sensitive to the call to action or service.

*Growth in the CLC way of life is linked to the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises.*

## **1. Welcoming to CLC and a period of introduction to the CLC way of life**

*(Note that it may be helpful that our Phase I Manual, Sections 1,2, and 3 connect to this 'growth cycle' even though it may extend longer than the 'doing' of these particular Sessions.)*

This first period, pre-community, corresponds to the **Principle and Foundation** of the Spiritual Exercises. It is an invitation towards greater inner freedom. It is important in this stage to be open and attentive to all aspects of life, to become more and more aware of the reality within and surrounding me with the help of the group. In order to reach this alertness and openness, the daily practice of a time of silence and meditation, especially meditating the Scripture and the daily Prayer of Awareness [Examen], is important. It is essential for the group to share and evaluate these experiences in an atmosphere of listening to each other.

The end of this stage is indicated when:

- the individual and the group as such have gained a positive attitude towards life and creation
- they have discovered the unique love of Jesus Christ, 'Lord and Creator of all things'
- there is an increasing desire to respond in love, and greater interior freedom can be noticed
- social and personal limitations are discovered and difficulties in overcoming them are experienced
- thus, all feel encouraged in hope and trust [ ... I know the one in whom I have put my trust..., 2 Tim 1.12].

With the help of the group and the group guide, the members have to decide now whether they want to continue in CLC or if they want to leave because CLC is not for them.

## **2. Taking root**

**The first part of this stage**, initiation, corresponds to the spirit of the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises. Encouraged by the positive experience of the Principle and Foundation, the members are now confronted with the reality of personal and social sin. *(Note: Section 4 of the Phase 1 Manual connects this growth cycle and may*

*extend longer than the 'doing' of these Sessions, or a group will 'cycle back' as the members of group continue to grow.)*

At the same time, they experience what it means to be redeemed by Jesus Christ. This step is crucial in the preparation for the discernment of spirits which is a central issue in Ignatian spirituality.

Of course, individual and community growth do not run completely parallel. It is, therefore, important that the individual seeks spiritual guidance when he reaches the point where the reality of social evil / structural sin in its different dimensions becomes obvious.

- The connection between social evil and one's own involvement in it and the incapacity to love and grow in freedom is understood.
- One's own fears, defense mechanisms, sinful tendencies, and incapability to change oneself are discovered.

It is a difficult time for the group but also a time of grace when the members experience this, as well as their limitations in relationships. A liberating and healing experience, reconciliation can take place when the group members can verbalize and admit these limitations.

This part of the way is marked by the presence of the crucified Lord. Looking at Him, individuals become aware of their own evil which leads to the rejection of life and love. They recognize their incapacity to free themselves; this arouses the desire for freedom. The person finds his/her way to the mystery of love which means personal redemption, healing, and liberation.

A deep longing to respond fully is awakened. In gratitude to the redeeming and liberating love of God, we align ourselves with the struggle against sinful structures in solidarity with the victims, the poor, the marginalized.

**The second part of this stage** corresponds with the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises, beginning with the Call of the King. Out of gratitude and love, the desire for a closer relationship with Christ grows. *(It may be helpful to note that Section 5 of the Phase I manual connects to this growth cycle and may extend longer than the 'doing' of these Sessions, or will 'cycle back' as the members of group continues to grow.)*

The relationship among the group members becomes more intense and a new level of unity among those who have experienced themselves weak and as "loved sinners" comes to life. The group experiences itself as a community of faith on a journey where the members help each other to fulfill the will of God. The discernment of spirits becomes more and more a determining factor for the whole group.

This new life of the group and its members is marked by:

- A growing intimacy with Jesus, encountering Him through daily meditation of Scripture, the daily Prayer of Awareness, the Eucharist, and the Spiritual Exercises
- directing all aspects of one's life towards Jesus. This conversion [Mk 1:15] takes hold of our whole life [in our family, working place, lifestyle, relationships]
- orientating one's attitudes and lifestyle towards the life of Jesus, especially in his relationship with the poor and marginalized
- meditating on Mary's role in the life of Jesus and in the Spiritual Exercises
- building a growing sense of the Church as a community of believers
- experiencing the CLC charism and learning from the life of St Ignatius; knowing Ignatian Spirituality and its role in the service of the Church

Through an increasing identification with Jesus Christ: "no longer I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20), and through the ongoing conversion which determines one's activities and ministries, the person's self-centeredness diminishes.

A new readiness to be sent wherever and however the Lord wants emerges. What was service before, now becomes participation in Christ's Mission. Jesus entrusted His mission to the Church and, therefore, the mission of each CLC member as well as that of the whole community is incorporated into the mission of the Church.

Now communal discernment and decision-making in community will be practiced. Here the identification with CLC as one World Community will take deeper roots. Formation and meetings on regional and international levels will be very fruitful at this stage.

### **3. Deepening**

This stage also corresponds to the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercise, because it too, is centered on the personal relationship with Christ. The discernment of a member's vocation for CLC will continue and eventually be concluded. In the preceding phase the members became deeply rooted in the CLC way of life. What was experienced as a personal response to the call of Christ is now confirmed.

New contents and methods for group meetings are no longer of prime importance. What is important now is to deepen what has been practiced so far, particularly "discernment" in all situations of life in order to live the CLC way of life, personally and in community and in apostolic service.

The aim is to make Christ the centre of our lives where participation in his mission is of prime importance. In the community, personal experiences are shared, deepened and challenged.

The different forms of evaluation [daily prayer of awareness, evaluation in community at regular intervals, spiritual guidance, monthly recollections, yearly retreats or longer retreats in daily life] are of great importance in helping members to become more and more available to the call of God in all aspects of life.

Having experienced the full Spiritual Exercises, and after discernment with the help of the community, the members gain certainty about their CLC vocation; then the question of commitment will arise.

#### **4. Continual Growth**

This long journey provides a gradual growth enabling the member to express a final YES to CLC and its way of life. This "yes" is also a yes to further growth, because life is never static, and the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercise is leading into a continuous growth process. Identification with Jesus Christ leads deeper and deeper into the Paschal mystery, the paradox of "life through death". This corresponds to the Third and Fourth Week of the Spiritual Exercises.

Characteristic of this maturity in CLC is a Life in the Spirit, a growing capability to find God in all things. This is the path we are led through the Spiritual Exercises, especially through the Contemplation to Attain love.

To find God in all things means to recognize His will, in the Church, in events, in others, and in ourselves. The growth of the individual member and the community will continue if the CLC way of life is followed faithfully and we use the instruments of growth offered to us [cf. General Principles, No. 12].

*A vocation to CLC is an apostolic vocation. Therefore, the purpose of community is to form members in their human and spiritual growth and to enable them to realize a deeper participation in the mission of Christ in the Church and in the world.*

#### **For prayer and sharing in the local CLC group**

1. Where do I see my group in the stages of growth in the CLC way of life?
2. What is the most urgent need I have for further growth and development in CLC?

*PROGRESSIO 1997, # 1 and 2*

**The following are the corresponding Graces of the Spiritual Exercises that are prayed for in relation to the 5 Stages of Development (Canadian Model).**

#### *Stage 1. Disposition Days Grace:*

To experience a deep sense of God's unconditional love for me and to have a spirit of awe and gratitude for the gifts of God in my life

- Stage 2. First Week Grace:*  
The inner dimension is to know that I am loved by God. The outer dimension is that the receiver receives God's mercy as sinner
- Stage 3. Second Week Grace:*  
To know Christ better so that I may love Him more passionately and follow Him more closely. To put on the heart and mind of Christ. To know the patterns of light and darkness in me. To face the cost of discipleship. To make decisions as I am called.
- Stage 4. Third Week Grace:*  
To deepen my gratitude and sorrow that Christ suffers for me. To be confirmed in the willingness to accept the cost of discipleship. To practice self-discipline.
- Stage 5. The Fourth Week Grace:*  
To rejoice and be grateful because of the joys of discipleship. In the fourth week one prays with Ignatius for the ultimate grace.

## D. CONNECTING THE STAGES OF CLC DEVELOPMENT

Prior to the writing of *Progressio Supplement #64*, it is important to note that CLC Leadership in Canada had already developed a formation plan called The CLC Canada Fundamental Stages of Development (see CLC Canada Leaders' Manual Section Three) to correspond with the existing Canada Phase I, II and III CLC Formation Manuals.

The Fundamental Stages are identified as **Pre-Community, Initiation, Redemption, Deepening, and Apostolic Community**. The names of these 5 stages were taken from the CLC Document, 'SURVEY' published in 1981 with one change. CLC formators realized that the fundamental element of the CLC charism was being "a community on mission". With this in mind, the 5<sup>th</sup> stage was changed from Continuing Growth to Apostolic Community.

Affirmation of this was experienced at the 2003 Nairobi World Assembly. Faced with the reality of the globalised world in which we were living, we received the grace of being "sent out by Christ as members of one body" to *walk together supporting each other* and to respond as an apostolic community to the challenges of our times.

Below you will find a table that describes the link (connection) between the CLC Canada Stages of Development model, the CLC Canada Formation Manuals, the



Spiritual Exercises, and the 4 stages model described in the *Progressio Supplement #64*.

*"...Progressio Supplement #64 aims to integrate what we **already are** with what we **hope to be**. For that reason, on the one hand, it gathers together the CLC formation 'process', the experiences of people and communities and, on the other hand, it attempts to look towards the future and to bring up to date the CLC growth processes in accordance with the 'call' of Nairobi – a call which invited us to move forward 'in order to become an apostolic body which discerns, sends out, supports and evaluates'.*

*The objectives of the document are to foster a greater unity within the World Community while it still recognises and values the richness of diversity, to serve as a guide for the formation process of the national communities and to offer a variety of proposals and guidelines which will allow the national communities to work out their formation plan in accordance with their own realities and necessities.*

*The document does not set out to establish a series of norms which must be complied with, rather it seeks to encourage us to go deeper within and to journey along our own path of growth with the ultimate aim of sharing our vocation and of participating more fully in the mission we have as an apostolic body within the Church."*

*Taken from the 'Introduction' Progressio Supplement #64*

Below you will find a table that describes the link (connection) between the CLC Canada Stages of Development, the CLC Canada Formation Manuals, the Spiritual Exercises, and the 4 stages model described in the *Progressio Supplement #64*. The schema shows the differences and the commonalities in the Stages of Development.

<b>Canada CLC Stages of Development</b>	<b>CLC Canada Manuals</b>	<b>Ignatian Sp. Ex.</b>	<b>Progressio Supplement 4</b>
Pre-Community	Manual I Session 1-13	Disposition Days P & f	Reception/ Welcome
Initiation	Manual I Session 14-18	Disposition Days P & F	Vocation/ Foundation
Redemption	Manual I Sessions 19-37	Weeks 1&2	Vocation/ Discernment

## 4.3 PROCESSES FOR ESTABLISHING CLC GROUPS

Deepening	Manual II Sessions 1 -46	Weeks 3 &4	Vocation/ Deepening
Apostolic Community	Manual III Ann 19 Communal Exercises	Contemplation to Attain Love	Apostolic Community

### A. THE EARLY STAGE OF CLC DEVELOPMENT

**A GROUP GUIDE UNDERSTANDS that...**

Jesus, who models leadership for us, extends the invitation to all to journey with Him. “Come and you will see”, underscores the nature and charism of CLC leadership – welcoming, inclusive, forward looking and challenging.

A guide’s role is distinct, but it also includes the knowledge and skills of the Group Coordinator. In fact, during the early stages of CLC development, when group members are just beginning to explore the CLC way of life, the guide also exercises the role of Coordinator.

The CLC Pre-Community corresponds to the desire for a deeper life; “*Lord, where do you live?*”. Some Guide-Coordination use the first 6 Sessions of the Phase I Manual for what is described as a ‘Pre-Community’ period - a Come and See exploratory period to provide an overview of the CLC way of life.

The **Objectives** at this stage are:

- Knowing others in the group
- Self-knowledge and personal acceptance
- Basic information about CLC structures and spirituality
- Deeper grasp of CLC way of life.

Generally, before the end of the first sessions in the Phase I Manual, a member of the group is invited to assume the role of coordinator so that the guide can live more fully and freely their unique role. This is the first stage in the formal process of CLC formation developing the “Sense of Discipleship” (Section 3) and Experience of Identity (Section 4) corresponding to the First Week and Call of the King (vocation)

in the Spiritual Exercises. It could go on for 1 to 4 years and is completed with Temporary Commitment or the search for another vocation.

The **Objectives** of this stage are:

- Conversion to the way of Jesus
- Experience of God's unconditional love
- Responding to God's call

The Guide is a co-discerner and exercises this role sitting **OUTSIDE** the community - looking in. The Guide sits on the fringe discerning the movement of spirits of the group as a whole. The Group Guide should not belong to the group. This is necessary so that the Group Guide can remain objective and continue as a constant presence over time in order to be effective in this role.

Guides do need to be familiar with the group's graced history/group story and be grounded in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius... in essence, operates as a Spiritual Guide of a group.

*In the same way that a spiritual director helps individuals recognize their desires and hopes with regard to the Lord, to make these known to the Lord, and to put themselves into a receptive position so that the Lord's response may be heard, ... so too does a guide do that for an apostolic community.*

*In this way the Group Guide helps a group discern what personal and communal spiritual movements within their interchanges are leading them towards the Lord ... and to decide what to do about that discernment.*

A group will have difficulty identifying, by itself, the movement of grace which occurs individually and communally without a Group Guide's assistance. In a CLC, a Group Guide is one who:

- is "steeped" in CLC Spirituality as a way of life
- is a keeper of the CLC vision
- is a 'student' of the basic and evolving documents of CLC formation and growth
- is able to open these up for the local groups they serve

The Guide must always ensure that the group continues to move beyond itself and does not turn inward. This is done by assisting the group to name its vision, set goals and realize them through discernment processes that lead to good apostolic decisions. Basically, the Group Guide facilitates the members' embracing and living out the vocation and commitment to live the CLC way of life.

## B. GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

### PURPOSE:

A recommended process in the establishment and initial formation of a new pre-Christian Life Community group.

### REFERENCES:

- General Norms (GN) of Christian Life Community (CLC)
- CLC Canada Formation Manual Phase One "Come and See"
- CLC Fundamental Stages of Growth
- CLC Canada Leaders' Manual

In following the Guidelines and Procedures, the CLC way of life is revealed through its unique charism. This charism includes three interrelated and interpenetrated dimensions (pillars):

- The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola
- Community
- Mission.

According to CLC General Norm #1:

*"A person can become a member of the World Christian Life Community in one of the following ways:*

*(a) By initiating along with others, a local, pre-CLC group, which is accepted by a regional or national community.*

*(b) By being a member of an existing group of Christians, which has chosen the CLC way of life. This group accordingly has been received as a local community by the regional or national community, which is its accepting community.*

*(c) By joining an existing local community, which is the accepting community, and which provides the means of formation."*

*"In whichever way admission takes place, the new members must be helped by the Community to assimilate the CLC way of life, and to decide whether a call, an ability,*

*and a willingness to live it are present, and to become identified with the wider Christian Life Community."*

Special attention must be given to ensure that all new groups be helped to live a genuine CLC process with the guidance of the following:

- A knowledgeable **Co-ordinator** well versed in the contents of the CLC Formation Manual for the current stage of CLC growth. (GN 41 a). The *CLC Formation Manual Phase 1* stipulates that the Co-ordinator, working in collaboration with the Group Guide, also may assume the role of Facilitator in the early stages of development of a group.
- A formed **Group Guide** trained in group process. The CLC GN 41(b) stipulates that, "*The Guide, well formed in the Ignatian process of growth, helps the community to discern the movements at work in the individuals and the community, and helps them to maintain a clear idea of the CLC goal and process*".

The Group Guide's role is *critical in the early development* of the new community and works with the Co-ordinator to assure that the necessary CLC spiritual and formation processes are presented and implemented.

### **1<sup>st</sup> PERIOD: INITIAL CONTACT: Information Stage - Where do you live?**

The ways that the Spirit draws people to CLC are varied. Inevitably, there comes a time when a person-to-person contact is made with the expressed desire to know **about** CLC. This 1<sup>st</sup> Period is characterized as a time of sharing information about CLC and gathering information about those who may desire to become part of a pre-community group. The role of facilitator, (CLC member, priest, religious sister or brother) is:

- (a) to be welcoming;
- (b) to gather information about lived experiences, formation and desires of interested individuals;
- (c) to co-ordinate and facilitate a group process of shared prayer and dialogue;
- (d) to provide initial information about the CLC way of life;
- (e) to be prepared to facilitate a process of several sessions to further the group's knowledge and understanding of CLC; and
- (f) to elicit a clear choice whether or not the group wishes to continue the CLC journey.

During this *Initial Contact Stage*, the facilitator may hold multiple roles: Co-ordinator, facilitator, formator.

At the conclusion of this "*Initial Contact Stage*", if the group responds positively in its desire to formally begin the CLC journey, they will be invited to begin the 2<sup>nd</sup> Period of the process called "*Pre-Community: Formation Stage*" (as identified in the *CLC Canada Formation Manual Phase One "Come and See"*). The facilitator, who has been journeying with the group, has the responsibility to:

1. inform the Regional ExCo of the establishment of a pre-community group, the actions taken, the formation process, and progress made.
2. consult with the Regional ExCo about proposed ways of ongoing organization and formation.

*If the "Initial Contact Stage" was facilitated by a priest or religious brother/sister, prior to beginning the "Pre-Community" stage, it is advisable that a CLC group be enlisted to Godparent the emerging pre-community. This will also be the transition period where a trained CLC Co-ordinator/ Formator and Group Guide will become responsible for the emerging pre-CLC group.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> PERIOD:** (Sessions 1 to 13)

**PRE-COMMUNITY: Formation Stage-Come and See**

In response to an explicit desire to continue the journey as a pre-CLC group, the lay respondent (Co-ordinator/Facilitator) may choose:

- (a) with the discerned support of his or her own CLC, to act as Co-ordinator and Formator for the "*Pre-Community Stage*" of formation (according to the process set forth in *CLC Canada Manual Phase One*). At this point, the Co-ordinator's own CLC could serve as a Godparent to the emerging pre-community; **OR**
- (b) to discern with his or her own CLC as to who ought to be "sent" to begin the formal process of formation in the CLC way of life.

In the spirit of collaboration, it is recommended that the Regional ExCo:

- (a) be a participant in the identification, **discernment**, and naming of a formed Group Guide to journey with the new pre-community group and its Co-ordinator/ Formator.
- (b) formally **send** the Group Guide to journey with the group by either being physically present or through attentive and regular consultation (mentoring) with the Co-ordinator/Formator.
- (c) be attentive to and **supportive** of the work and role of the Group Guide and invite opportunities for **evaluation** of the process so as to offer better service for CLC development.
- (d) ensure that the *CLC Canada Manual Phase1 "Come and See"* be the primary resource for formation.

It is important to keep in mind the need to be flexible, while not sacrificing quality, in addressing situations that are challenged by distance or financial circumstances. When face-to-face meetings prove difficult, the use of modern technology (i.e., ZOOM, Microsoft Teams) is recommended. In these instances, it is imperative that a "mentoring system" be implemented so that a formed Group Guide will be able to journey with the Co-ordinator/ Formator of the new pre-community group from the "Pre-Community Stage" onward.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> PERIOD:** (*Phase One Manual Sessions 13-37*)

At some point in the period between Sessions 13 and 18, the pre-Community discerns a *Temporary Commitment* to the world CLC and makes an application to CLC Canada to become an official CLC member of the National Community. On acceptance into the National CLC, and embracing the CLC Way of Life, the group becomes identified as a CLC. The "new" CLC, accompanied by their Group Guide, continues following the formation process as indicated in the *Phase One Manual*.

*From CLC Atlantic Region Guidelines*

## **C. FAQ - WHAT DO WE DO WHEN AND IF...?**

*The following is a recap of a Q-A period from a CLC Guide Training Workshop facilitated by John Sumarah and Pam Daigle.*

1. If a member continues to share how they got to their prayer time and not the fruit of it?
  - ❖ When someone is into sharing their 'process' instead of the fruit of it, it may mean that they are unaware of this pattern. Take them aside and help them see this... "I know that all you went through to get to where God seemed to most touch is important to you, however, for us, we mostly need to hear what that was ..." or... the Coordinator or Guide could address the group in evaluation and 'model' the difference.
2. When a member consistently doesn't share on the assigned prayer material, how do I deal sensitively with an individual's feelings and still address things? Do I address this in the group or in a 1:1 way?
  - ❖ There needs to be a certain 'tolerance' level in the early stages of CLC development. The group needs to go a certain distance with an individual. It

could be something the person is not fully aware of. In the evaluation, we can express the importance of following God's lead in prayer but can also express how important it is for the group to be formed with common material. The individual 'at fault' may feel uncomfortable however we need to trust they will deal with this on their own. If the pattern persists, we may need to take that person aside and while acknowledging the need to respect different ways/materials for prayer etc., we need to help them see that there is an impact on the group when they do not, at some level/on some occasions, pray with the theme and grace that is forming us. In the end, if this seems to be more of a resistance to the CLC process, we cannot allow one person to have that kind of power. We don't want a group to fold up. A 1:1 may be necessary - even an invitation to pray about whether CLC is the best place for them at this time.

3. When a member expresses inadequacy (not getting it) specially after a 'significant' sharing of another?

- ❖ We all feel inadequate. We need to name it, feel it, and then get beyond it or we will get stuck. Encourage groups not to compare, not to judge one another's sharing but just listen reverently. The guide needs to help people see that while significant experiences (even CWPC- consolations without previous cause) are certainly important to share, but our 'ordinary' sharing are just as important and may be exactly what another member in the group needs to hear that night. Free the group up about this. Also, deep sharing is often accompanied by deep emotions. When this happens, the next one in the circle to share may feel uncomfortable in sharing something which seems the opposite. A facilitator may want to interrupt physically! One way is for the leader to get up and gently take the symbol out of the person's hand and hold it until it seems right to move on, then places it in the next person's hand. (In one Guide's group there is no round robin ... rather, the symbol is picked up and put back according to the readiness of members to share.

4. What do we do with 'off track' sharing?

- ❖ Often life experience rather than prayer material (with no connection) happens in beginning groups. The guide needs to frequently clarify what CLC is - not just a support group but a group with a communal, spiritual and apostolic focus. Help them see this.... especially how scripture applies to their life. When members of a group are preparing to share a life experience in Part I, the leader needs to remind the group that we are being invited to reflect 'on these scriptures, this grace, this kind of life experience, this document' in a connective way OR they will inevitably and naturally default to 'any' life experience that comes to them. We need to be both accepting and challenging in helping a group learn how to do this well. The CLC pattern may actually be clear to some who continually 'go off track' but not the motivation. This may need to be addresses one to one.



5. What do we do when a member(s) starts preaching (or advising)?

- ❖ It is important to continuously encourage the group to share at the personal level. One of the gifts of CLC is integrating the 'head' and the 'heart'. The 'I' form of sharing is a way of OWNING both our own thoughts and our own feelings. Help the group to understand this. You may need to reiterate this also in a teaching way.... "...this is how we share..." (and explain). Or use joining statements like ... "Before you go on could we hear how... Or ... "I hear the wonderful things you are saying about the meaning of the scriptures for all of us - AND (for you?), using an intonation that asks for personal sharing. (There IS a place for interrupting people.) It is important to use joining statements like AND, not BUT with people to show understanding before correcting. During the evaluation at the end of the meeting a guide could say ... "I keep noticing that perhaps as a group you might want to pray over this, and we'll talk about it at our next meeting." We need specially to nip the 'bible study pattern' in the bud.

6. What do we do if the process is continually being pushed aside by the group?

- ❖ If the process is continuously disregarded - that is, if sharing is not sharing, but crosstalk, advising in Part I or resistance/avoidance of discussion around the week's theme/content is a pattern, the guide must REFORM the group as to the CLC focus of meeting and way of life. This should come up in the evaluation. The group must understand the communal, spiritual, and apostolic thrust of CLC and come to see it is responsible for its own life. The guide may want to say something like ... "as CLC we have a unique knowledge to share here in living Christian community. We are discerning communities of apostolic service, and our meeting process helps form us to that... let's look at the three parts of our meeting again to help us see that..."

7. What do we do when a member expresses disillusionment/disappointment with the group ... that is when they project onto the group rather than deal with their own issues, implying there is something wrong with the group/group not helpful for them?

- ❖ This is a spirit of deception in the group ('if this group were better, I'd be better) In groups, there can be Parent - Child - Adult dynamics at work. Groups must not move into the Parent state but stay in the Adult state. That's why the quiet helps the group to do this and not rush to comfort. We don't get up and go over and comfort them like a parent does a child The Guide/facilitator must challenge members to the Adult mode of interacting if they get caught in this dynamic. Each one must understand that they take responsibility for their own thoughts and feelings. This doesn't mean it is not appropriate to at some point offer to pray with them, but not in the time of sharing. A respectful listening is enough. When difficulties such as described above are happening, it may be necessary

for the guide to take an individual aside and say something like ... "I know you are having trouble in the area of \_\_\_\_ When was the last time you saw your own spiritual director (if it seems to be primarily a spiritual issue)? - or - if emotional, "Are you getting some help for this?"

Sometimes the disillusionment is expressed toward the leadership of the group. This form of conflict is often about a projection and the real issue is about irresponsibility in the group for its own life and direction. It is really about a call to the group to take on more leadership responsibility for its own development. All in the group, not just the designated leader, are being invited to contribute to the leadership of the group. Few people like conflict or like to deal with it. It is not easy to be present to discomfort personally or in a group dynamic, but it is inevitable. We need to see conflict as a gift to GO DEEPER and reflect on what's really going on and respond.

8. When does affective maturity happen in the formation of CLC groups?

- ❖ It is a journey of growth in prayer, openness, and discernment. It happens faster with good guiding. A guide is the key to the group's affective maturity.

9. What do we do if there seems to be a fear to be honest about hurt feelings?

- ❖ If the guide perceives conflict in the group due to unexpressed hurt feelings, a guide might say... "I know you all love one another and do not want to hurt one another, but my sense is that there are hurt feelings here. We need to name these." If we don't so this the group will become a pseudo-community in their pussyfooting around. A real community invites conflict and deals with it! Avoidance of conflict can lead to disbanding. Communal discernment will almost always bring conflict with it. Each one has a will/own ideas. To really discern God's will, a community must transcend this inevitable conflict. Our conflict actually invites God's presence in a real way. PARTS OF ME will have to be drawn closer to Jesus if we're going to do God's will! It has something to do with the seven capital impulses living in each one of us. Conflict has something to do with either the PROCESS the group is using, and this is the easiest to deal with. Or it can be about the CONTENT being discussed and this can be worked through. But when the source of the conflict is the group members (personalities) who are involved in the discussion/group process ... this can be thorny.

10. What do we do when a member has a pattern of missing meetings?

- ❖ John English use to say, "...miss three meetings with no excuse and you're out." Though a bit strong it emphasizes the priority we are called to give to CLC (if we have chosen to enter formation or if we choose CLC as a vocation). If not, we are not contributing. There needs to be some tolerance, but CLC needs to be in the top three or four (God, family, work/primary ministry/CLC. If it is not that

kind of priority, it is probably not for them. Prioritizing may mean discerning among the 'many good things we do'. By Weeks 12-18, people should have come to understand this. Taking a member aside may help them face where they are with this or face the impact of their pattern of missed meetings on the group. If nothing seems to be resolved, the group may need to be helped to name its real feelings about the situation - to challenge with love and respect, but to ask for some response to this dynamic on the life of the group.

11. Regarding the scripture that is read at the beginning of the meeting - some feel they are being asked to reflect on it. How do we use that opening scripture to simply focus the group?

- ❖ The opening scripture, taken from the previous week's prayer material, is not intended to be reflected upon in Part I but to act more as a mirror to see where God has touched us since our last meeting (which could be during a prayer time with that scripture or others assigned - or in a life experience.) The scripture that is read is simply intended to throw some light on what it is that we have come prepared to share. Another way to focus the sharing is to draw attention to the grace and how it has been received in prayer and/or life. There are different ways to 'focus' what is expected from the group as they prepare to share in Part I. If a group is struggling with this, it can even be clarified for them in their preparatory material (if given that way).

There is a dynamic in the structure of Phase I ... at the beginning it is more around Principle and Foundation type questions for sharing, then scripture is introduced, then the dynamics of Week I of the Exercises with scripture and a more focused grace other than just being 'open to God and to one another'. To understand this 'easing in' can help us prepare them for sharing in the first part of the meeting.

12. In Week 6, the theme is about celebrating our journey thus far. What if the 'mood' of the group is not celebratory, but 'down' during that meeting?

- ❖ The guide needs to adapt to the reality of the group - however, in a situation such as this, we can point out whatever IS worth celebrating. 'We want to celebrate tonight that as a group we have learned to share deeply and openly with one another - indeed, a gift to celebrate' ... or ... "Let us celebrate our deepening understanding of what CLC is about".

13. How does the guide help the group discern movement of spirits?

- ❖ The group is responsible for its own life and development; however, the Guide's role is to help with discerning this. Evaluation is key to this. Evaluation is about 'how the group is doing' (not the guide/facilitator). The guide needs to help the group see that, as CLC, we have a unique knowledge to share here (discernment

of spirits) and to pay more attention to that. Help them evaluate their own 'dynamic' as a group ... what is really going on, where is it leading, where are we going as a group? A guide might ask: "How do we sense the meeting went tonight (all parts of the meeting)?" Help people say ..." I liked this but not this" ... otherwise, over time, it builds up. Evaluation at the level of the personal is important - once we share our 'sentiment' we are freed up. Everything is open to evaluation/review, and we learn much through this.

14. Is teaching part of what Guides do to help groups develop?

- ❖ Spiritual freedom is very important for guides ... the freedom to be flexible and adaptable. Our style of guiding is influenced by the maturity level of the group. There are two areas to consider around our role- support and teaching. In the early stages of group development there is always a need for support and direction. Vis a vis a particular task - we must learn to match our guiding style to the group need. Any new task requires direction. The guide is invited to 'flex' their style here - it needs a 'teacher' to direct the process. However, if a group is competent and confident, a Guide only needs to offer support (a "You can do this")

15. How often should a Guide visit a group after the initial phase of group development?

- ❖ The Guide's role is to continue giving sufficient support to the Coordinator or leader of the meeting's agenda and process. For a while you are there at every meeting; then phase out - maybe every two meetings, then maybe every 4-6 meetings ... but keep the right amount of connection for the maturity level of the group and where they are in CLC developmental stages. (Be there for Week 18 which helps CLCs to go deeper - and for Week 26 for Communal Help in Personal Decisions for example.) Be available to leaders to plan when needed and to debrief meeting experiences. After the transition from regular presence as guide, don't wait for the leader to invite you in - you should feel free to show up at any meeting. Guides are mandated by the Region, not the groups, regarding their role. Without a visit even with good leadership, a group can go off track. Guides need to show up.

16. What about rotating leadership of the group meeting?

- ❖ If rotation happens, it should be for enough time to learn the skills of leading and to enable the group to adjust to different styles of leadership ... several months. Note - we are not talking about the leader of the GROUP but the facilitator(s) of the group MEETING. There is a difference. The whole group also is itself a 'leader' of the group - it's a shared responsibility. Not all are called/have the charisma to lead the group's forward progress. The guide determines the leader (the Group Coordinator) of the meeting in the beginning stages ... and may need to input

around any other leader chosen by the group - even at a later stage of development. **It is not about taking turns** - it is about the GROUP LIFE and FORMATION as CLC that determines who should lead the meetings in their forward progress. The guide has more knowledge to bring to this selection of leader of the meeting. To keep the vision of CLC as discerning communities of apostolic service/action before the group is the responsibility of the guide. Nairobi's "discern, send, support and evaluate" must forever be in our minds and hearts.

## 4.4 DYNAMICS OF A DEVELOPING CLC

### A. THE GIFT OF SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

Group Guide's responsibility is to always keep in mind what the goals of CLC are so as to guide the group onward toward its destined vocation ... a discerning community for mission. As mentioned in Section One, a CLC meeting unfolds in three dimensions (Three Pillars) that define the CLC vocation and CLC Spirituality.

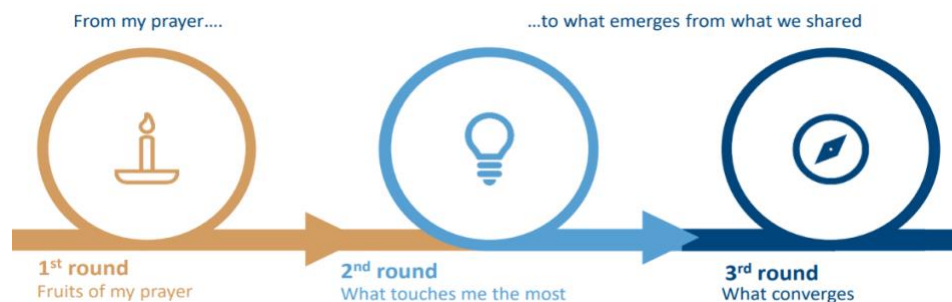
- I. Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius
- II. Community
- III. Mission

*"We learn by going  
but to know where one is going always helps to get there."*

***IN PART I OF A CLC MEETING, THE THREE DYNAMICS WHICH ALLOWS CLC TO DEVELOP AS AN APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY ARE THE PROCESS OF GROWTH, THE STAGES OF GROWTH AND DSSE.***

ALL 3 CLC DIMENSIONS ARE 'IMBEDDED' in SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

COMMUNITY >>> SPIRITUALITY >>> MISSION



In CLC spiritual conversation, we move from "me" to "we"

Spiritual Conversation is a consistent way of proceeding in both Part I and Part II of our CLC meeting. Each 'round' of Spiritual Conversation emphasizes one of the 3 PILLARS or 'dimensions' of CLC. The following 'flower' metaphor explains how this unfolds...



- < Round 1: the **ROOTS** – the SPIRITUAL DIMENSION of CLC.

Round 1 'roots' us in our core spirituality - the **Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius**. With the help of my journal, I share what happened when I prayed way with....

- a scripture text
- a life experience
- an article or a formation document

A **grace and question** usually help me to focus this in Round 1.



- < Round 2: the **STEM** – the COMMUNAL DIMENSION of CLC

*"No one person has ears big enough to hear the infinitely rich word of God."*

Round 2 invites me to pause and listen to God speaking to me through what I have just heard. Round 2 "begins" the movement from the 'me' to 'we' communal dimension of spiritual conversation because it connects me to others in the group. It also helps us begin to notice the lead of God through our responses to on another's sharing. A typical Round 2 question: **How did I hear God speak personally to ME through what I heard in Round 1 – or what stirred an inner movement in me?**

**NOTE:** *The second round is not about adding something else to my own story that I shared in Round 1.*



• < Round 3: the FLOWER – the COMMUNAL MISSION DIMENSION of CLC

*Do whatever he tells you” Jn.2:6*

**Round 3** corresponds to the ‘flowering’ of our spiritual conversation – it is also how we move even more towards the ‘we’. Here we listen for how God is speaking to us, or how God seems to be present with us/acting in us **as a group through our sharing** in Round 2...**leading US forward**. ‘Hearing this’ will invite some sort of response or ‘next step’.

Because CLC forms us to be men and women for others, this forward movement may have something to do with any of the following. It may be related to:

- the specific grace we are seeking
- *the spiritual growth of one or more of the members*
- *the inner life of the group or an area of CLC development we need*
- *the direction our formation should take*
- *issues around individual missions or the group’s mission direction/calls*

A **Round 3** question that helps us move towards this communal and ‘mission’ dimension of CLC is:” ***How do we sense God is leading us forward? What seems to be emerging or converging for us from Round 2?***

Note: (Not everyone has to share...in this sense it is not exactly a ‘round’).

## TOWARDS PART II OF A CLC MEETING...

Sometimes what we **hear and name**, may need to be opened up in further conversation during that particular meeting and so we carry this conversation over into Part II. Or, it may need further conversation or some kind of process at a later date.

***Throughout the Rounds***, the Group Guide listens with an objective “inner ear” (heart and head)

- Has the Grace been received?  
Is the group in consolation or desolation?
- What connection can be made to the Spiritual Exercises? What Week of the Exercises are we? Are we living the CLC Charism? What Stage of Growth &



Development - Pre-Community, Initiation, Redemption, Deepening, or Apostolic Community?

- What, if any, leanings for mission were expressed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Round?

***The Responsibility of the Group Guide ... (see Stages of Dev, Process of Growth, Sp. Ex. etc.)***

- Educates in the faith
- Initiates the invitation to spiritual life
- Handles the dynamics of the group
- Introduces the group to CLC meetings process
- Helps them discover and express inner movements
- Encourages participation in community life and mission
- Provides examples of CLC Vocations
- Enables a first experience of the Exercises
- Encourages sharing, communal Review of Life and personal Examen
- Becomes a spiritual guide for some
- Supports the coordinator
- Creates climate for discernment and election
- Promotes awareness of social injustice and provides opportunities for service
- Prepares members for Temporary Commitment

*Compiled from CLC formation documents and processes*

## **B. EVOLUTION, PURPOSE, IMPORTANCE OF SECOND ROUND SHARING**

*“Your response to others is to come from what moved you as you listened. This is not a place for problem solving or giving advice.”*

*John English SJ. Phase III Formation Manual  
Sharing Experiences of the Spiritual Exercises. Pg.163*

### **Learning to listen**

Listening to the experiences of others and the works of the Spirit in them gives us a sense of awe and gratitude toward God and a respect and trust of the other members of the group. It helps us recognize our unity in spite of our diversity. Listening goes beyond hearing. All the senses are working although hearing is primary. One's whole person is involved in listening.

What is being shared is personal experiences. This means the one speaking is the expert. The role of the listener is to listen attentively with a non-critical attitude. Listening requires humility and self-forgetfulness.

### Learning to tell our story

How do we tell our story? Much the same way that the disciples on the way to Emmaus did. They related their desolation, 'Our own hope had been...', and consolation, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he explained in the scriptures to us?' (Lk 24:13-32). We learn how to speak briefly yet with enough concreteness that others will be able to relate to our experience and gain insights into their own.

### Feedback

After a 1<sup>st</sup> go-round of sharing, the members may remain quietly reflecting on what impressed them as they listened. Then a *further brief sharing* can let the others know that they have been heard and appreciated. THIS IS THE CEMENT THAT BINDS THE GROUP TOGETHER. Eventually the experience of the group gets highlighted.

### Further reflection on our group sharing in a 2<sup>nd</sup> Round

- *What did I hear?*
- *What impressed me as the others shared?*
- *What new insights did I gain?*
- *What are the inevitable consequences of the truths we have shared?*
- *Where did I experience affective harmony with the others as they spoke?"*

### How people express themselves

For a discerning process to take place, people have to move to different levels of revelation and understanding. Reflection deepens as individuals get feedback from the group, in a continuous process.

The depth of the community's self-knowledge as well as the depth of the members' commitment to each other depends on external expression. It is through this that it comes to recognize itself as a corporate person or subject. The silence itself is a symbol of awe and presence before God. It also prepares the way *for reverential listening to those who are moved to speak*.

As a group grows into a faith community the sharing becomes more and more trusting and eventually deeper. As the group moves from simple sharing of events to add hopes, desires, vision, dreams and images of reality, spiritual vocabulary increases and ways of communication change.

In the sharing, the members of the community eventually express the way they image themselves in relation to God, where they find God and how they live out their

spiritual lives. Members notice the recurrence of expressions that indicate a faith community is present. Some of these have to do with where the community senses God; some with the sense of mystery; some with a new understanding and appreciation of history; some with the felt sense of the risen Lord in the community. The community learns to describe its interior movements. It begins to recognize communal experiences that energize and move the community as a whole."

*John English SJ. 'Spiritual Intimacy and Community' (Paulist. New York. 1992) pg.65-77*

### C. PRAYER LED BY THE SPIRIT

*We are being led by the Spirit  
in many hidden ways to enter  
into the life of the Trinity.  
When we disclose something  
of ourselves to another in  
trust and love,  
we share in God's revelation  
to the beloved Son.  
When we listen  
with loving attention to another  
who speaks from the heart  
of what is deepest,  
we understand a little more  
the Son's listening attention to his "Abba." AMEN*

*THE WAY OF DISCERNMENT by Elizabeth Liebert (pgs. xix – xx) adapted for CLC*

## 4.5 SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

### PREAMBLE

Spiritual conversation does not have to be explicitly about spiritual things. Spiritual Conversation is mainly about the quality of listening and the quality of speaking. It means paying of attention to the spiritual movements in the other person as well as in oneself during the conversation, which necessitates attending to many other levels of what is being expressed. Such a quality of attention is an act of reverence, welcome and hospitality for others as they are, and takes seriously whatever is going in inside the parties to the conversation. This can be done in any context, while discussing any topic.

Spiritual Conversation is composed of two foundational skills or practices, active listening, and intentional speaking. **These are the basic building blocks of any communal discernment.**

### A. PURPOSE

The main purpose of spiritual conversation is to create an atmosphere of trust and welcome so that people may more readily express themselves frankly. It allows them to take seriously whatever is going on within them. This transparency makes the perception of spiritual movements easier and, eventually, the Spirit's involvement.

- Active listening means welcoming non-judgmentally whatever the person says, no matter what you think about what is being said, or what you think about the person. Each is an expert in his or her own experience. We should listen from the point of view of the presupposition of the Spiritual Exercises, that is, to be "more ready to put a good interpretation on another's statement than to condemn it as false" (*Spiritual Exercises* n.22).

#### **Matter for Discernment:**

The object of attention is the other person or persons in the conversation and what they are experiencing, as well as oneself and what one is experiencing. The guiding question for one who is engaging intentionally in spiritual conversation can be "What is going in the other person and in me, and what is the Lord up to Here?"

## B. ACTIVE LISTENING AND INTENTIONAL SPEAKING

Two basic skills or practices make up spiritual conversation, *active listening* and *intentional speaking*.

### Active listening

The goal of active listening is to seek to understand others as they are:

- It means listening not only to what the other person is saying, but also to what they mean to say, and to what they might be experiencing interiorly. Above all it means listening also to the person.
- Such listening is called "active" because it means paying attention to more than one level of expression of the other. To do so, one must be actively engaged in the process.
- It means listening to the other now as he or she is speaking, and not instead concentrating on what one will say next.
- Active listening means welcoming non-judgmentally whatever the person says, no matter what you think about what is being said, or what you think about the person. Each is an expert in his or her own experience. We should listen from the point of view of the Presupposition of the Spiritual Exercises, that is, to be "more ready to put a good interpretation on another's statement than to condemn it as false" (*Spiritual Exercises* n.22).
- We should expect that the Spirit is speaking with us through the other person.
- Non-judgmental welcome can mean exploring what the person is saying, for Example by means of follow-up questions or expressions of interest and sympathy.
- Non-judgmental welcome does not mean criticizing or disagreeing, at least not at first, and not until the other person trusts you, and not until you think you have understood what the person means. This is a profound welcome of the other person in his or her radical uniqueness.
- If you criticize or challenge before trust has been established and before you have understood what the other means, then the other person will probably not feel free to be frank and sincere.

- Active listening means allowing one to be affected by the other.
- Active listening is demanding, for it requires humility, openness, patience and involvement, yet it is also a profound gift to others of taking them seriously.

### *Intentional speaking*

This is the equivalent to active listening and refers instead to a similar quality of speaking. There are not good expressions for this now, so we choose the expression "intentional speaking". The goal of intentional speaking is sincere expression of oneself, of one's experience, feelings and thoughts:

- Intentional speaking is based in a habit of listening actively to oneself in order to be aware of how one is responding interiorly to the other during the conversation. This inner self-awareness then guides how one engages in the conversation, seeking always to remain free of selfish motivations in what one says. This self-awareness gives one's speaking its "intentional" character.
- It means speaking from one's own experience, and from what one is indeed thinking and feeling, while respecting the needs of active listening.
- Intentional speaking means taking responsibility not only for what one says, but also for what one feels. In intentional speaking, one never blames the other for what one is feeling. For example, instead of saying "You made me angry when you said x..." say "when you said x, I felt angry because I thought...". By not blaming the other for what you are feeling, you keep the exchange free and transparent by avoiding making the other defensive.
- It means sharing the truth as one sees or experiences it, not imposing it.
- Intentional speaking is self-giving, a free, generous offer of a gift to another, in reciprocity for being actively listened to.

### **Explanatory Notes:**

- A good way of understanding the relationship between active listening and intentional speaking in spiritual conversation is by analogy to Ignatius's second preparatory comment in the *Contemplation ad amorem: love consists in a mutual sharing between two persons. One shares what one has with another who has less of it and welcomes from another what one has less of. Thus, when one has honour, one shares it with one who has less honour, similarly with knowledge, etc. (Spiritual Exercises#231)* In response to being spoken to in an

intentional manner, one listens actively; in response to being listened to actively, one speaks intentionally. The one encourages the other.

- Spiritual conversation, and its component skills of active listening and intentional speaking, presupposes a regular personal practice of the Examen of consciousness. **Without a habit of discernment and the self-awareness of the operations of one's own freedoms and unfreedoms that grow with the practice of the Examen, then one can neither listen actively nor speak intentionally.**
- Non-judgmental active listening presupposes that the one you are listening to is an expert in his or her own experience. One can discuss the interpretation of the experience, but this must come with the establishment of trust.
- The Spiritual Exercises Commission of the French-Canadian Province, in their 2009 report, identify spiritual conversation as a basic Ignatian mission. It is something that anyone of an Ignatian spirituality can practice daily, and which is a foundation for any other Ignatian apostolate.
- The attention, gratitude, reverence and reciprocity of active listening and intentional speaking, and hence of spiritual conversation, are rooted in faith.

### THE 'CHECK IN' AT A CLC GROUP

If a group has not yet learned skills in active listening and intentional speaking, the "check-in" is a simple technique at the beginning of a meeting that models such behaviour very simply, and which usually deepens the quality of the rest of the conversation. The "check-in" is a short expression of the disposition or inner state of each participant at the beginning of the meeting, perhaps accompanied by a very brief explanation of why he or she is feeling this way. The check-in is not normally a summary of the significant moments in the person's life since the previous meeting, but merely a description of their current disposition. For example, "I'm feeling fine", or "I'm distracted by work waiting for me on my desk" are appropriate check-ins.

*COMMUNAL APOSTOLIC DISCERNMENT: A TOOL KIT*  
(a document of Canada's English Jesuit Province – slightly adapted in format)

## C. IMPORTANCE of CONTEMPLATIVE LISTENING: 2ND ROUND SHARING

A contemplative experience is whenever heart, mind, and body are all present and accounted for at the same time, when they are all “online”. In the language of Wisdom, we can experience *pure presence* as a moment of deep inner connection with the pure, gratuitous Being of anything and everything. It may be experienced as a quiet leap of joy in the heart, absolute clarity in the mind, or a deep centeredness in the body. Thomas Keating tells us that; *through grace we open our awareness to God whom we know by faith is within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than choosing, closer than consciousness itself*”.

Contemplation, like the Wisdom path, is an exercise in openness, in keeping *all three spaces, heart, mind, and body, open long enough for us to notice other hidden material*. When we can do that, we are content with the present moment and can then wait upon futures we know will be given by grace.

Those who can keep all three spaces open at the same time will know the Presence that connects everything to everything. Thus, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round is linking the *1<sup>st</sup> Round* to the *3<sup>rd</sup> Round*. It is like a building block between both rounds. But the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round is slightly different in that the accent is on “Contemplative Listening”. It is like walking the path of Wisdom. It is an exercise in openness, in keeping all three spaces open (body mind and heart) long enough for us (the group) to notice other hidden material. When we can do that, we are content with the present moment and can wait upon future revelations, trusting in the infinite love of God that will surface in the other building block, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Round sharing.

### Practicing The Discipline Of “Contemplative Listening”

This is the richest and deepest support for a group when one is preparing to move into the 2nd Round of sharing. Carmelite spiritual author William McNamara offers a simple yet profound definition of contemplative listening: *a long look at the real*. Contemplative listening, then, means bringing a full-bodied, loving presence to the persons before you, as well as to what is said and what as yet remains unsaid.

Contemplative listening seeks to honor the presence of the Holy Spirit in the speaker and between the listener and speaker. Such listening rests in warm, loving, engaged and prayerful silence, which often needs few or no words.



Contemplative listening is more than simply not speaking. It involves putting oneself aside to attend fully to the other. When your own current or remembered experience begins to play in your mind, set it aside for the moment. I call this self-forgetfulness “bracketing” to convey the notion that one does not ultimately lose the self. Rather one chooses, for this moment, to leave one’s own concern aside, in order to be fully present to another. Any time your attention wanders from the speaker, it is time to bracket what you are then musing about and refocus your attention lovingly and prayerfully to the speaker. You can return to your own musing and memories later.

This discipline also means that you must withhold your own pearls of wisdom, no matter how hard-won: (“Let me tell you how I dealt with this same kind of thing – it worked really well”); your own similar stories (“The same thing happened to me”); and your own informed knowledge (“That’s what I do in my job, I can help you”).

***Your best gift is your attentive, supportive presence.***

## 4.6 'TOWARDS' MISSION IN EACH PART OF A CLC MEETING

*“No one person has ears big enough to hear  
the infinitely rich Word of God.”*

*G. Schemel SJ*

### A. TOWARDS MISSION' IN PART I OF THE CLC MEETING

#### 'Towards mission' in ROUND 1

We come prepared to share something of our personal journey in about **2-3 minutes**. Before the meeting, we reflect on our prayer and our daily life experiences since we last met... and we select **ONE experience**. It could be connected to a concrete concern, need, situation – or an encounter with someone, an opportunity we had in our family, with our friends or neighbors, or while at work or exercising our ministry ... or something we read, what we heard or saw in the news, or what has preoccupied us about happening in the Church or in the world. However, the reason we select this one experience to share in Round 1 is because of the INNER SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT(S) it triggered in us.

We share our inner spiritual movement(s) as the **primary focus of our sharing**. While it is important to share the 'story' part of our experience – this should be brief, without *unnecessary* details (1 min.) The remaining 1-2 minutes are about **naming** and **describing** how we were interiorly touched by the experience... how it affected our thinking, desiring, feeling places. Why? Because this reveals where God is at work in us. This helps us develop 3 important skills in CLC:

- *the skill of recognizing and naming accurately the 'spirits' which move us,*
- *the skill of sharing the fruit of prayer, and*
- *the skill of learning how to 'make meaning' out of that.*

These skills are part of the way of Ignatian discernment and are a 'pre-requisite' for discerning God's will in concrete choices. This affects how we understand CLC mission and how we can **grow in our capacity** to live a discerning apostolic way of life, individually and communally.

### 'Towards mission' in the CONTEMPLATIVE PAUSE...

If we allow 1-2 minutes before beginning *Round 2*, we can open up a 'deeper listening space'. What are we listening 'for'? We are listening for what God may be doing in our stories. What are we listening 'to'? We also listen 'to' ourselves – to how what I have heard has affected **me**. That is, I notice my own interior spiritual movements and what I think that might mean for me - or for us as a group. This *may* be connected to a call to mission.

### 'Toward mission' in ROUND 2

The sharing in *Round 2* shifts us from 'this is what happened between me and God BEFORE I came to the meeting' to 'this is what is happening NOW between God and me and us together'. (...*those who feared the Lord talked to one another about this, and God took note and listened" Malachi 3:16*). That is, *Round 2* opens the door to the 'communal' colloquy. This means it is NOT the time to share 'another personal experience' (as in *Round 1*). It is a short round (1-2 min.) and it focuses on how God is interacting with me and with us through the sharing we already heard. We are especially invited to notice our inner responses to what we heard – what 'moved' me.

### 'Towards mission' in the Contemplative Pause

In this listening space. we ask for the grace to **be aware of and understand** how the Trinity has been 'present and active' in US as a GROUP through our sharing in *Round 2*. For example, I may have begun to hear more clearly how God is working among us, speaking, calling me/us-to be 'sent' in some way into the world ... I notice my own interior movements in response to that awareness.

### 'Towards Mission' in 'Round 3' – Discerning the presence and action of the Trinity

Sometimes an image helps capture it – or a phrase, a text from scripture. It is also helpful to connect whatever was expressed to key areas typical of CLC formation for mission... four of these are related to:

1. The inner life of the group
2. The spiritual growth of a member or of the group (in *Ignatian spirituality*)
3. The direction our formation should take (re *the GPs/ Norms, Stages of Growth, mission priorities*)
4. How God is with us on mission or moving us toward specific mission initiatives

## B. TOWARDS MISSION IN PART II OF THE CLC MEETING

Mission is *naturally* imbedded here in ongoing CLC formation. Discussion emerging from the awareness in Part I may need to continue into Part II. Although a single meeting may not be enough to arrive at a clarity or direction, if our conversations are sincere and meaningful, it is normal that what God is about in them will keep presenting as possibilities to individuals or to the community as time goes by. In other words, we will eventually make personal and communal decisions for mission in response to what we have been hearing.

To grow in this way of being an apostolic community, we may need to be more intentional in paying attention to and reflecting on the needs or opportunities emerging in the stories of our members in Part I.

## C. 'TOWARDS' MISSION IN PART III OF THE CLC MEETING

### 'Towards Mission' in our EVALUATION ROUND

Evaluation focuses on WHAT we did and HOW we did it. What was not helpful? What was helpful? These are good questions in the early stages of CLC development. As we mature, other questions may be more helpful, especially those that keep us focused on mission. For example...

- *What may have distracted us tonight from our focus on mission?*
- *What did we do that most helped keep our focus on 'mission'?*
- *What ways of proceeding did we use that contributed to an increase of apostolic energy in us?*

### 'Towards Mission' in our APPROPRIATION ROUND

We do this by asking good appropriation questions - choosing those that will help us pay attention and name clearly what God has been doing with us as individuals and as a group during the meeting. Some suggestions:

- *What has been significant for me or for us in order to move forward?*
- *What have I or we heard tonight that has been consistent with our graced history?*
- *What aspects of our CLC common mission priorities seem to be emerging tonight?*

- *What movements were operative in us in the way we worked with our DSSE process tonight?*
- *What impact has tonight's meeting had on my own areas of ministry? On our common mission?*

*Adapted from a Progressio article (with permission) by Pam Daigle, CLC Formator, Atlantic Region, CA*

## D. CONTEMPLATIVE LISTENING FOR MISSION IN THE SECOND ROUND

Becoming contemplatives-in-action is a journey of spiritual growth. Living our CLC way of life can be demanding as we listen for how the Trinity is calling us, as individuals and as community. To discern well we need to learn how to take 'a long loving look' at reality. This is the contemplative stance.

Guides have a particular role in helping our CLC develop this deep listening and loving looking. A key skill guides offer their groups is to help them be open to hear how God is emerging in the group story. It is our stories and our images that move us into the future with God. That's why the second round is so important. It is like a window into God's mind and heart. In the second round we are invited to a time of stillness and silence so that we can reverently 'stare' at one another, and take a long loving look at what is hidden within our stories so we can find God there.

Lois and Kuruvila Zachariah shared, *"In the second round we need to take a long loving look at the other and recognize the authentic images of God, the world and ourselves emerging there. The group guide needs to know what 'world' the group is bringing into being as they gather."*

This is what guides need to do to help groups discern - the story the group is living out of and the images of the future that are emerging. This teases out of us the forward vision. And if this moves into discerned action, imagine how the Reign of God will come more fully among us!

As God's dream for the world goes forward... **Let us allow the contemplative stance of the second round to lead us there.**

*"Listen long in the Silence  
that the Word may be heard,  
that decisions arise from the depths  
of your inner being*

*where Wisdom dwells..”*

*Excerpts from Article by Pam Daigle includes Ps.78 (Psalms for Praying) by Nan Merrill*

## **E. DISCERNING THE MOVEMENT OF SPIRITS IN THE SECOND ROUND**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Round sharing confirms and leads the members to discern what the Trinity wishes them to learn – to implement this knowledge into their lives, both individually and communally. This is where the recommendations of the World and the National Councils will slowly begin to be discerned in the hearts and minds of the members, again communally and individually.

- (a) The question put forward to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round sharing is very important – as much, if not more, than in the 1<sup>st</sup> Round sharing.
- (b) As the guide/leader listens carefully to the members’ sharing, where does s/he feel the Spirit is leading the group to grow in freedom?
- (c) This is not a 2<sup>nd</sup> sharing. Not an “Oh, I forgot to say....” Remind the group that *no new sharing happens in this round*. What emerges is from the community of the Trinity, not ours.
- (d) The Group Guide’s understanding of the “movement of spirits” is very important at this time.

*From CLC Atlantic 2004 Group Guide Formation Manual*

## **4.7 GUIDING THROUGH PARTS II AND III OF A CLC MEETING**

### **A. GENERAL COMMENTS PART II & III of a CLC MEETING**

#### **PART II OF A CLC MEETING**

1. Serious Conversation is speaking about the seeds of apostolic mission that are the result of the discerning experience of the Spiritual Conversation experienced in Rounds Two and Three in PART ONE of the meeting. Is there need for more conversation? Is the Spirit guiding us forward in mission? How?
2. This is the time for further conversation in the ongoing DSSE processes related to individual or group missions?
3. Here is the opportunity for ongoing CLC Formation: content and Processes (related to the CLC Stage of Growth, formation manuals, Sp. Ex., CLC documents etc.).
  - Consider/reflect and discuss together on the prepared material
  - Explain the Grace to be prayed for the next session
  - Give the prayer material and reading assignment for the next session.
- IV. Belonging to the wider CLC means that there may be information, requests from the Local, Regional, National or World that require feedback.
- V. Other issues.

#### **General Comments:**

Guiding a CLC group through exploration of meaningful topics and shared prayer is not a small task and requires continued reflection, cultivation of skills, and openness to how God may be working in them and through the group.

The most important part in guiding a group through these meetings, however, is to remember the Spirit truly is the one leading the meeting and to try to be open to how

that might unfold. That may mean that the topic shifts to something different at points or part of the meeting doesn't even get covered. It is common that facilitators begin with a "plan" for a meeting, yet it often goes in a completely different life-giving direction or there is no formal plan to begin with and something wonderful still emerges from the group. All of these patterns are normal in the life of a CLC. It is important that you continuously discern these movements in order to identify that they are in line with God's invitations for growth in the community. It is a delicate balance to recognize when diversions are of the Spirit or symptoms of a group who is struggling to engage certain topics. With prayer and reflection on the experience, though, God can help as we work to ensure that the CLC experience is meaningful and enriching for all the members.

*Excerpt from CLC USA Webpage*

### **PART III of a CLC MEETING**

Part III of the meeting is a short, reflective act of awareness that looks back over the whole conversation. It is part of the conclusion and completion of a meeting. In the review, participants reflect back on the meeting in order to get some comprehensive awareness of their experience of it and participation in it. It can take various forms: an evaluation, an expression of gratitude or appreciation, an appropriation of the meeting. It is like a check-in but comes instead at the end of a meeting. Often this exercise is called an evaluation, but because of the various forms it can take, "review" is a more comprehensive term.

#### **Purpose:**

A review of the meeting helps to complete the meeting. It can perform functions of evaluation, gratitude, communal self-awareness, and an apostolic function of bringing some forward movement to the conversation. The review gives participants the chance to engage intentionally in the quality of the conversation, trying to discern what the conversation meant, maybe identify how the group was consoled or not, and assess not only the quality of the conversation but also the quality of their own participation in it. The appreciation exercise performs a similar function for the group and its communal spiritual life as does the review of prayer after a Contemplation in the Exercises. Thus, even though it is short, the appreciation brings out the forward movement in the conversation by identifying its possible spiritual meaning, and how it might be better conducted by the leader and the participants the next time. In this way, the assessment helps the group to assume responsibility for its own communal spiritual life, and also helps to build the agenda for the next meeting.



### **Matter for Discernment:**

The matter for discernment is the whole conversation from beginning to end, especially how one experienced it. This includes not only how the meeting was conducted and what happened at it, but also the quality of one's own participation.

### **Process:**

- The leader indicates that the meeting is drawing to a close and invites the group to enter into a review of the meeting.
- 5-20 minutes is usually an appropriate amount of time, depending on the size of the group and the importance of the meeting. Like the check-in, the review is short, but important because of the effects it can have on the meeting, as explained above in the "Why" section.
- The leader then proposes a question or a choice of questions to focus the reflection. The choice of question and kind of review should be guided by the importance of the meeting, the degree of need to learn from it, the time available and the energy of the group at this time.
- After asking the review question or questions, the leader proposes a short time of reflection, then invites responses. These may be offered spontaneously, in which case not everyone will speak during the allotted time, or the leader may systematically go around the group inviting responses.
- Here are some possible questions to guide the review:
  - ◆ *Evaluation*: An evaluative review tends to focus more on either the process of the meeting or the content and is useful for planning the next meeting. The question may be as simple as "How was the meeting for you?" or more involved, such as "What helped your participation in the meeting? What hindered your participation in the meeting?" or "What did you find helpful or unhelpful?"
  - ◆ *Gratitude or appreciation*: A review of gratitude or appreciation is more general than an evaluative review, and responses will deal with both process and content. The question may be "What do you feel most grateful for in the meeting?" or, "What do you most appreciate from the meeting?"
  - ◆ *Appropriation*: An appropriation review engages the participants to synthesize or integrate their experience of the meeting in order to identify some chief meaning of the meeting for them. The question for this kind of review may be something like, "What is the main thing (or meaning) you are taking away from this meeting?"

- If it is desirable to touch on content, process and experience of the meeting, then the leader can ask an evaluation question and a gratitude or appropriation question.
- Hearing each other's reviews allows the group to hear itself in action in a reflective mode. Hearing others' reviews will also affect each one's sense of the meeting.
  - ◆ If the leader notices some interesting patterns in the review, then it may be appropriate to point these out. Otherwise, a simple thank you at the end suffices to conclude the review.
- A written evaluation can be done at the end of a long meeting that is outside of usual meetings of a group, for example, one that lasted a few days, or was a special workshop. It is still good to do a brief oral review together, for hearing each other benefits the whole group, which in turn becomes part of the experience and remembered significance of the meeting. Written evaluations benefit the leaders and planners of the meeting, but do not have immediate impact on the group.

### **Explanatory Notes:**

- The meeting review is like the review of prayer in the Spiritual Exercises, or like the Examen of consciousness at the end of a day.
- Check-in and review can be understood as "bookends" of a meeting or of group conversation. While these two simple techniques do not completely transform a meeting into a spiritual conversation, they can deepen the quality of listening, speaking and participation. In this way they support the meeting in a "bookend" way by giving it a spiritual framework. The check-in at the beginning welcomes each person and sets a simple model for active listening and intentional speaking.
- Even if the rest of the meeting is conducted in a "normal" way, a check-in at the beginning can deepen the quality of the rest of the conversation.

A review at the end lends a reflective dimension to the whole experience:

- by valuing each participant's experience of it
- by encouraging participants to discover an overall sense to it
- by encouraging them to take collective responsibility for it, and in these ways preparing for the next meeting.

*Written by Pam Daigle*

## **B. EVALUATION AND APPROPRIATION: CONTEMPLATIVE ACTIVITIES**

### **What is an Evaluation Exercise?**

It is first of all a contemplative activity because it involves a willingness to see - even to be surprised. It is an interior experience and so needs an inner quiet and attending. It is an effort to get in touch with one's immediate experience in terms of the content and process of a meeting. It is quantitative in that it allows for "measuring" the effectiveness of what we did. It is important, therefore, to be specific in evaluation. It is an aid to future directions and helps build on the positive energy and avoid what is less helpful.

All elements of a meeting are open to evaluation:

- ways of prayer
- approaches used for conversation: sharing/discussion
- presentations/inputs
- materials used/distributed
- rhythm of the meeting: pacing, timing
- ambience/environment/physical setting
- social
- "instruments" used: agenda/power cycle/LDR cycle/processes - leadership style
- delegation of tasks
- balance between "maintenance & task" (relationships & goals) - balance of the CSA (communal, spiritual, apostolic aspects)

### **How is evaluation facilitated?**

The facilitator may help participants evaluate a meeting in several ways:

1. By surfacing hopes and expectations at the beginning of a meeting and looking back at these to see which were adequately met. (This could also be done for a period of meetings where hopes & expectations had previously been articulated)

2. By asking an open-ended question such as, "What do you think actually happened here today/tonight that helped us move forward or led us to new discoveries or learnings?"
3. By doing a "Gathering Exercise" on newsprint asking for specific learnings: clarities, awareness, insights.
4. By facilitating two rounds of sharing - beginning with the negative. For example:
  - What parts of our meeting/evening were less helpful, useful, valuable for you? Why?
  - What parts of our meeting/evening were most helpful, useful, valuable for you? Why?

### **What is an Appropriation Exercise?**

Appropriation is first of all a contemplative activity because it involves a willingness to see - even to be surprised. It is an interior experience and so needs an inner quiet and attending. It is an effort to understand and appreciate the significance of our experience, so as to be able to use it in concrete decisions and actions. It is a qualitative understanding or insight which carries energy to move us forward as an individual or a group. In other words, an appropriation exercise or round is a way we seek to understand how God has been working in me, or in the group.

### **How is an Appropriation Round Facilitated?**

By listening to the individuals and the group, the facilitator or the group guide often knows what question or group of questions to ask that will allow the grace of the group's experience to emerge. Some of the following questions may be of help to surface insights or appreciations in a contemplative way:

- What has been significant for me/us in order to move forward?
- How has God been with me/us during this time together?
- What images of God seem to have been surfacing during this meeting?
- What is my sense of our group identity from our meeting tonight?
- What have I/we heard tonight that is consistent with our graced history?
- How do I sense God calling me/us in the experience of being together tonight?
- What aspects of our communal life seem to be emerging tonight as needs?
- What movements of spirits have affected my/our way of being together?
- What movements have been operative in the way we have proceeded?
- What truths are present for me/for us to face as we leave here/continue my/our journey?
- What is dearer to me/to us now?
- How can I/we sustain the grace of this experience (this sense of union, this

- sense of purpose?)
- What will I take home with me that I/we need to continue to pray about?
  - What impact has tonight's meeting had on my own areas of ministry?  
personal relationships?

*2005 GG Formation MANUAL Atlantic Region*

## **4.8 THE ROLE OF THE GUIDE IN THE STAGES OF 3, 4, 5, 6**

The members of most adult groups will be at stages 3 or 4 or 5 in their faith development. Here are some suggestions for the role of the group guide in groups that are generally, in one particular stage.

### **STAGE 3, SYNTHETIC – CONVENTIONAL**

1. As group members gather to listen to one another, there is an increasing awareness of oneself in relation to the group members.
2. As the group grows in trust and deepens its sharing there is a feeling that the group members are friends and companions who understand each other.
3. God is often seen as a friend and companion also
4. Group members are deeply influenced by each other and tend to conform to group expectations
5. Research shows that many adults remain in Stage 3 throughout their lifetime.

### **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE GUIDE FOR THIS GROUP?**

- (a) Provide a process whereby the group can enter into conscious and formal sharing and dialogue i.e., enter into the spiritual conversation
- (b) Provide a simple evaluation process at the end of each meeting
- (c) Be clear about the process you use and the reasons behind its use. For instance, you might use a simple list of dos and don'ts for sharing
- (d) Stick to the schedule
- (e) Practice detachment, in the Ignatian sense
- (f) The Life Cycle grid may be helpful to a stage 3 group if the guide feels that the level of doubt is rising
- (g) Help members to see that a healthy group has a balance between task and relationship
- (h) Constantly discern the movement of spirits within the group. Is the group in consolation or desolation? If you are using Phase I, II or III, ask members if they prayed for the grace of the week. If so, did they receive it?

#### **STAGE 4, INDIVIDUATIVE-REFLECTIVE**

1. The transition to this stage in the individual is the experience of contradiction among valued authorities, leading to critical reflection. This will happen in a group also, although not all members will move to this stage.
2. There is a critical attitude towards the assumption of one faith tradition.
3. Members may start to question each other's belief.
4. The group as a whole may start to see things in terms of polarities i.e., the intimacy of the small group members vs. the defined dogma of the Church.
5. The group will face difficult questions regarding identity and belief.

#### **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE GROUP GUIDE FOR THIS GROUP?**

- (a) Remember your roles in previous stages.
- (b) The fear of death, change, destruction, may prevent some members from adopting the critical stance of Stage 4.
- (c) Be aware of the potential for conflict. If there is conflict, use and pray over the Rules for the discernment of spirits.
- (d) Maintain an atmosphere of listening deeply to each other at meetings.
- (e) Encourage members to value the differences among them.

#### **STAGE 5, CONJUNCTIVE FAITH**

1. Those members of the group who move from Stage 4 to Stage 5, come once again, to the recognition that they need to belong, that the group is important for their well-being.
2. They learn to live with contradictions, paradox, and the tension between independent thinking and loyalty to authority and the community.
3. Their openness to the truth of other traditions may cause some tensions in other group members.
4. A faith-sharing group, all of whose members are at Stage 5, is rare.

#### **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE GROUP GUIDE FOR THIS GROUP?**

- (a) Remember your roles from previous Stages.
- (b) Help members remember the vision of the group and restate it if necessary.
- (c) Revisit the tasks of the group, using the Power Cycle.
- (d) The yearly evaluation is *essential*.
- (e) Be flexible and open to new ideas and encourage this in all members.

## STAGE 6, INDIVIDUALIZING FAITH

Stage 6 is reserved for the very few, and group guides are not likely to encounter its expression within the group.

- Consistent with our graced history?
- How do I sense God calling me/us in the experience of being together tonight?
- What aspects of our communal life seem to be emerging tonight as needs?
- What movements of spirits have affected my/our way of being together?
- What movements have been operative in the way we have proceeded?
- What truths are present for me/for us to face as we leave here/continue my/our journey?
- What is dearer to me/to us now?
- How can I/we sustain the grace of this experience (this sense of union, this sense of purpose?)
- What will I take home with me that I/we need to continue to pray about?
- What impact has tonight's meeting had on my own areas of ministry?  
personal relationships?

*2005 GG Formation MANUAL Atlantic Region*



# SECTION FIVE

5.1 DIMENSION OF MISSION .....	194
A. GENERAL PRINCIPLE EIGHT: COMMUNAL APOSTOLATE .....	194
B. CHARITY AND JUSTICE .....	195
C. WHAT IS JUSTICE?.....	197
D. DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING of INJUSTICE .....	198
5.2 PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR (GP4 and GP8) .....	202
A. READING SCRIPTURE THROUGH THE EYES OF VULNERABILITY .....	202
B. A SPIRITUALITY FOR HARD TIMES .....	204
5.3 BECOMING AGENTS OF CHANGE .....	215
A. COMMUNAL-SOCIAL SPIRITUALITY: ENGAGING ISSUES OF INJUSTICE	215
B. CHARITY AND JUSTICE: BRINGING THE SOCIAL MISSION TOGETHER.	216
1. JUSTICE AND CHARITY .....	217
2. THE "TWO FEET" OF SOCIAL MINISTRY.....	220
3. TWO BLANK FEET .....	221
SESSION I.....	223
SESSION II .....	225
5.4 CLC FORMATION FOR SOCIAL MINISTRY .....	229
A. FIVE CRITERIA FOR MISSION .....	229
B. AN IGNATIAN APPROACH: EDUCATION FOR RESPONDING TO INJUSTICE	230
C. SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND PRAYER AND ACTION .....	234
D. INDIVIDUAL MISSION .....	239
5.5 THE PURPOSE OF CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY.....	242
A. FOR THE GROWTH OF GOD'S KINGDOM.....	242
B. TOWARDS AN APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY: A COMMUNAL PROCESS .....	245
A COMMUNAL SUPPORT-EVALUATION PROCESS .....	246
C. COMMUNITY FOR OTHERS.....	249
D. OSCAR ROMARO – WHO WILL SPEAK? .....	252
E. COMMUNAL SPIRITUAL FREEDOM PRAYER EXERCISE.....	253
F. FAITH AND COMPASSION.....	255

## 5.1 DIMENSION OF MISSION

### A. GENERAL PRINCIPLE EIGHT: COMMUNAL APOSTOLATE

#### MISSION IS COMMUNAL

Mission is always communal. A task carried out personally becomes a mission when it is part of the Church's mission. The World Community, recognized and integrated into the mission of the Church, is for us the mediator who, by means of the national and local communities, transforms into mission our apostolic tasks and our humanitarian services. Being ready to be sent demands much humility and transparency.



*As members of the pilgrim People of God, we have received from Christ the mission of being his witnesses before all people by our attitudes, words and actions, becoming identified with his mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, setting the downtrodden free and proclaiming the Lord's year of favour. Moved up and just straightened edges.*

*Our life is essentially apostolic. The field of CLC mission knows no limits: it extends both to the Church and the world, in order to bring the gospel of salvation to all people and to serve individual persons and society by opening hearts to conversion and struggling to change oppressive structures.*

- a) *Each of us receives from God a call to make Christ and his saving action present to our surroundings. This personal apostolate is indispensable for extending the Gospel in a lasting and penetrating way among the great diversity of persons, places and situations. At the same time, we exercise a corporate or group apostolate in a great variety of forms, whether through group action initiated or sustained by the Community through suitable structures, or through involvement of members in existing secular and religious organizations and efforts.*

- c) *The Community helps us to live this apostolic commitment in its different dimensions, and to be always open to what is more urgent and universal, particularly through the "Review of life" and through personal and communal discernment. We try to give an apostolic sense to even the most humble realities of daily life.*
- d) *The Community urges us to proclaim the Word of God and to work for the reform of structures of society, participating in efforts to liberate the victims from all sorts of discrimination and especially to abolish differences between rich and poor. We wish to contribute to the evangelisation of cultures from within. We desire to do all this in an ecumenical spirit, ready to collaborate with those initiatives that bring about unity among Christians.*

*Our life finds its permanent inspiration in the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ.*

## B. CHARITY AND JUSTICE

1. "We need to make the kind of society where it is easier for people to be good," said Peter Maurin (1877–1949). That is our difficulty today. We are surrounded by good, well-meaning folks who are swept along in a stream of shallow options. Not only is the good made increasingly difficult to do, but it is also even difficult to recognize. It seems that affluence takes away the clear awareness of what is life and what is death. I don't think the rich are any more or less sinful than the poor; they just have many more ways to call their sin virtue. There is a definite deadening of the awareness of true good and true evil.

I have found one fuzzy area that often needs clarification: We have confused justice and charity. Charity was traditionally considered the highest virtue, popularly thought of as a kind of magnanimous, voluntary giving of ourselves, preferably for selfless motives. As long as we rose to this level occasionally by donating food, gifts, or money at the holidays or in times of crisis, we could think of ourselves as charitable people operating at the highest level of virtue.

What has been lacking is the virtue of justice. Justice and charity are complementary but clearly inseparable in teachings of Doctors of the Church, as well as the social encyclical letters of almost all popes over the last century. The giving and caring spirit of charity both motivates and completes our sense of justice, but *the virtue of charity cannot legitimately substitute for justice*. Persons capable of doing justice are not

justified in preferring to “do charity.” Although this has clearly been taught on paper, I would say it is the great missing link in the practical preaching and lifestyle of the church. We have ignored the foundational obligation of justice in our works of charity!

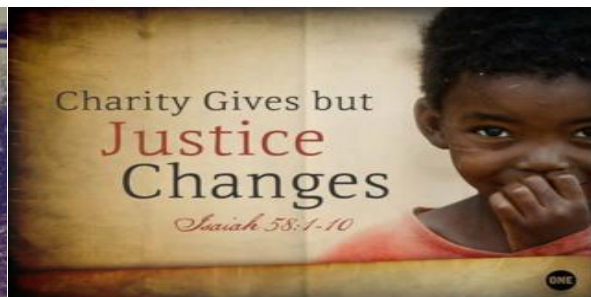
For centuries we have been content to patch up holes temporarily (making ourselves feel benevolent) while in fact maintaining the institutional structures that created the holes (disempowering people on the margins). Now it has caught up with us in unremitting poverty, massive income disparity, cultural alienation, and human and environmental abuse.

Jesus preaches a social order in which true charity is possible, a way of relating by which cooperation and community make sense. Jesus offers a world where all share the Spirit’s power “each according to their gift.” And that “Spirit is given to each person *for the sake of the common good*” (1 Corinthians 12:7). That is the key to Christian community and Christian social justice. It is not a vision of totalitarian equality, nor is it capitalist competition (“domination of the fittest”). It is a world in which cooperation, community, compassion, and the charity of Christ are paramount—and to which *all* other things are subservient. The “common good” is the first principle of Catholic social doctrine.

*From Daily meditations by Richard Rohr, Franciscan Friar,  
founder of the Centre for Contemplation and Action*

2. I have had a few intense conversations over the past year about charity and justice. As the result, I’ve been mulling over the meaning of these two virtues so important to our Christian tradition (and to the traditions of all people of good will). My ‘mulling’ has gone something like this: people tend to use the terms loosely, indistinctly, and forget how they relate to each other.

On one side, charity, mis-defined as ‘charitable works,’ in turn can be conflated with justice, and risk side-stepping the root causes of the great poverty and injustices that exist in our world. This is sometimes called ‘do-goodism,’ an individualistic response to an immediate need rather than an expanding awareness of the bigger picture and decisions to try to do something at a societal level. Indeed, it may point to a resistance in looking at how one might be contributing to any number of injustices in the first place.



Source: pinterest.com

For example, an individual who faithfully gives alms to his parish or her favourite charity but never reflects on the structures that necessitate these very gifts may be living in the 'ism' of the doing good mode. The same goes for the parish that raises big bucks to support local causes or to support a sister parish in a developing country but never reflects on the structures that create the need for such acts of charity. It could be as simple as researching where our local supermarket buys its bananas and asking the question, do local farmers suffer as the result of a multi-national forcing a cash crop on them to the detriment of their ability to grow the food they need to feed their own families. **True justice desires to change the structures that produce the needs and injustices in the first place.**

Conversely, justice, detached from charity can miss the basic Christian stance of 'love' and can get caught in theorizing about how to change unjust structures. This might sound good in the academic/think tank sphere but in the end, human beings (and all of Creation) can be objectified with the dignity of human person becoming subservient to an abstract sense of the collectivity (and the abuses of power that follow).

Justice, in the biblical sense, is much more than changing oppressive structures. It involves at the outset a conversion of heart. In the Christian context it is possible only in a world view that includes love of God and of neighbour, even if that neighbour happens to be an enemy. It involves a commitment to solidarity with those who are most downtrodden.

Mother Theresa is a good example, whose work with the Missionaries of Charity has become symbolic of God's abiding love in a world that is often devoid of it. At the same time, the simple hands-on work of countless sisters and volunteers continues to draw global attention to the plight of the untouchables in India. In essence, **true justice comes as a result of an already present stance of charity arising from a deep and felt knowledge that the loving hand of God is at work in the world, no matter how bad things might seem to be.**

*by Erik Oland, SJ in Our Spirituality*

## C. WHAT IS JUSTICE?

Justice is a concept that is difficult to define. At different times, it means different things to different people. A person's or a group's understanding of justice, or of what justice should look like, often depends on their culture, traditions, and religion. While there is no one universal definition of justice we know that it is closely associated with fairness; to act justly means to act fairly.

We also know that it guides us in our conduct with each other and the world we live in. Finally, justice comes in different forms and is used in all aspects of society. We often think of justice when a criminal is given 'due' punishment for a crime they committed. This is called *Punitive Justice*. In most countries, it is administered through a public courts system. The belief is that punishment (incarceration, fine, community service) changes a criminal's behaviour. It is also believed it acts to deter others from committing a crime.

*Social Justice* is a form of justice concerned with breaking down barriers which prevents individuals or certain groups in society from accessing the necessary means to live full and healthy lives.

*Distributive Justice* is a theory that works to bring about social justice. A society is considered unjust when certain individuals and groups are unable to access basic human entitlements such as shelter, healthcare, and education. Distributive justice seeks to ensure that a society's resources are distributed fairly among all those within it.

## D. DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING of INJUSTICE

*To deepen our understanding of an injustice it is important to get all the facts.*

Today, information and the sources from where we get them from comes in many different forms and through many different mediums. Sometimes it is difficult to determine what is true, partially true, or false. We know the internet provides much information on almost any given topic; however, we also know that some information is erroneous and misleading. Therefore, we must develop critical thinking skills. This requires we ask key questions when sifting through information. For example, is the source credible? Is the information fact or opinion? Are the facts in line with those from other sources? What is the motive of the author(s) in providing the information? It is also important that we are critical and consider our own prejudices and position in society. Often, we have a preconceived idea about an issue. These ideas are generally based on our culture and on what might be considered popular in the groups to which we belong. Often it is difficult to go 'against the grain' and accept facts which are not considered popular. Equally, at times we think that issues which affect us are more important than those affecting other groups in our society or the world we live in.

Learning to be critical helps us to better understand injustices in our society and world. It ensures that we identify the core underlying causes of an injustice and not just accept the visible, obvious, and at times popular truths. It helps us to make sure that the conclusions we make are clear and accurate.

## HOW ARE WE CONNECTED

An injustice can occur when one person wrongs another. We refer to this as *Particular Injustice*. With particular injustice, we can identify the victim and the wrongdoer. An individual stealing another person's iPhone is an example of a particular injustice. However, much of the injustice we see happening in our world today such as poverty, the exploitation of workers, sex trafficking, and homelessness, results from *Structural Injustice*. This differs from particular injustice because many participants are involved in creating the injustice, not just one individual.

Therefore, it is best to look at structural injustice as a set of different relationships or processes rather than just one act.

While it is easy to identify the victims of structural injustice, for example, refugees, it is much more difficult to find out who is to blame. This difficulty stems from a reality that most people involved in the process have no direct connection to the injustice. Equally, they may not be aware that their involvement is causing harm to others. As a result, they are distanced from any responsibility from first, creating the injustice, and second, from responding to the injustice.

In most cases unjust social structures have been constructed over time and gradually become part of a society's culture and norms; in effect, how a society functions. These structures also lead to the acceptance that some injustices are a consequence of fate, something that is 'what it is', or something that is 'just bad luck'. Since, many participants fail to recognise that injustice results from something they are part of, the injustice endures.

We have come to learn that justice is best understood when we recognise God's intention in creating the world – He wanted it to be a just place where everything flourished. Thus, we have been created to live justly in our connection to Creation, Humanity, and God.

Not only are we called to form good relationships, we are called to do what is needed to make sure that we all flourish on earth. The Bible is full of wonderful stories and examples of how we should live justly. For us Christians, taking the time to reflect or to 'think deeply' or 'carefully about' the messages within it, is important. Considered the most widely read book in the world, the Bible gives us comfort, hope, perspective, and purpose. From it we draw strength and courage.

Equally, reflection is a core element of Ignatian spirituality and forms the basis for discernment. Ignatius believed that when we reflect on our experiences and are able to free ourselves of worldly 'attachments', we make right decisions; decisions which are more in harmony with what God desires for us. Jesuits hold dearly the idea that our relationship with God is a journey. The Bible is the beacon of light which guides

that journey. Taking the time to reflect on our lives through the Bible affords us a chance to get closer to the one who inspired its design, God.

## **ON THE FRONTIERS**

On speaking to Jesuits recently, Pope Francis said, 'your proper place is on the frontiers. From Jesuits Ante Gabric SJ who worked with the poor in India to Frans Van de Lugt SJ who helped Christians and Muslims alike in Homs, Syria; since the time of Ignatius Loyola, there have been countless examples of inspirational Jesuits who have had the 'courage to do much'. Today, they continue to pray, serve, accompany, and make a difference to those who are most vulnerable. But you do not have to be a Jesuit 'to serve' on the frontiers. We are all called to be 'men and women for and with other'.

To date we have come to know much injustice in our world and have identified that the frontier does not have to be some remote place on the other side of the globe; it is on our doorstep. Homelessness and the housing crisis resulting from economic and social structures continue to adversely affect thousands of people. The waiting times for medical tests for cancer are 25 times longer for public patients than they are for private patients. Restrictions on the lives of asylum seekers causes much stress and worry for those placed in direct provision. Closing our borders to people who flee conflict makes their journeys ever-more hazardous. We can limit the impact of climate change and of chronic poverty, which affects large parts of the developing world, by changing how we live in our own country. Thus, the call to be on the frontier is a call to be at a place of action where you can make a difference.

## **A QUICK RECAP**

When God created the world, He intended it to be a just place, where everything flourished.

We are created to live justly in our connection to Creation, Humanity, and God.

Justice is about making good and right relationships, and doing what is needed to make sure we all flourish.

There is much injustice in our world; much the result of structures which have been constructed over time.

Structural injustice involves the participation of many; it is best to view structural injustice as a different set of relationships or processes of which we are a part.

As Christians, we are called to respond to injustice.



Since the time of Ignatius Loyola, Jesuits have served on the frontier.

Every injustice has a frontier – it is on the frontier that we can make a difference to those who are most vulnerable.

To respond effectively to injustice, we must deepen our understanding and our reflection.

*EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE JESUIT SCHOOLS IRELAND*

## 5.2 PREFERENCIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR (GP4 and GP8)

### A. READING SCRIPTURE THROUGH THE EYES OF VULNERABILITY

*God chose things the world considers foolish to shame those who think they are wise. And God chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. —1 Corinthians 1:27*

*You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun to rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. —Matthew 5:43-45*

Christianity is a bit embarrassed by the powerless one, Jesus. We’ve made his obvious defeat into a glorious victory. Let’s face it, we feel more comfortable with power than with powerlessness and poverty. Who wants to be like Jesus on the cross? It just doesn’t look like a way of influence, a way of access, a way that’s going to make any difference in the world.

We worship this naked, homeless, bleeding loser, crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem, but we want to be winners . . . at least until we learn to love the so-called little, poor people—and then we often see they are not little at all, but better images of the soul. Yes, those with mental and physical disabilities, minority groups, LGBTQIA folks, refugees, prisoners, those with addictions, those without financial wealth—all who have “failed” in our social or economic success system—can be our best teachers in the ways of the Gospel. They represent what we are most afraid of and what we most deny within ourselves. That’s why we must learn to love what first seems like our “enemy.”

If we look at all the wars of history, we’ll see that God has unwittingly been enlisted on both sides of the fight. It’s easy to wonder what God does when both sides are

praying for God's protection. Trusting Jesus as the archetypal pattern of God's presence and participation on Earth, I believe *God is found wherever the suffering is*. I believe this because that is precisely where Jesus goes. He makes heroes of the outsiders and underdogs in almost all his parables and stories. To miss that point is culpable and chosen ignorance. The awakened and aware ones—like Jesus and Francis of Assisi—go where people are suffering, excluded, expelled, marginalized, and abused. And there they find God.

Imagine, brothers and sisters, how different Western history and religion could have been if we had walked as tenderly and lovingly upon the earth as Jesus and Francis did. Imagine what the world would be like if we treated others with inherent and equal dignity and respect, seeing the divine DNA in ourselves and everyone else too—regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, appearance, or social class. Nothing less offers the world any lasting future. We must be honest about that—and rather quickly, I think.

The vast majority of people throughout history have been poor, disabled, or oppressed in some way (i.e., "on the bottom") and would have read history in terms of a need for change, but most of history has been written and interpreted from the side of the winners. The unique exception is the revelation called the Bible, which is an alternative history from the side of the often enslaved, dominated and oppressed people of Israel, culminating in the scapegoat figure of Jesus himself.

We see in the Gospels that it's the lame, the poor, the blind, the prostitutes, the tax collectors, the sinners, the outsiders, and the foreigners who tend to follow Jesus. It is those on the inside and the top—the Roman occupiers, the chief priests and their conspirators—who crucify him. Shouldn't that tell us something really important about perspective? *Every viewpoint is a view from a point*. We must be able to critique our own perspective if we are to see a fuller truth.

Liberation theology—which focuses on freeing people from religious, political, social, and economic oppression—is mostly ignored by Western Christianity. Perhaps that's not surprising when we consider who interpreted the Scriptures for the last seventeen hundred years. The empowered clergy class enforced their own perspective instead of that of the marginalized, who first received the message with such excitement and hope. Once Christianity became the established religion of the Roman Empire (after 313), we largely stopped reading the Bible from the side of the poor and the oppressed. We read it from the side of the political establishment and the usually comfortable priesthood instead of from the side of people hungry for justice and truth. Shifting our priorities to make room for the powerless instead of accommodating the powerful is the only way to detach religion from its common marriage to power, money, and self-importance.

When Scripture is read through the eyes of vulnerability—what we call the “**preferential option for the poor**” or the “bias from the bottom”—it will always be liberating and transformative. Scripture will not be used to oppress or impress. The question is no longer, “How can I maintain the status quo?” (which just happens to benefit me), but “How can we all grow and change together?” Now we would have no top to protect, and the so-called “bottom” becomes the place of education, real change, and transformation for all.

The bottom, or what Jesus called “the poor in Spirit” in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3), is where we have no privilege to prove or protect but much to seek and become. Jesus called such people “blessed.” Dorothy Day (1897-1980) said much the same: “The only way to live in any true security is to live so close to the bottom that when you fall you do not have far to drop, you do not have much to lose.” [1] From that place, where few would expect or choose to be, we can be used as instruments of transformation and liberation for the rest of the world.

## B. A SPIRITUALITY FOR HARD TIMES

*‘...what practical ways should we try to give a truly spiritual response to this challenge of our time? Where exactly does our Christian faith lead us, together with others, in coming to grips with our highly organized world?’*

*‘...worship of God will always take the form of seeking justice in compassionate love for others in this world.’ What could they amount to in actual practice?’*

### Adopting A Simple Lifestyle

A “simple lifestyle” is always going to be relative to the particular circumstances in which we actually live. Here I am thinking mainly of people in the more developed nations. (For most of us living here, to adopt the lifestyle of persons in less developed economies would be quite a shock.) But compared to the much richer way I might live if I tried hard for it, a simple lifestyle would be several notches down the pole for me. That’s the easiest way to indicate what is meant. It’s up to each individual to decide concretely what this might entail.

It means noticeably less than what our commercial ads tell us we should seek. Since consumerism is our main obstacle in trying to develop a realistic approach to Christian poverty today, it is over against consumerist attitudes that a simple lifestyle may be grasped and realized.

False voices, false pressures in our society urge us to earn more money so as to buy more commodities, to commit ourselves to long-term payment obligations in order to

get hold of what we can't afford right now, and so on. "See if you can't move up to a higher level of income/ownership." Or (since things are getting worse financially these days), "Perhaps another paying job could enable you to maintain your expensive mode of living? Why not try some moonlighting?"

Unemployed people and all those living "below the poverty line" (a phrase used in the more developed world for persons at the lower levels of income in our society) will already have adopted "a simple lifestyle" whether they want it or not. For them, the question is whether they will choose to make spiritual goals their primary aim (even while continuing to seek a better income) or whether resentment, bitterness, discouragement, blaming, or depressed feelings will tend to dominate them.

When those negative states prevail (on the surface or just below the surface of their minds), a desire for material commodities still has primacy in their heart. Now, I don't think we ever have the right to criticize persons struggling with difficulties of that kind, much less to judge them morally. In any case, their condition may be temporary. And a new spiritual attitude, which might help to liberate them, usually comes about by means of God's grace-not through anyone else's efforts.

Materialistic pressures are mounting in our society as a whole, and the tensions we feel are getting so excessive that our health is sometimes in danger of being undermined. And so, the suggestion that we deliberately adopt a simple lifestyle is meant to deal directly with this obstacle. It involves a choice. It should mean a carefully considered turn-around in our real attitude towards getting and spending. To repeat, only the grace of God will assist us truly to desire it and then to choose it, effectively.

As a practicum aimed at solidifying this new attitude, a regular experience of contact with disadvantaged persons or groups is recommended. The purpose is to identify oneself with those living at the margin, rather than with those trying to move upward financially. It means learning to place one's real heart with the economically poor instead of with the rich.

This practicum calls for ongoing experiences, not a rare or occasional visit. It insists on solidarity of hearts and minds; it is not a matter of slumming as a "lord or lady bountiful," who condescends to be friendly with those beneath them. We should come to marginalized members of our society as equals, but as equals who have a lot to learn.

We are trying to form a new habit; a whole new sense of what life means. We are trying to get free from the bonds - and the accompanying lies - of the consumerist mentality. Except for a miracle of grace, it will not come quickly. (Even after the big grace of conversion, there will be much patient learning to be done in the months and years that follow.)

The virtue intended here is a greater trust in God alone for a deep sense of economic security. That is what Jesus is driving at when he asks, why are you anxious? The flowers don't worry, and yet the Father clothes them. The birds don't worry, and yet God sees that they are fed. Your life is worth much more to God than birds or flowers (see Luke 12:22-24). Our Lord is concerned to free us from economic anxiety - Not to tell us that we needn't make serious efforts to solve our economic problems.

### **Adopting the Goal of Social Justice**

Our obstacle in this case is self-absorption. People in the less developed parts of the world, who often live with an economic system operating at a quasi-agricultural level, are much less self-absorbed than those in the more developed world tend to be. Some in our own culture aggressively exploit us for economic reasons by appealing to our intensified sense of self. In less developed nations, for the most part, the poorest people care for one another more than our members do, It's quite noticeable. Without asking questions, they share the little they have. (Their richer members often appear quite indifferent.)

But to a great extent we seem to have lost our spontaneous feeling for others, and now we need to cultivate it. Perhaps when a serious situation of crisis is brought home to us emotionally, we can be generous enough. But when that emergency has passed, we tend to lapse back into our habitual self-centeredness. 'We've become turned in on ourselves again. Our "next pleasure" seems terribly important to us. From extremes of Victorian Puritanism in the nineteenth century we have gone all the way to the opposite extreme of "the ME-society."

That false spiritual attitude should be countered by choosing a new one: to change the unjust structures of our world, and to begin at once by desiring to change the false processes and institutions of our own society. This is meant in the sense of what is long-term and systemic: not merely to sing a nice song at a time of crisis ("We are the World, We are the Children"), but to change a system itself which is basically unjust.

To face a change of this size is not easy. In practice I've found that when individuals begin to take up this task they tend to be overwhelmed by the immensity of the problems. As soon as they openly seek to learn about human injustice (let alone our own involvement in it), they undergo the heavy desolation of too much bad news. It's more than human beings can take at first. There are limits to what we can bear.

True enough. But we can surmount those first difficulties when we get free of too much isolated responsibility, laying a heavy sense of guilt on our own backs. Instead, we could soon move forward to a sense of collective sinfulness, a growing awareness of original sin as it takes shape in our world. After a time, this can lead us to a new hopefulness: I am coming to know what God has known all along. It is the divine Lord who bears the main brunt of this burden-I merely consent to share it.

And so, we may receive the grace of committing our lives to the pursuit of social justice in ways that may lie within reach of our hands. In order to support a commitment of this kind, an essential practicum (it seems to me) would be to find a daily time of personal prayer. Especially effective would be a habit of interior prayer - any method that enables us to get into immediate contact with the divine mystery. With many people, daily prayer with others in a group will do as well.

When we set aside half an hour each day for what matters most to us - our relationship with the merciful God who cares passionately for all creatures - then we may grow to peace of heart in contemplating the enormous tasks facing us in our time. The virtue I have in mind here is one not usually given a name, a habit of openness and freedom in responding to the evils of the world in which we are called to live out our lives.

It's my conviction that the special framework of daily one-to-one contact with God in Christ is basic to every believer's commitment to social justice. That alone will liberate them from burnout, from false arrogance towards others, and from taking too much upon themselves. A combination of openness and freedom of this kind is needed if we are to persevere in the service of a faith that truly desires and seeks justice.

### **Joining A Support Community**

In this instance I am thinking especially of the dangers of isolation, of personal weakness which we feel must be hidden from others - or even denied and concealed from oneself. It isn't enough to have one or two intimate friends (who know everything about me). No, I believe it's essential to belong to a group of others who share the same values and who meet together regularly to listen patiently and to support one another.

Modern culture has tended, on one hand, to hold up an ideal of individual strength and heroism (the frontier marshal) and, on the other, to break down the bonds of true community. This exposes anyone who follows such an ideal to self-deceptions of the worst kind. Where they lead eventually is to despair - at least to discouragement, despondency or cynicism. For we are not, naturally meant to be heroes and heroines. Rather, we are meant to become truthful among close friends who continue to affirm our worth even when our weaknesses and limitations are revealed to them (compassionate love).

The practicum in this case would be learning to share one's real, interior and day-to-day events with a small group of companions. For some people, this will require repeated efforts and some failures before its true benefits begin to appear.

The new ability involved is the virtue of belonging. It sees that to become more fully humanized is to know one's need for membership with other persons. Community at

the local level does not mean that we have no ideals or that we perform no effective actions. No, it means the contrary: our true ideals are not "over our heads, threatening us now," but set in front of us as goals for realistic and persevering action. For we are pilgrims (as we saw) on a journey, that has a glorious destination.

We are going somewhere that matters to us. That means not merely being but also doing. "Good fruit comes from a good tree," says Jesus (Mt 7:17). What we do is not needed to prove that we have any worth. Instead, our sense of worth as created and saved by the God who passionately cares for us enables us to perform excellent actions-and we eagerly do so. Because we are relaxed about our personal worth, we can joyfully pour out our energies in doing what is worthwhile.

### **Self-Worth as Independent of Income**

Another difficulty in attaining self-worth comes as essential to the human condition. Our faith in Christ's presence among us will enable us to belong deeply and enduringly.

### **Self-worth As Prior To Any Performance**

Another major obstacle facing us in hard times comes from the false doctrines of the "Puritan Ethic," especially the notion that we have to prove ourselves by accomplishing something. It imagines that high standards of performance are set over our heads, and that our value as persons will be judged by whether or not we measure up or can "reach the top."

Since only one or a very few will ever reach the top, all the rest of us can seem to be second-rate. It's worse when we make this kind of judgment against ourselves. Then we nearly always feel worthless. We are failures in our own eyes, or we are in constant danger of failing to achieve any real value in the eyes of others.

A practicum which may help to develop our sense of self-worth as prior to any actions might consist in celebrating the gifts of creation by God and salvation in Christ. Those are the greatest gifts we have, and they are given us without any merit on our part. We can thank God for them in many ways - at Morning Prayer as we wake up to a new day, at grace before meals, on feasts and anniversaries, at special moments with others. When it's more urgently needed (in the case of this or that person), it could be practiced often each day-for example, when moving from one event to the next.

Whatever forms the practicum of celebrating life may take; the virtue aimed at here is gratitude, which is the basic stance of believers in the presence of God.

This virtue, when it has become a lively one, does, I believe, mainly from the materialistic warp in modern culture of treating persons as though they were things. In our economic system this warped attitude leads to measuring the value of each



person by the level of his or her income. It's so deep-rooted and so persistent that we tend to do it to ourselves.

As soon as anyone loses a job, for instance, or even has to take a cut in salary, the person often falls into self-doubt. "Is it because I'm no good? Is something wrong with me as a human being? Will I be a failure in everyone's eyes from now on?" These awful doubts are not reasonable, but they dominate our deep feelings, if not our minds.

It's important to get free of this warped attitude, then, and as a means to it I suggest the practicum of an imagined "downward mobility". By this I mean a deliberate choice that runs directly counter to the materialistic view of human worth so current in our world. Choose to imagine yourself in various positions of low income.

If it bothers you to do so, keep at it until you feel calmer and can come to accept it. Share your struggle (if you are, in fact, struggling) with friends and companions. In other words, try to identify your true self with your spiritual values and not with your level of income. (I assume it is clear I don't mean that we shouldn't earn our living or cease to make sensible arrangements for our material needs and for those who depend on us. Obviously, those duties always remain. But I think we should strive to get free of any notion that our material needs come first, or define who we are, or can rightly be used to measure our worth as human beings.)

The aim of testing ourselves with "downward mobility" is to acquire the virtue of spiritual poverty itself, as I understand Jesus to teach it in the Gospel. We should imagine ourselves as intensely as we can to be severely handicapped, or suffering the consequences of a stroke, or to have lost our long-term job and unable to find a new one, and so on.

A religious sister who was severely handicapped by polio once told me about a woman friend who used to lean close to her at public meetings and whisper, "I'm handicapped, too." Both of them knew that the friend's handicap was psychic, not physical. This became a joke between them, much appreciated. The fact was that the sister had struggled for years to get free of any limitations on her service of others and had received this grace abundantly.

Keep on doing this exercise, then, in order to reach the spiritual condition of one who rejoices in freedom from any anxiety over questions of self-worth and feels committed to goals higher than material concerns. These goals will include, of course, the intention of working with others collectively to make the economic system itself subordinate to the spiritual values of justice and compassion.

## **Stewardship in The Use of Possessions**

In the teeth of Western culture's excessive stress on individual ownership rights, the Church has frequently raised the issue of common rights. In other words, property and goods belong, not only to the individuals who own them, but also to the society that dwells in the land as a whole. It's not that the Church has not championed the right and the need of individuals and families to own private property—that has always been a solid part of her teaching. It's just that the excessive individualism of modern views has needed to be balanced by reminders of community rights.

For example, we are told that in the eighteenth-century thieves were condemned to death for stealing a rabbit, or other small items like that. Robbery is wrong, but is ownership of the rabbit more important than the life of the thief? Something was badly out of balance in that notion of "justice."

Similarly, the doctrine of laissez-faire in the nineteenth century led governments to irresponsible acts of non-interference when merchants shipped food out of the country at the same time that many individuals were starving to death. This may seem to be an extreme case, hard to understand today, but at least it illustrates how one-sided the emphasis on individual ownership can become. That false emphasis itself continues to influence many minds today.

The term "stewardship" may serve us well in this context. What I own is for myself and my family, of course, but since it is also partly meant for the whole community, I can come to see myself as a steward of its rightful use. The same may be extended to the whole world today: we are the first generation growing into global awareness of all other peoples as a single population living precariously on the resources of our common planet, Earth. Economic decisions made in one part influence the whole world.

And so, taken together, we are meant to be joint stewards of the material resources at our common disposal. The market for all kinds of goods is now worldwide. On the longer term, no segments of the world's population can continue to consume the lion's share and feast to superfluity while the majority remains close to physical destitution or mired in underdevelopment. Anyone who reflects carefully on these matters knows that we cannot continue very long in the way we have been going.

It follows that at home in the West we need to seek freedom from our habits of "selfish ownership." More positively, we must learn how to become true stewards of God's good creation. What practicum might enable us to develop the new attitude required? In our local societies we might make it a norm to "include a stranger at every feast." An example might be to invite persons who seem to be left out of ordinary communities (for whatever reason), asking them as a favour to become part of our celebrations.

A few years ago, I was a privileged guest at my nephew's Christmas party. I found myself chatting with an older man who lived in the forest nearby. He had no family

of his own and few contacts in the neighborhood. Obviously, too, his income was very limited. It was an enjoyable discussion since he clearly felt right at home and happy to celebrate Christmas with a joyful family group. Later I was shown the abandoned trailer where he lived in the woods. My nephew and his wife had discovered his isolation and wanted to include him in their party. They would have felt uneasy if he had spent his Christmas alone.

This example of God's grace at work in a family is meant to illustrate the sense of stewardship I think we all need to cherish in our hearts. It's not a sense of "kindness" or "charity," so much as a feeling for what is right. Many readers have already developed this attitude, I'm certain, and so I wish merely to put it into the spotlight for a moment so as to recognize its value and recommend it for the global society to which we belong.

### **Contributing One's Special Gift**

As a final suggestion for developing an effective spirituality for hard times, I would like to put forward the conviction that every person without exception has "a special gift" to bring to human society. It derives from the divine creation and the event of salvation in Christ, already mentioned above. Each person, then, should be encouraged to find what that special giftedness might be and to contribute it to others.

As experience can teach us, some of the best gifts received in any society come from quieter members—gifts of listening, of taking time to reflect together, doing ordinary daily tasks, finding out what shy persons need, caring for the sick or the elderly or ailing members, and so on. More spectacular gifts need less attention since they are already well recognized. But the community which "includes" every member will make sure that all of them believe in their own contributions and gain recognition in the whole community.

Many readers familiar with St. Paul's epistles (see I Cor. 12:20-26) will recall how much he insists on this idea: "There are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again, the hand to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members, of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable" (vv. 20-22).

Now, not everyone feels this way about herself or himself. Many simply expect others to tell them what they ought to do with their lives. And many others don't know what their own special gift might be. They haven't discovered it yet. Or they've become discouraged because of the hurts received in life, the setbacks to their growth and the failures they've had to deal with. Perhaps others see themselves as wounded members of society, as helpless victims or as so severely handicapped that there is nothing they can give.

Contrary to all those defeatist attitudes, I protest that we must first of all believe in our worth and then find what we can give. The giving will be much easier when we first believe. In fact, the giving of our own gift will almost look after itself. It may come spontaneously when we've begun to believe deeply enough in our own special qualities as human beings.

Jesus Christ tells us (in effect): "Don't believe the bad news. Believe the good news!" There's no lack of bad news in our world today. We are so aware of all the things that can go wrong that we can become locked into the negatives, entrenched in defensive positions, keeping our guard up against anything else that may come our way. That's "believing the bad news."

This is a form of non-faith, perhaps, but very effective in preventing anything better from coming about. It shows the power of faith - even in what is false, giving it control as long as we continue to believe in it.

With a negative attitude of that sort, the hard times we are going through can appear to be nothing but "bad news," nothing but a ticket to unhappiness and misery. But Our Lord tries to teach us (to call forth from our hearts by his grace) a very different spiritual attitude: "Believe the good news!" Trust in God's help. Leave the defensive "trench warfare" mentality of the First World War, and free your life-energies for the important task of making a constructive contribution. In other words, find your own special gift and set your heart on contributing it to others.

A serious obstacle here is the widespread notion in our media that, after we've done what we have to do in our working time, we should expect to be entertained in our leisure moments. This implies that work is a boring drudgery and free time is meant for "the fun society."

This is a big topic in itself, and I will not launch into it here (I'm not opposed to good humour and enjoyment!), but I do want to express my belief that the attitude just mentioned gets everything upside down. However common it may be, it presents a topsy-turvy view of reality. The whole of our life should be joyful. We should not expect to have "fun" only in leisure times. Peace should pervade everything we do, work as well as recreation. Peace and joy are meant to be normal for those who believe in Christ; pain and trouble are facts, but exceptional.

The "entertainment" view of life (the idea that we need to be "distracted" and "amused" all the time) comes from the fact that for so many people what they do is empty and meaningless for them. This is not the fault of most individuals - it's what they have to face in their actual situation. But my point here is that we are called in faith to turn this around. At least, we can begin to do so and to encourage one another in this aim.

A practicum that might assist this effort is a pretty obvious one - volunteering. Many active people are doing a lot of this already, and it's not a cure-all. Perseverance will be needed by each person to find the right tasks. A number of early tries may turn out negatively. Sometimes it's only by actually doing something that we discover what it's like and whether it's right for us in particular.

If you're so busy already that you have no time for volunteering, then I suggest that you choose to do whatever you are doing in a spirit of freedom and joyfulness - rather than taking it as an imposition, a heavy burden laid on your back.

What I am stressing are the attitudes we can bring to our main work and to our volunteer jobs. That is where spirituality comes in. Our convictions about happiness, about our own worth and about the special gift we have to contribute to others - all these need to be "discouragement proof." Arrows of bad news that come our way should fall to the ground without leaving a dent on our joyful purpose.

The virtue to be sought in this, enables them to work confidently and joyfully in taking up the tasks of life together.

Let us all pray for one another to receive the grace of doing this in the hard times we are facing today. Connection might be named "self-forgetfulness." It's a well-known truth that we discover happiness not when we seek it directly for ourselves, but when we plunge into action for others. When we forget ourselves in doing what seems worthwhile, we may gradually realize - in the middle of doing it, or afterwards in reflection - how much more we have received, how truly happy we've become through that very forgetfulness of our own self and our own troubles.

In conclusion, may I say that I hear much of this in the mysterious saying of Jesus: "Whoever wants to save his own life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it" (Mark 8:35).

As he looked about his world at that time, Christ Our Lord saw many suffering people, many struggling hopelessly with their economic difficulties - in short, enduring hard times. His teaching about poverty of spirit was meant not to provide a practical solution in economics.

*John Wickham, SJ Chapter 5 How Can We Respond Today?*

**QUESTIONS** In your reading of this for reflection, ponder the following questions, both individually, and then within your CLC groups:

1. What heightened awareness and movement of the spirit arose within you as you read and reflected on this article by John Wickham?

2. How does Fr. Wickham's thoughts on our response to the economic and social conditions in which we live affirm or challenge you personally in relationship to our Common Mission?
3. How do Fr. Wickham's thoughts affirm or challenge your CLC group?

## 5.3 BECOMING AGENTS OF CHANGE

### A. COMMUNAL-SOCIAL SPIRITUALITY: ENGAGING ISSUES OF INJUSTICE

In every age, people experience “hunger and thirst for righteousness” (Mt. 5:6) a cry that goes up from the margins of society. If we discern such cries, it allows us to create a new future according to the Spirit of the Beatitudes ... When we truly see (become conscious) of the reality in front of us, discern God’s invitation, and respond, our life becomes richer and more prophetic. In the biblical tradition, the prophet is one who ‘interferes’ with injustice.

In our time...a **GAP** has opened up between the realities we face and the solutions available to us.

It is important to see this gap as a **space** in which to reflex, question, dialogue and discern appropriate responses to issues of injustice. For an individual or a community, this is a matter of a living faith.

Wisdom from other sources...

“Faith is not a set of beliefs but rather a trust in the presence of God, an openness to what God will reveal, do, and invite”.

*(Bishop Robert Barron)*

“Between us and every decision, there needs to be a space, a pause, to determine what Jesus wants us to do, not what I think we should do.”

*(The Word Among Us, Sept. 2021)*

When we are not formed to think critically, societally...we become good persons who operate morally, or ethically at home, or at work, but seldom do our inner experiences affect our consciousness and consequent activities upon the social structures of which we are part and which we maintain allowing unjust structures to continue.

*(John Veltri, Orientations 28 p. 466)*

As we grow in consciousness of the many forms of injustice, we also need to learn how to distinguish two kinds of voices...

*“My sheep listen to My voice. I know them and they follow me...  
The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy”*

(Jn.10:27, Jn.10:10)

***The voice of God:***

- Never imposes but proposes
- may correct but always - gently encouraging, consoling, while giving hope
- opens our horizons
- speaks to the 'present' in order to help us "move" in the here and now of a situation and gives us strength to go forward
- appeals to our desire to do good, to help, to serve, but invites to ask not just "What is good for me?" but also, "What is for the common good?"

***The voice of the enemy:***

- sows dissension, makes us rigid, intolerant, and judgmental, finger pointing
- pins us against a wall, paralyzes us, closes us in on ourselves
- distracts us from the present to focus on fears of the future or keeps us stuck in the past, in sadness, fear and grievance
- makes us fearful, unstable resentful, unforgiving
- harsh doomsayer, insistent, even monotonous
- offers us dazzling illusions - ideas that are fleeting to exploit our attachments to pleasure, wealth, power and prestige

*Notes taken from Let Us Dream interview with Pope Francis 2020*

## **B. CHARITY AND JUSTICE: BRINGING THE SOCIAL MISSION TOGETHER**

### **For a Two Session Group Reflection**

The social mission is something that we are asked to embrace as followers of Jesus Christ. The social mission has "two feet" both of which are necessary for moving forward to be in relationship with God's people and thus with God. One foot of Charity responds to the immediate need that people experience, people in situations that do not allow them to live with the dignity that God have given each of us. A second foot of Justice asks the question WHY? and responds with action for social change. Why are people suffering or living in poverty? What can we do to change the situation? How can we, the community of faith, be co-creators with God for the fullness of life?



This reflection piece is designed for those who provide services for people living in poverty and for those who are working to change policies and institutions to reduce the incidents of poverty. It is a two-session format.

There are many individuals in many parishes who respond to the needs of others by offering time, money, and advocacy. Those providing services know the stories of individuals in need, have insights into the difficulties they confront, and learn about poverty issues firsthand. Those working to change the systems have insights into the political landscape with its obstacles and possibilities.

These two sessions offer an opportunity for reflection on what has been learned, and encouragement for continuing to serve and build bridges between charity and justice.

Each session is 1½ to 2 hours long. All that is needed is the material included here and one person to facilitate the sessions. All directions and tips are available in this easy-to-follow packet.

*Office for Social Justice Catholic Charities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis w.cctwincities.org*

## **PREPARATION**

**Make copies of the following 3 items below:**

- 1. Article: Justice and Charity**
- 2. The Two Feet of Social Ministry**
- 3. Blank Two Feet Page**
- 4. ½ sheets of paper**

### **1. JUSTICE AND CHARITY**

*by Jim Dinn, Pax Christi*

Social justice and charity are sister values, but charity seems to be the sibling that people give the most attention to. Social justice, on the other hand, is more easily overlooked or given a back seat.

The past 100 years have seen a dramatic development in the Catholic Church's emphasis on social justice. As Pope John Paul II emphasizes in *Centesimus Annus*, religious teaching today "must include among its essential elements a proclamation of the church's social doctrine." It is as if the teaching of the church needed to gradually grow into that recognition and emphasis just as we individually must do also.

Justice and charity are both rooted in the social dimension of the gospels. Both reflect the same gospel mandates. The Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount, and such parables as the Last Judgment, the Good Samaritan, the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Pharisee and the Tax Collector—these and dozens of comparable passages inspire acts of justice and charity.

Both can be powerful Christian responses to human need. The dividing line between them is often blurred and, in reality, many a response is a dynamic blend of justice and charity. For descriptive purposes, however, some people find it useful to see charity in terms of giving direct aid and justice in terms of correcting structures.

For example, if we see someone drowning in a river, we try to save the victim. But suppose we find another person struggling in the water an hour later at the same place, then two or three the next day. If we finally realize that they are falling in the river because there is a hole in the bridge, we might change our response. We could still wait by the riverside to aid victims, or we could take a hammer and nails to try to rebuild the bridge.

Of course, more often the structure that needs changing isn't built of wood or steel. It is more likely a social structure. And the biggest obstacle is that all of us grow attached to social structures just as they are. The more comfortable we are, the less need we feel for change.

Even the more flawed structure is an extension of ourselves. It is hard to dissociate ourselves from it, hard to endure others' criticism, hard to undertake or permit change. Our defensiveness about the status quo of our institutions is entangled with our defensiveness about ourselves. We instinctively sense that if the institution needs to change, we may well be forced to change with it. And the institutional shortcomings to which we are blind are often reflections of the same shortcomings in ourselves. So, we smile on the charity that assists the needy within the existing structures and resist or resent the justice that threatens to reform the structures.

Archbishop Camera of Brazil has commented, "When I tried to help the poor, people said I was a saint. When I asked why they were poor, people called me a communist." The Archbishop touches on a rather widespread irony. Sometimes people applaud those who try to help the needy through direct assistance, but they are critical of any attempt to change the structures that put people in need.

Even within the system of slavery, being "nice" to a slave did not provoke the kind of resistance and opposition from the slave owners that working against the structure did. Within our own system that fosters private ownership and competitiveness, nobody feels threatened at the idea of sponsoring programs to help the needy or donating to causes. But suggesting responsibility for others' needs or implying that the poor are entitled to share in our resources—these ideas disturb us because they

move us out of the more comfortable zone of charity into the challenging zone of justice.

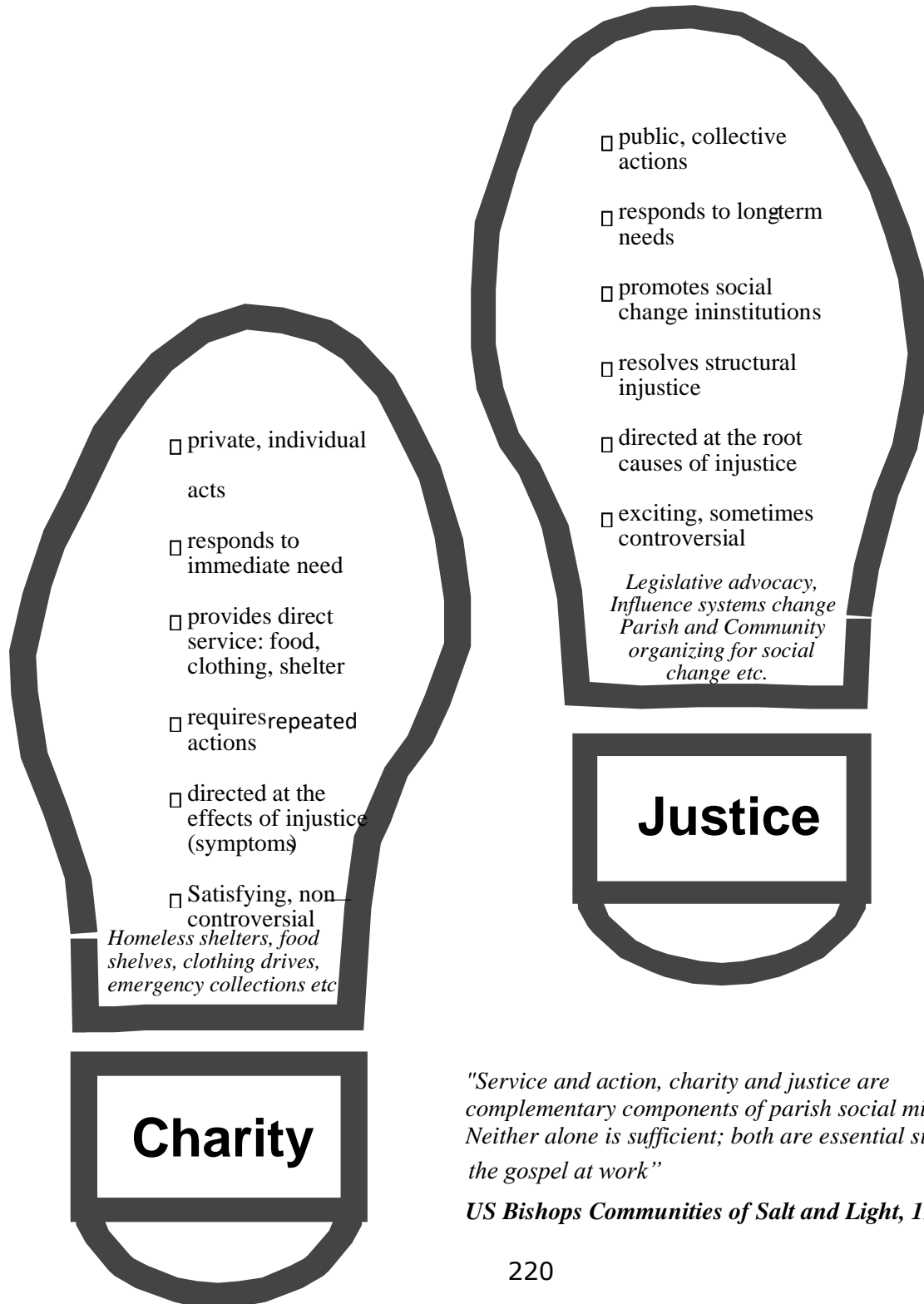
This is why working for social justice can be controversial. If we respond to ozone depletion by giving direct aid (nursing the skin of cancer victims) nobody would object. But if we work to pass and enforce laws to eliminate the chemicals that deplete the ozone, some companies and investors are sure to oppose us. If we knit bandages and collect medicine for war casualties, we will be universally admired. But if we work to prevent war, we risk being branded as unpatriotic or subversive.

In our imperfect world, of course, there will be continuing need for direct aid to be rendered even as we struggle for structural solutions. As for the competing claims that justice and charity make on us, Archbishop Camara offers this suggestion: "In the war against injustice, 80% of our time and effort must be devoted to changing structures and promoting human advancement; but 20% must be set aside for tending the wounded and the victims of war."

There are no limits to the variety of arenas that need our attention. Education, civil rights, environment, war and peace, rights of the elderly, rights of the handicapped, women's rights, immigration, literacy, employment, etc., all cry for our commitment.

Any method of involvement is possible. It may initially be a matter of learning more about a particular issue. We might join or form a group of people to share ideas or prayer about a local need. We might get involved in contributing to a cause or fundraising for it. We might find ourselves getting into letter writing, demonstrating, lobbying. No issue is too minor or insignificant to provide an outlet for our principles. In all of this we are reminded that we need to be guided by the Spirit and sensitive to our own gifts. Precisely because structures are extensions of ourselves, we must undergo and must help others undergo a change of heart. Our U.S. bishops in their pastoral letter on economic justice put it this way: "the transformation of social structures begins with and is always accompanied by a change of heart."

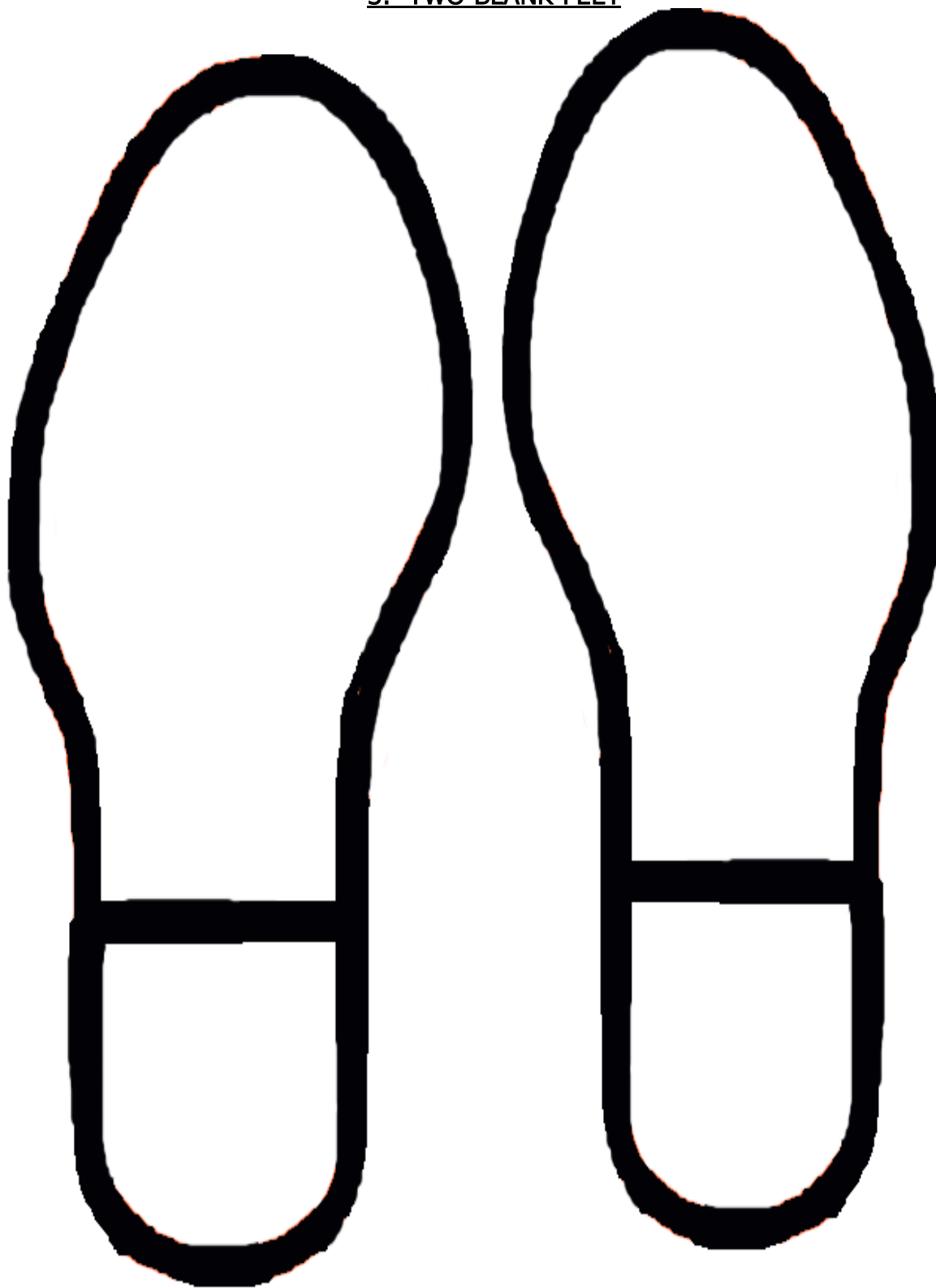
## 2. THE "TWO FEET" OF SOCIAL MINISTRY



*"Service and action, charity and justice are complementary components of parish social ministry. Neither alone is sufficient; both are essential signs of the gospel at work"*

*US Bishops Communities of Salt and Light, 1993*

3. TWO BLANK FEET



## Notes for the Facilitator

### Session I has the following goals:

- To explore what parishioners, as service providers and advocates, have learned about poverty and the issues that people are facing.
- To recognize the importance of the services for people in crisis and the need for long-term policy solutions.
- To foster a sense of connection and appreciation for both parts of the social mission.
- To learn from each others' experiences.

Direct service is necessary to prevent the immediate repercussions of poverty which could result in greater illness, broken families and even death. It is a service that is needed again and again. Advocacy is necessary in order to create conditions that will keep people from becoming impoverished. Both feet (charity & justice) are essential to our Catholic faith. The conversation during this first session asks people to share reflections on how they feel about their work, how they may have changed or grown in their service or policy advocacy and what questions they may have about their experience doing social ministry.

### Session II has the following goals:

- To explore the meaning of root causes and systems and relate concrete experiences to these systems.
- To recognize the necessary, but limited impact of direct service and the need for long-term policy solutions.
- To identify their role in animating the parish to engage in charity and justice.

## The Role of the Facilitator

Your role, as facilitator, is to provide the opportunity for people to talk together. There are no correct answers as people reflect on their experience.

- Start and end on time; it is respectful and will bring people back.
- You need not use ALL the questions. Use the questions to keep the conversation going.
- The early questions on feelings are important, the conclusion is important. Use the middle questions as needed to invite greater participation.

- Involve participants in the prayers. See separate prayer sheets. If you wish to make copies for the group, feel free to do so.
- Both sessions begin with a scripture reading, a short reflection and a prayer. Before the scripture reading, welcome people and have each person introduce themselves. (This can be done informally.)
- If there will be a number of people who do not know each other; name tags would be a good idea.

### SESSION I

**Invite** each person to introduce her/himself and ask them to share:

- Why do you do what you do in your service work or work with issues?
- What is the call or challenge you experience?

**Opening Prayer: DARE TO HOPE** (Linda Jones)

*We dare to imagine a world where hunger has no chance to show its face. We dare to dream of a world where wars and terror are afraid to leave their mark. We long to believe in a world of hope unchained and lives unfettered. We dare to work for the creation of a world where your people are free from poverty. Dare we open minds to difference? Dare we open our lives to change? Your Kingdom come, O Lord, Your will be done. Amen.*

**Scripture Readings:** (Before reading the passages, ask people to listen for what strikes them.)

1. James 2, 14-17 (Reflection on Faith and Action)

*What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if a person claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about the physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

- After reading the passage, allow some time for quiet.
- Ask people to indicate what word or phrase struck them. There is no need to explain, simply indicate a word or phrase.
- Another short pause for quiet.

- What strikes you:
  - o about what you just heard from each other?
  - o what is surprising?
  - o how do you see services and work with issues related?
  - o in what way could you be supportive of each other?

## 2. I Peter 4:7-11 (Reflection on Hospitality)

*Dear Friends, be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, you should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If any serves, you should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and power for ever and ever. Amen*

Read the short reflection on hospitality slowly and reflectively. Feel free to make copies of it for the group if you wish.

### Conversation:

Ask the following questions, allowing time for people to respond and develop a conversation:

- o what strikes you about manner in which to pray?
- o as you heard Peter's comments, what was your strongest feeling?
- o How do you use your gifts for 'hospitality'?
- o name a time or situation in which you think this hospitality took place in relation to your service or working with an issue.
- o indicate how this understanding of hospitality is important to the work you do in your service or working with an issue.
- o what do you find most interesting?

### Conclusion, before next gathering:

Ask people to read the short article on *Justice and Charity* for the next gathering. Ask the group to name groups and individuals from their work to remember in prayer.

### Closing Prayer:

*Good and Gracious God, Source of all life,*



*All creation is charged with your Divine Energy. Ignite Your spark within us that we may know ourselves as truly human and holy, forever part of the Web of Life. All Creation, each star and every flower, each drop of water and every person, each atom, down to its very electrons, explodes with the revelation of your Sacred Mystery.*

*May we always walk gently up on this earth, in right relationship nurtured by your Love, taking only what we need giving back to the earth in gratitude, mindful of those who will come after us.*

*Grant us the strength and courage, we pray for such radical transformation into your Kingdom. Amen.*

*(Michelle Balek, OSF)*

## **SESSION II**

Before the meeting: Ask each person to write down what issues or people they are working to assist on the ½ sheet.

### **Opening Prayer:**

*Good and gracious God, we thank you for touching our lives and calling us to witness to the love of Jesus. As we acknowledge our failings, make us a people of forgiveness and welcome, creating in us a place of justice and peace. As we open our minds and hearts to the guidance of your Holy Spirit. Make us a Gospel people. May our hearts burn within us, as we help others discover Your gracious presence. We pray in the Holy Spirit through Jesus. Amen.*

### **Scripture: Matthew 5:1-10**

*When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons and daughters of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*After reading the passage allow some time for quiet.*

- Then ask people to indicate which of the beatitudes strikes them most at this moment. There is no need to explain.
- Another short pause for quiet

### **Introduction:**

You read the short article on *Justice and Charity*. You may have learned something new, or it may have put things together in a different way for you.

- ◆ What key point struck you?
- ◆ Where did you find your experience reflected in the article?
- ◆ Where did you find yourself annoyed while reading the article?

\*\*\*Hand out the "Two Feet of Social Ministry" and read together.

\*\*\*Hand out blank Two Feet page—fill in how you are 'walking' in Charity and Justice

- In what way is the work you do like the charity foot of social ministry?
- In what way is it similar to the justice foot?
- Have ½ sheets blank paper and a ball of yarn

### **Develop a "WHY WEB": Why are people poor?**

1. Lay out on a table, wall or the floor the names of the various service or issue groups represented here.
2. Ask them to indicate the underlying issue or problem that requires this service. (Example: Families Moving Forward = Homelessness; A food shelf = Hunger)
3. Ask people to form a circle (or two or more as needed with 10 – 12 people in a circle).
4. Ask participants to think of a response or two to the basic question, "*Why are People Poor?*", giving them a minute or so.

### **When all are ready:**

- Hold a ball of yarn, hang on to one end of the yarn and ask the question, *why are People Poor*, and give your response. Then throw the ball ACROSS the circle for someone to catch, while you hold on to the yarn end.
- That person now asks the question, *why are People Poor?* gives a response and holding onto the yarn, throws the ball ACROSS the circle.
- This continues until all people have responded and are holding the yarn. It should look like a web on the inside of the circle with lines criss-crossing. If the yarn is very loose, ask people to step back and pull the lines taut.

*Some possible responses: lack of education, greed, fear, generational poverty, child care costs, low wages, drug/alcohol abuse, mental illness, no insurance, lack of affordable housing, lack of transportation, heating costs too high, racism, immigration status...*

## **ASK THE GROUP WHAT THEY SEE**

- Ask the person who has the issue “education” (or any issue) to pull on their string and then ask who can feel that pull? Ask them what issues they represent (perhaps childcare costs and low wages); Ask what connection they see between these issues.
- Do this several more times, asking others in the group to pull on their string and see what issues feel it and how they are connected.
- What conclusions can we draw? For example: These issues are connected to each other. They cause each other, impact each other. An issue can create another issue or make it worse.
- Improving one issue can improve another.
- The connections illustrate that we live within various systems (health care, educational, business, governmental etc.) and these systems interact with each other.
- Helping people in poverty is complicated and we need to see the whole thing.

Take another minute to “study” the look of the web and do a bit of pulling on it. Then wrap up your ball of yard and get ready for a conversation.

### **Conversation:**

- ◆ Ask the people delivering direct service to tell a story that demonstrates the “why” connection between issues.
- ◆ Ask those advocating for policy changes to talk about the connections they experience in doing the work of advocacy.
- ◆ In the parish, what specific issues are represented by the direct service and issue work that we do?
- ◆ How could we involve more people in this social ministry of charity and justice?
- ◆ Where shall we go from here?

**Conclusion:**

Ask people to evaluate the two meetings:

- ◆ In what way were they helpful?
- ◆ What would you change?

**Closing Prayer:**

*Spun into being from the sum by the whole breath of God, we came forth beautiful to behold. Each of us is word of God meant to spell with one another, a harmony of spirit, a sacred poem to sanctify the centuries. But now the sacred poem of humankind is being rent with accents foreign to the harmony the Holy One intended. There is terror. There is fear. There is dissipation of energy, as cruel and violent forces break a part the sacred syllable of the poem and frighten earth's children. How can we spell again words to keep us close and safe? How can we birth hope and nourish it? We can today in this place vow in our hearts to reverence from our depth of being the loveliness we know in one another, the harmony of spirit we wish to share with the world. We can kindle today the energy within us to change the universe with the inner poetry of our souls. We can make a commitment to confront continually the systems that violate the reverence we feel toward the earth and all creation. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.*

---

## 5.4 CLC FORMATION FOR SOCIAL MINISTRY

*In order that our mission may become ever more what it is intended to be, we must take seriously the need for a solid and deep formation. This formation is demanding and must embrace the human, spiritual, doctrinal, ethical and pastoral levels. We cannot offer less to the men and women of today, who thirst for truth and are skeptical of all mediocrity, persons with little capacity for the mission to which they are sent.*

### A. FIVE CRITERIA FOR MISSION

#### 1. The "Magis"

As persons inspired by Ignatian spirituality, our missionary availability cannot be restricted to one field or another of the apostolate. We should be available for everything, for whatever does not enter into conflict with our state of life and our primary obligations as lay men and women. The "magis" is experienced as a calling 'to the more'. (In the Spiritual Exercises it is about ordering our lives.)

#### 2. The most universal and most lasting good

We should prefer people and places whose profit would result in extending the same good to many others. So, we should not, out of fear or shyness, refuse to assume front-line political tasks, or of being close to influential people with public responsibilities. We should be wherever there is the possibility of *influencing structures* rather than people, offering our availability and our skills, always conscious of our limitations and always seeking the help of others. However, big tasks should not stop us or reduce our apostolic zeal for smaller things. Everything becomes greater and more important in response to God's preferred will for us.

#### 3. The greater fruit

If there is a mission that has possibilities of enduring longer and of bearing lasting fruit as regards the service it offers, it is certainly preferable to another which is momentary, and which will probably end with me. It is merely a work which is

restricted to my person and cannot be passed on to others who will carry it on and make it grow after I leave.

#### **4. The greatest need or urgency**

Keep in mind the social reality and the pastoral plans of the local and universal church. Social and cultural analysis that includes the religious, social and political aspects, with in depth and specialized studies, and a true knowledge of the situation, are all indispensable if we wish our discernment to be truly efficient. These means are closely related to the spiritual means, such as prayer, discernment and spiritual orientation learned in the Spiritual Exercises. The absence, however, of an adequate instrument for analysis may lead to improvisations and amateurisms, which, though made in good faith, unfortunately do not lead to a service of quality.

#### **5. Reaching where others do not reach; being where others are not.**

The very same capacity to 'read' the situation calling for a response – to analyze the socio-political and cultural reality, whose importance we have just underlined, should help us discover where the needs are *not* so visible and transparent. It should also help us discover the difficulties which have discouraged people being present there; and where we may be called to give witness to hope. We must live our mission in a world that is pluralistic on all levels, including the religious level. Knowing that we are sent to announce the Gospel, as Christians who live in the world, we must be ever more open and attentive to the demands of ecumenism and of inter-religious dialogue. We must learn to work with people of other creeds to promote common values and objectives, such as peace and justice.

## **B. AN IGNATIAN APPROACH: EDUCATION FOR RESPONDING TO INJUSTICE**

Justice, alongside prudence, temperance, and fortitude, is a cardinal virtue; a human quality that helps form our character, guides our thoughts and actions. We acquire these virtues through effort. Prudence is about making decisions, temperance about exercising self-control, and fortitude about having courage. The last lesson highlighted that justice centres on treating people fairly. As Christians, we hold this dear as we know that justice is always about relationships; however, we understand that justice is much more than this. The way to understand justice is to recognise God's intention when He created the world. He wanted it to be a just place – a place where everything flourished. We have been created to live justly in our connection to creation (the environment), to humanity (people), and to God. What makes a

relationship just? The answer to that is simply, 'when we deal with each other we do so with the sense of awe that arises in the presence of something holy and sacred' (USCCB, 1986). As we are created in the 'image and likeness of God' (Genesis 1:27), we have a dignity, a value and worth, that cannot and should not be taken or harmed. But this is not where our understanding of justice stops. We are aware that there are many in our world who do not flourish. Much of these results from damaged relationships; those driven by hate, greed, abuse, and vengeance. For Christians, we must do what is needed to make these relationships right. Therefore, justice is not just about living right and making good and right relationships, it is also about our commitment 'to serve' ensuring that all of us flourish on this Earth. This is what Jesus did; he formed good relationships and did what was needed for those who suffered injustice. In his time, his mission was to create the just place God had originally intended it to be. This too is our mission in our time.

When Pedro Arrupe SJ became Superior General of the Society of Jesus in 1965, he set out to ensure that the Jesuits committed to addressing the needs of the poor and vulnerable in our world. His understanding of justice, coupled with his experiences as a missionary, guided his vision for Jesuit education. In his 1973 address to Jesuit alumni in Spain, he noted that the goal of Jesuit education was 'to form men-women for others'. This ideal was endorsed and expanded on by Peter Hans Kolvenbach SJ, Superior General (1983 - 2008) when he added that we should 'form men-women for and with others. He summoned Jesuit educators to 'form men and women of competence, conscience, and compassionate commitment' Competence prepares students to 'use their knowledge and their skills' to live and transform the context they live in. Conscience develops their ability to see the world they live in 'with the eyes of God', discovering both 'the beauty of creation' and 'places of pain, misery, and injustice.' This not only leads them to be thankful for what they have but also ignites within them a desire to change the world they live in. Compassion cultivates their capacity to move from a feeling of 'charity and compassion' towards a response to injustice, while Commitment, being 'inseparably tied to compassion' means they will continuously strive 'toward faith' and towards dismantling social structures which create injustice. Recently Adolfo Nicolás SJ, Superior General (2008 - 2016) explored the above as an expression of the Human Excellence that Jesuit education seeks to offer its students. Preparing students to change the world for the better is integral to their faith formation. For Nicolás, this affords young people access to the 'hidden treasure' of faith 'that Jesus showed' which was 'the deep and lasting joy of discovering that by putting life in service of others, or giving it to others, giving up personal or group benefits in order to seek the greater good is not to lose life, but to find it in its fullest sense.'

To deepen our understanding of an injustice it is important to get all the facts. Today, information and the sources from where we get them, comes in many different forms and through many different mediums. Sometimes it is difficult to determine what is true, partially true, or false. We know the internet provides much information on almost any given topic; however, we also know that some information is erroneous

and misleading. Therefore, we must develop critical thinking skills. This requires we ask key questions when sifting through information. For example, is the source credible? Is the information fact or opinion? Are the facts in line with those from other sources? What is the motive of the author/s in providing the information? It is also important that we are critical and consider our own prejudices and position in society. Often, we have a preconceived idea about an issue. These ideas are generally based on our culture and on what might be considered popular in the groups to which we belong. Often it is difficult to go 'against the grain' and accept facts which are not considered popular. Equally, at times we think that issues which affect us are more important than those affecting other groups in our society or the world we live in. Learning to be critical helps us to better understand injustices in our society and world. It ensures that we identify the core underlying causes of an injustice and not just accept the visible, obvious, and at times popular truths. It helps us to make sure that the conclusions we make are clear and accurate.

An injustice can occur when one person wrongs another. We refer to this as Particular Injustice. With particular injustice, we can identify the victim and the wrongdoer. An individual stealing another person's iPhone is an example of a particular injustice. However, much of the injustice we see happening in our world today, such as, poverty, the exploitation of workers, sex trafficking, and homelessness, result from Structural Injustice. This differs from particular injustice because many participants are involved in creating the injustice, not just one individual. Therefore, it is best to look at structural injustice as a set of different relationships or processes rather than just one act. While it is easy to identify the victims of structural injustice, for example, refugees, it is much more difficult to find out who is to blame. This difficulty stems from a reality that most people involved in the process have no direct connection to the injustice. Equally, they may not be aware that their involvement is causing harm to others. As a result, they are distanced from any responsibility from first, creating the injustice, and second, from responding to the injustice. In most cases unjust social structures have been constructed over time and gradually become part of a society's culture and norms; in effect, how a society functions. These structures also lead to the acceptance that some injustices are a consequence of fate, something that is 'what it is' or something that is 'just bad luck'. Since, many participants fail to recognise that injustice results from something they are part of, the injustice endures.

Consumerism is a theory which encourages people to buy material goods. While we have always purchased goods, material and other, our culture of purchasing has shifted. Today, we live in a society where much of what we buy is driven by desire. This has changed from a time when we used to purchase goods based on their value and benefit. Equally, much of what we purchase today, especially in terms of material goods, is considered an expression of our culture, of who we are. As we explored in the previous lesson, it shapes our lifestyles. Nevertheless, our culture of consumerism has consequences. Scientists can now measure the impact the household consumption of goods has on the environment. To do this, scientists measure the materials, water, and land required to make the products we consume, in addition to



the greenhouse gases emitted in the production and use of these products. The reality is that the production and use of goods by household consumers contributes to more than 60 percent of all global greenhouse gas emissions. These goods include the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and other items we use daily. For example, over 15,000 litres of water are used to produce 1kg of beef and 17,000 litres of water to produce 1 kg of chocolate. In 2015, Pope Francis released his encyclical, *Laudato Si - Praise Be to You*. This letter to Catholics worldwide, also referred to as *Care for Our Common Home*, outlines a clear message on how to apply Gospel teachings and Catholic traditions to the specific issue of caring for the earth – God’s gift to us. In it, the Pope highlights the impact human behavior has and continues to have on the destruction of the earth. For the Pope, and for us Christians, this is a justice issue. Wealthier countries generate the most significant impact on the environment while people in poorer countries suffer the environmental and social consequences. It is well recognised that the earth cannot sustain our current practices.

We have come to learn that justice is best understood when we recognise God’s intention in creating the world – He wanted it to be a just place where everything flourished. Thus, we have been created to live justly in our connection to Creation, Humanity, and God. Not only are we called to form good relationships, we are called to do what is needed to make sure that we all flourish on earth. The Bible is full of wonderful stories and examples of how we should live justly. For us Christians, taking the time to reflect, or to ‘think deeply’ or ‘carefully about’ the messages within it is important. Considered the most widely read book in the world the Bible gives us comfort, hope, perspective, and purpose. From it we draw strength and courage. Equally, reflection is a core element of Ignatian spirituality and forms the basis for discernment. Ignatius believed that when we reflect on our experiences and are able to free ourselves of worldly ‘attachments’, we make right decisions; decisions which are more in harmony with what God desires for us. Jesuits hold dearly the idea that our relationship with God is a journey. The Bible is the beacon of light which guides that journey. Taking the time to reflect on our lives through the Bible affords us a chance to get closer to the one who inspired its design, God.

Everybody has a story to tell. When we listen to someone telling us a story, whether of joy, sadness, or despair, we connect with them. The human story has the power to transcend boundaries that divide humanity - race, religion, social status – for it helps us rediscover what it is we have in common; that we are all human. When we listen to a story with intent, we develop a sense of empathy with those who are telling it. Empathy is the ‘ability to understand and share the feelings of another person’ or simply put, the ability to ‘walk in someone else’s shoes’. The Bible encourages us to empathise; ‘rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn’ (Romans 12:15). When responding to injustice it is fundamental that we empathise with those who have experienced injustice. This not only helps us to connect with that person on a human level, but more so, it deepens our understanding of what they have gone through. It helps us ‘to serve’ more effectively. We have learnt that much of the injustice which occurs in our world is structural in nature. We also know that this is

best understood as a set of relationships or processes which we are part of. In most cases we are distanced from the injustice and the harm it causes. Listening to someone who has experienced injustice and empathising with them brings us closer to that injustice; it makes us realise the real impact of what is going on. We start to imagine: What if it was me? What if it was someone I loved? Listening to a human story takes time and energy. The process of understanding and sharing the experiences of another is an emotional one. It also takes courage. At times, what we hear is uncomfortable. It triggers within us different emotions. It prompts us to act.

*Reflections On The "Signs f Times" And,  
The Drama of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Week of The Spiritual Exercises. Dec. 2012*

## C. SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND PRAYER AND ACTION

If love is your purpose and the common good is your goal, it was and still is the time to double down on prayer. Because prayer, real prayer, is both contemplative and active. Part of that is working for a good, just, humane, and loving society.

That means taking time to pray it *also* means standing on our feet and marching in the streets. It means praying through participation in the life of our government and society. Through fashioning a civic order that reflects goodness, justice, and compassion, and the very heart and dream of God for all of God's children and God's creation.

- Draw attention to **DISCERNING COMMUNITY FOR MISSION** as the **PURPOSE** for CLC
- Speak to CLC **IDENTIFICATION**: CLC Spirituality=SP Exercises/ community/ mission
- Outline **RESOURCES**: GP GN, Our Common Mission, Spiritual Exercises, World General Assembly Documents
- Identify **TOOLS** already presented:
  - 1, 2, 3<sup>rd</sup> round of sharing (what have we done, what are we doing, what aught we to do for Jesus)
  - Leadership formation (key to facilitate direction of group)
  - Group Guide Formation (critical to development of vision holders and promoters)
  - Power Cycle (visual process)
  - Life Death Resurrection Cycle (understanding the dynamics of group)
  - Communal Discernment (movement of spirits)
  - Criteria for mission (focus on structural change)
  - DSSE (expression of communal mission)
  - Organizational structures – group, regional, national, world

**All are tools, structures to facilitate mission. If any hinder mission, they ought to be changed.**

There is yet another tool, specifically designed to seek the truth of a reality. It is the process of **SOCIAL ANALYSIS**. We live in a world of layered values and information that obscure the truth.

- socially (evident in ethnic disparity-class system),
- culturally (some are worth more than others – men vs women),
- economically (priority of profit over people),
- politically (patronage),
- psychologically (intellectual ability vs disability).

The facts that these conditions exist is proof that our society (by admission or omission, consciously or unconsciously) supports the way things are.

So, to get to the truth of a reality requires carefully and painfully peeling away the veils that obscure.

**Social Analysis** is about developing an intellectual scepticism...learning not to accept everything at face value. It is learning to peel back the layers and asking:

- **who benefits,**
- **who loses,**
- **who pays and**
- **why is it so.**

For those already open and engaged in mission, Social Analysis is the method of apostolic planning that helps us move from doing charity (reinforcing dependency) to doing justice (promotion of liberation).

Social analysis is not new to us...we engaged in social analysis when we learned to talk with our first "why". Have you been around youngsters...and endured their countless "whys"? They need to understand and make sense of the world around them. Inevitably the answer is "because I said so" ... too often, that response satisfies and is carried into adulthood where we accept without question because someone with power or in authority said so. And so it continues... society follows suit...some types of questions ("why") are discouraged as the status quo (school, workplace, society, church, consumerism, capitalism, communism) requires compliant participants.

The success of advertising is based on passive unquestioning hearers who respond as directed...and it works. Listen to the social analysis that Terry O’Rielly does on advertising on CBC’s “Age of Persuasion”.

A 1994 *Progressio* titled *Community in Mission*, presents a methodology that highlights the point that as an apostolic community, we need to be aware that there are **4 relationships** that influence us from **outside** each time we face an opportunity for apostolic action. These can be both positive and negative.

### **1. CULTURAL CONTEXT:**

- This is understood as the particular way in which members of a society relate with one another, with nature, with God (common lifestyle).
- Culture generates events, events generate laws, and laws generate attitudes (collective conscious).
- In undertaking an apostolic action (mission) CLC is called to insert ourselves into the culture of our countries, and to influence change in those values that promote injustice towards certain sectors of the society.

### **2. NEOLIBERAL TENDENCIES:**

The industrialized countries are promoting a socio-political doctrine advocating the supremacy of commerce and free competition.

This ideology includes deregulation of the economy (market rules), privatization (less government intervention), and liberalization of protectionism (free-trade agreements).

### **3. CHURCH MODELS:**

- Church as perfect society (traditional) – pyramid with hierarchy at the top and laity at bottom... a church for the poor.
- Church as God’s people (communitarian) – circle of communion and participation... a church with the poor.
- Church of the poor (prophetic) – circle of communion and participation ...a church from the poor and like the poor in its lifestyle and mission.

### **4. GROUP MENTALITY:**

As a member of any group the tendency is to take, adopt consciously, unconsciously the groups way of thinking and acting:

- Birds of a feather...
- Tell me who your friends are and I'll tell you who you are...

As well, we are influenced **internally** and tend to belong to groups that share spirituality, a mentality, a way of life, with shared goals, thinking, social class, interests.

These are a few **typical characteristics** that identify and distinguish 3 groupings:

**1. Traditional-conservative mentality:**

- sees social realities from a hierarchical point of view
- primary importance is given to authority and dogmatic truths
- holds to well defined moral principles
- does not question social structures
- resents change
- prefers to do things the way they have always been done.

**2. Moderate mentality:**

- places the human person at the centre with all its dynamism, capacity to learn, change, be transformed
- has an open mind and keen interest in everyone's renewal and improvement
- strives to be modern and liberal but not to question the structural dimension of many human and social problems.

**3. Liberating mentality:**

- looks at structures with a critical eye to discover behind these structures the socio-economic interest of some groups
- promotes group action by which people become aware of these manipulations and avoid them
- goes to the roots of the problem and tries to change unjust structures
- effectively fosters the overall transformation of the person.

I repeat... Social Analysis is about developing an intellectual scepticism...learning not to accept everything at face value. It is learning to peel back the layers and asking such questions as:

- who benefits,
- who loses,
- who pays and
- why is it so.

**Criteria for mission** aid in selecting our field of mission while **social analysis** aids in uncovering the truth of the situation.

One of the means identified to implement the recommendation of the 1986 GA of Loyola was the engagement in social analysis as a way to ensure the correspondence between reality in which we live and the responses which we give.

**Good discernment leading to good decisions is dependent on good data.**

Since the 2008 GA in Fatima, CLC has been somewhat preoccupied in trying to understand what was meant by our world EA Fr. Adolfo Nicolas' observation that CLC was called to be a PROPHETIC APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY.

It seems to me that it is when CLC lives intentionally as a discerning community for mission from a **liberating perspective** that the possibility of prophetic action surfaces or becomes evident. The intent is not to set out just to be prophetic, but it is in the living out of a communally discerned action that allows the guidance of the Spirit and the gift of grace to unfold in prophetic action. Often it is with hindsight that a prophetic action is recognized.

At first glance it could be viewed as:

- foolhardy venture,
- a disruptive disobedience,
- an annoying disturbance.

Keep in mind that Jesus was considered all of the above...and more. Look who he hung around with (sinners both men and women, foreigners, untouchables). Look at what he did (broke the Sabbath laws, reacted against the temple being used for business venture).

We continue to be challenged by what Fr. Larry Stinn SJ wrote in the following concluding remarks in a 1976 *Progressio* titled *Putting Gospel Values to Work*,

*"CLC is a community at the service of all humanity, a service which is greater in so far as we are poor with Christ. Liberation is no more than a word UNLESS it becomes a reality in our lives and in that of our community. Only if we are liberated ourselves can we be a force for the liberation of others. But such liberation comes only if we allow Christ to change our attitudes and transform our pattern of action. Either it touches the concrete areas in my life and the lives of those around me, especially the poor and oppresses, or liberation will remain an ideal we talk about but do not live, at least not many of us."*

In the CLC way, social analysis ought to be clarified by the gospel and the dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises. A second component of Social Analysis is Theological Reflection that helps us see with the eyes of the Trinity.

Fr. Nicolas challenged CLC to see with the eyes of God, to listen with the ears of God, to feel with the heart of God then to discern, decide and act.

Social analysis and Theological reflection are tools aimed at clarifying who we prefer to see, to listen to, to feel with and on whose behalf, we desire to act.

To put on the mind and heart of Christ requires us to:

- be aware of our interior life - our interior movement of spirits (heightened awareness of biases, unfreedoms, blindness)
- deepen our understanding of the world we live in and its culture (get all the facts, gather data including the underlying or hidden issues)
- deepen our theological understanding from an incarnational perspective (critique the status quo in light of the gospel...risk being counter-cultural)

If a particular mission/apostolic action is God's desire for us and we respond to the best of our ability, the grace to be prophetic will be both God's call and God's gift.

## D. INDIVIDUAL MISSION

*"In relationship with others, and attentive to the signs of the times, those who are so disposed are moved to open their hearts to the needs of the men and women of their world. From this contact with reality arise the personal calls that lead to specific ways of following the Lord.*

*The invitation to follow Him will become concrete in the way we personally respond to these calls. The initial vocation to follow Jesus will unfold in specific activities. But, for these activities to become mission, it is necessary that the community assume the call, help to discern and, finally, send each one on mission. In this sense perhaps, vocation would be the correct term in speaking of personal involvement in the Church's mission.*

*For each CLC member, the different contexts of their life as laity: family, politics, profession, community, local Church, are the main fields of action."*

Members of CLC are lay women and men coming from all walks of life and are all ages. Each has had a life in the community(s) in which they lived and worked, and usually in the Church, long before receiving a call to live out Ignatian Spirituality communally in CLC. We are most grateful for all their gifts and experiences which they bring to the discernment of their individual missions for the coming year.

### Essential Steps for an Individual Mission

1) **DISCERNING:** We are invited to live a process of apostolic discernment

- to recognize the will of God,
- to grow in awareness of where God is calling us to serve,
- to join in the Mission of Jesus.

In this discernment, it is important for each member to reflect back and relish the sacrament of Baptism when s/he was welcomed into the Christian community as well as return in contemplation to the point in life when s/he decided to follow Jesus and continue to do so.

This can be done by:

- ❖ praying my Graced History. Manual of Formation Phase III pg. 141
- ❖ reflecting on "Who have I been called to be with?" One Apostolic Community: Our Way of Life May 2004, Lethbridge, Alta: *Harvest Spring 2004*
- ❖ looking at my personal attitude in everyday life (The Awareness Examen), i.e. How I have been:
  - available to follow God's will?
  - open to the signs of the times in today's world?
  - ready to respond with compassion and competence?

As laity, in many cases we did not formally declare our vocation. But, by following Jesus in this world we have been carrying out *the Mission of Jesus* in a multitude of ways. Now it is time to focus on this and to name it specifically by discerning what my individual mission is for this coming year as stated in the Charism "*the different contexts of their life as laity: family, politics, profession, community, local Church.*"

Suggested scriptures found in Manual One Meetings 14-18 on discipleship e.g. Peter and Mary.

2) **SENDING:** In sending each other and being sent as a whole community, we repeat in the Church the gesture of Jesus, "As the Father has sent me, I send you." We wish a renewed awareness of WHO is sending, of WHAT the member is being sent to do and finally of HOW the community sends its members, with certain signs and gestures.



**3) SUPPORTING:** When each CLC member shares with the community the necessary information about her/his mission and the community listens to each member and in everyday life expresses its support with concrete gestures, we have responded to this call of supporting one another. Round two provides a forum for the members of a community to “support” each other’s individual mission throughout the year.

**4) EVALUATING:** We are called to become more aware of what we have done and how we are living the mission received. It is a continuation and confirmation of the original discernment and so the same attitudes are required in daily life. Again, round two provides a forum for the members of a community to remind each other to “evaluate” their individual missions throughout the year.

## 5.5 THE PURPOSE OF CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY

**GP 4** is one of the best short presentations of the whole of our "Charism" ... it transmits the core identity of what CLC means to its members. ... Work for justice and simple lifestyle are shown as distinguishing marks of our CLC.

### A. FOR THE GROWTH OF GOD'S KINGDOM

#### CHRISTIANS: BUILDING THE KINGDOM.

We are Christians, in other words, people who follow Jesus and work with Him in building up the Kingdom. This is the core of what CLC is all about. "Jesus was not a Christian", is the rather provocative title of a recent book. It is worthwhile to reflect on this title, though the book itself is not of interest to us. It is true that Jesus was not Christian, true in the sense that his purpose was not Christianity, but the fullness of life for all people. Jesus dreamt of God's Kingdom - all exegetes agree on this point. Perhaps we don't always realise how the Kingdom is connected with our daily experiences, even the most profane ones. At his first appearance in Nazareth, Jesus reads from the book of the prophet Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, and to proclaim the Lord's year of favour", and further on, "This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen." (Lk 4:16-21). Jesus was an incorrigible "world-improver", and this is also clear from his programmatic speech - the Sermon on the Mount. Maybe, though, it is even clearer in the description of the Last Judgement. **It is by feeding the hungry, giving the thirsty something to drink, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned (Mt 25:31-46)** that you will reach God - and these are all rather profane actions!

Jesus' purpose was the Kingdom of God. In the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius lets the Three Divine Persons look down from heaven to earth and conclude that the Second Person will become human, in order "to bring about the salvation of the human race" (cf. Sp. Ex 102, GP 1). Again, Jesus' purpose is the salvation of all men and women, and our faith is related to this purpose. This purpose must also be, right from the start, the purpose of CLC. A spirituality only interested in or focused on its own inner development is false. **Our being in CLC, our being in the Church, our Ignatian heritage, everything that we are, is for the service of the Kingdom of God.**

When we bear in mind Jesus' purpose, we can understand what it means to follow Him more closely. In Jesus, God's Kingdom has dawned. Not only does He make the Kingdom closer to us, but He is the Kingdom of God right amongst us. It is not just a coincidence that the expression "Kingdom of God" disappears from the Acts of the Apostles and from St Paul's Letters. It seems that it is to give space to the spirituality of the imitation of the Lord. For Paul, true life means life in Christ.

So far, the text of GP 4 is simply about being a Christian. The purpose of CLC is indeed simply to form Christians. Ignatius never wanted the Jesuits to be called "Ignatian" after him, like the Benedictines after Benedict and the Franciscans after Francis. Ignatius' disciples were to be called after Jesus, because they were "Companions of Jesus". Perhaps for the same reason the General Assembly in Rome 1967 decided to choose the name Christian Life Community, relating it to Christ our Lord and without other references, for example to Ignatius.

**And yet, CLC is a particular vocation within the Church.** Even though it is always about the same Gospel, there are many windows through which we can see that Gospel. The proper charism of CLC can perhaps be defined by two elements. On the one hand, there is the dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises (see GP 5, on our sources) that determines the way in which we work for the Kingdom. On the other hand, there is a real-World Community to which we belong, normally through our belonging to a small particular group in which we exchange about our faith and our life. CLC as a way of life rests on three pillars: Community, Ignatian Spirituality, and Mission.

Before going on to the second paragraph of GP 4, let us consider the importance of one or two passages in the first paragraph. No restrictions are foreseen on membership of our Community – "Men and women, young and adults, from all social conditions". While at the world level, e.g., at any World Assembly, we can find this diversity, at the national level this is not always true. Sometimes we forget the youth or are not able to reach them. At other times, the number of men and women is not well balanced. Very often, our membership reflects only one kind of social background. GP 4 is a challenge in this sense.

Finally, it is important to understand that the expression "more closely" is related to the Ignatian sense of "magis", and does not contain an implicit comparison, in the sense of better or worse, with other vocations within the Church.

## **LIVING: EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE, AND YET NOT EVERYTHING**

How do we actually live our being Christian? How do we try to make the Kingdom present among us? That is what the second paragraph of GP 4 is about. We **aim to become committed Christians in witnessing to those human and Gospel values within the Church and society.** The sentence could just stop here. The CLC call cannot be restricted, because it comprises every area of life. **The highlighting of the dignity of**

**the person, the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation is not intended to be restrictive, as everything can be included in these areas, but rather wishes to be inspirational.** In fact, CLC doesn't have a specific content to develop, but should touch the whole of our life. Our engagement can be social, political, scientific, cultural, ecclesial... and in any area CLC will provide us with a method and an attitude.

However, this non-restrictive approach does not mean neutrality. **"We are particularly aware of the pressing need to work for justice through a preferential option for the poor"**. The Spiritual Exercises, and the CLC way, help us to find out what is God's will in our lives. They enable us to make choices in the Spirit of the risen Lord and to remain open to any possibility in front of us. But this is always from the perspective of the poor and humiliated Christ and His gift of self on the cross (Philippians 2:6-8). This key element will protect us against a "neutral" reading of the Gospel, which often hides a desire for riches and power. There is an unbreakable bond between authentic faith and work for justice, and this is what this sentence of GP 4 reminds us of.

In the Meditation on Two Standards (Sp. Ex 136-146), Ignatius puts in front of us the choice of riches or poverty. He warns us that the spirit of evil will first tempt us with material wealth and then will invite us to undertake the next two steps: honour and pride. The Lord, though, invites us to the highest spiritual poverty and, if God chooses us, even to actual poverty. Humiliation and dishonour will follow, and from here true humility can grow. All our other choices flow from our choice of one of these directions. Just as the adoration of riches is at the beginning of many other and perhaps more serious evils, detachment from everything you own is a basic Christian attitude out of which will grow a true confidence in God, and only in God.

Our preference for the poor becomes concrete in our simple lifestyle. Each of us lives in a particular culture and milieu, and it is part of our spirituality to live amidst our own world. Within this, however, we choose simplicity, which is more than just sobriety. The simple lifestyle is first of all an expression of our freedom for God - Ignatian indifference, inner freedom. The simple lifestyle expresses also our solidarity with the poor, as we try to look at our world and society through their eyes.

## **COMMUNITY: IN SERVICE OF OUR MISSION**

The third part of this text brings together all that has gone before in the Community: a gathering of people who want to integrate better their faith and their daily life in all its dimensions, and who can recognise themselves in our charism. This gathering in community is immediately related to "apostolic service, especially in our daily environment", and to the "response to Christ's call from within the world in which we live".

Community is formed only with a view to the Kingdom of God, which grows through our being with Christ and working with Him, and through our being together with other companions in this great enterprise. The group, and the wider community

therefore are never goals in themselves, but they are indispensable for us to develop a CLC way of life aiming at the growth of God's Kingdom. Like Ignatius and his first companions, we also want to remain united and permanently connected with each other for the sake of Christ's mission, which is ours.

The reason why the group - the local group and the World Community - are such powerful tools for the Kingdom becomes clear further on in the GPs. The group is "a concrete experience of unity in love and action" (GP 7). The group is thus a community of love. The group is also a faith community, i.e., it is for the members "a primary means to continue their growth", a place where a deep sharing of their faith and their life occurs on a permanent basis (GP 11).

## B. TOWARDS AN APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY: A COMMUNAL PROCESS

### PREAMBLE

CLC groups are identified as "communities of apostles" - that is, as groups made up of members who are giving loving service as Christ's disciple in some aspect of their life, and in the world (family, work, neighbourhood or other secular/marketplace areas). At the Nairobi World Assembly (2003), our World CLC called us forward - to become not just a community of apostles but an APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY. What is the difference?

Consider these two understandings: The first is that as a community, we may be called to *discern, as a group*, a communal action or communal mission. We then need to *send ourselves, as a group*, into this mission in a prayerful and intentional way (or the community members who will 'enact' the action the group has discerned) We then need to *support* this communal mission by finding creative and concrete ways to do this. Finally, we need to take time to *evaluate* it. This four-phase dynamic is our growing edge in CLC.

However, there is a second way to live as an apostolic community - to be intentionally engaged in each other's personal missions. How? By *helping each other* first discern our mission, then send each other into that mission... and then as a group, find ways to support the one on mission as it is being lived and from time to time evaluate it.

In the Phase I and II Manuals of the Canadian CLC Formation Manuals we are taught a communal process to help one of our members discern an apostolic decision. We have been learning with joy and graced enthusiasm to send one another on mission.

Where we need to grow is in concrete ways of supporting one another and evaluating the service we have undertaken.

In this second way of living as an apostolic community, our CLC groups are at various stages of development. Some groups have not yet had members regularly bring issues to the community for help in discerning a decision. Some groups are in the beginning stages of an Ignatian approach to discerning decisions (either personal or communal). It may be that some of our members have even found themselves in areas of mission or formal ministry without much reflection or with little prayer. This too constitutes our growing edge in CLC.

Bringing personal issues for communal help in discerning decisions constitutes a big step for many members of CLC. Group Guides and Group Coordinators need to nurture the steps towards this way of life which ultimately leads us to living as an APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY. How do we grow into this way of life? *By starting where we are now!*

The following process may be helpful for Group Guides and Coordinators in nudging our groups in this direction.

#### A COMMUNAL SUPPORT-EVALUATION PROCESS

**WHEN:** During the Part II of a CLC meeting - scheduled by group consensus. Any member should be able to ask for this Spiritual-Exercise process if needed.

**WHAT FOR:** When a group member has discerned a decision for mission/apostolic action with the help of the group, this process can be used to support the member and evaluate with him/her the living out of that choice.

When a group needs more balance or development in the 3<sup>rd</sup> 'pillar' of the CLC way of life (apostolic mission). Inviting members to reflect on their personal areas of service (even when they have not even been 'discerned' or when they have been discerned independently of the group) may help the community move more fully towards Nairobi's (2003 World Assembly) call to live as an apostolic community (DSSE).

**HOW:** By means of contemplative listening and offering comments and questions to the one sharing.

**WHY:**

1. To gain deeper insight into his/her personal mission/call
2. To discover the need for further discernment/decision and invite the group's help in discerning a decision as in Ph I, Week 26.
3. To allow the community to be part of discerning a member's personal mission. In this way, the whole group 'hops on' the DSSE train at the first step.

**Addendum:**

What else might happen as a result of such a support-evaluate communal process with an individual member? It is possible that the *group* could hear a call to discern a communal action from entering such a contemplative process with an individual member. In this case a communal discernment process is needed and in this case the GROUP gets on the DSSE train in another mode.

**THE CLC MEMBER'S PERSONAL PREPARATION**

The one sharing with the community their experience of mission comes to the meeting having reflected ahead of time using **one or more of the first 8 questions plus question 9 and 10.** (If desired, they could offer their community a brief - half page recap of what came to them in their reflection via e-mail before coming to the meeting. This may help the group be more present to them in the process.)

**PREPARATORY FOCUS QUESTIONS**

1. How did God's call come to you regarding this area of service and what helped you discern and choose this action/ministry?
2. What were the hopes (the goals) you had for yourself and those you desired to serve/help in saying yes to this call/this choice?
3. Where do you sense God has been most with you in this way of loving and serving others? How would you describe the quality of God's presence with you? Where have you experienced God's felt absence in serving this way? Describe your experience.
4. What interior graces/consolations or struggles/desolations have been yours? Has there been a particular pattern to them? What meaning do you give to your awareness?
6. Where do you sense confusion or lack of clarity about what God may be asking of you in this area of the mission?
7. How are other areas of your life being affected by your commitment to this area of mission?
8. How do you sense your mission fits with your graced history and your unfolding identity in Christ? What fruitfulness do you see? How do you see your mission extending the mission of Christ/the mission of the Church? What feelings surface in you as you ponder this?

9. What area of your serving do you most feel a need to explore with your community in this support-evaluation process? What invites you to say that?

10 Other than this process, is there any other way we, as a community, might be with you or assist you at this time?

### **THE PROCESS (40 - 45 min)**

#### **PHASE 1: THE COMMUNITY PREPARES FOR SUPPORTIVE LISTENING**

**5 minutes**

The Coordinator welcomes all to the communal process and invites the community to become aware of God's loving gaze upon all of them.

The coordinator invites the community to a contemplative listening stance and prays a communal grace (Ex.: Holy Trinity, we ask for the gift of prayerful listening and responding. Fill us with the mind and heart of Christ during this time.)

A scripture may be used if desired (Ex. Col 3:16-17 or Acts 21:17-20) and contemplative silence.

#### **PHASE 2: THE ONE PRESENTING SPEAKS (about their mission)**

**10 minutes**

#### **PHASE 3: CLARIFICATION *IF NEEDED***

**5 minutes**

The Coordinator invites the listeners to ask questions about what has been said that is NOT clear (not the type of questions that will 'explore' what has been shared).

#### **PHASE 4: CONTEMPLATIVE PAUSE**

**5 minutes**

*The Coordinator invites the group to a time of quiet inner listening...* the community ponders what has been shared asking for the Spirit's lead around questions to ask or comments to make that might be helpful for the one who has shared their story. The presenter also listens more deeply to his/her own interior thoughts and feelings after having shared.

#### **PHASE 5: COMMUNITY RESPONSE**

**15 minutes**

The Coordinator first invites the presenter to share, if they wish, anything significant that emerged during the contemplative pause. If so, all listen ... The Coordinator **first**



invites those who feel drawn to ask a question that might help 'explore' the feelings or issues in the presenter's sharing. All listen to the interchange – perhaps with occasional prayerful pauses – further questions may emerge for the presenter during this time.

**Then** Coordinator invites those who feel called to offer a comment, an image or a scripture that came to them during the contemplative pause (or in that moment)

*(Not every member of the community needs to engage Phase 5 – only as the Spirit leads. Some may feel called more to a supportive and prayerful intercession during this phase.)*

#### **PHASE 6: PRESENTER'S RESPONSE** **5 minutes**

The Coordinator invites the member who shared their experience of apostolic service to express what has been helpful for them in this communal exchange and anything else they might need from the community to move forward. The community (via the Coordinator acknowledges what has been heard and brings the process to closure with prayer).

### **C. COMMUNITY FOR OTHERS**

What do we mean when we say that CLC is an apostolic body, a community for mission, or that our life is essentially apostolic (GP 8, 12b)? Very often, it has meant that CLC members give an apostolic purpose to their profession, undertake some apostolate or do some social service. Of course this is an over-simplification. Our charism involves something more--perhaps something different.

Mission supposes that someone sends, and someone is sent. To be on mission is to be sent. The Church is sent by Christ to carry on his mission throughout human history. CLC is sent in the Church and by the Church. When the Church confirmed the General Principles and Norms. she recognized and approved our specific apostolic and charismatic identity, and she sent us out to carry on the Church's mission.

A service or apostolate undertaken by an individual or by a group becomes fully mission only when those who carry it out have been sent in and by the Church and in and by the community. They are the mediators, the sacramentality, of the Lord Jesus who sends us.

#### **SENDING SUPPOSES COMMITMENT**

Sending supposes commitment, and commitments can only endure when the one who is

sent is aware of having been chosen. When Jesus chose and called the Twelve, *he called to him those whom he wanted* (those who were close to his heart) ... *to be with him* (to become his companions), *and to be sent out ...* (Mk 3:13-14).

The personal experience of being loved and chosen fortunately comes before everything else. Without this experience no commitment can last. In the *Spiritual Exercises* to choose is to be chosen. This is the basic personal experience: *to be received under his standard* (147); *to beg the Lord to choose us* (157); and *he or she should beg him to be chosen* (168). This is the grace to be asked for.

In Ignatius' experience, the grace earnestly asked for by "the Pilgrim" and confirmed by his mystical experience at La Storta, was that of *being placed with the Son*. Some have called this fundamental experience a seduction experience.' *You have seduced me, Yahweh, and I have let myself be seduced; you have overpowered me: you were the stronger* (Jer 20:7).

This is at the heart of the Ignatian pedagogy of the *Spiritual Exercises*, which in fact is a pedagogy of Christian affection. The life of CLC, in as much as it *holds the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius as the specific source and the characteristic instrument of our spirituality* (GP 5), is based upon the fundamental experience of falling in love with Christ. **FALLING IN LOVE WITH CHRIST, CHOOSING CHRIST, AND BEING SENT BY CHRIST.**

Only with this grace is it possible for a person to make a personal, radical option for Christ. It is *personal* because the disciple wants to be with him, become his companion regardless of the consequences, and identify one's whole person with Christ in his totality. This option is unconditional, fundamental, free and personal, and it gives meaning to one's whole life.

After making this free-choice out of love for Christ, are we ready to be sent? To believe in Jesus Christ is to be ready to be sent, for vocation and mission are intrinsically connected. God always chooses and calls in order to send. We find this again and again in the vocation narratives of the Old Testament: Moses (Ex 3), Isaiah (Is 6:1-13), Jeremiah (Jer 1:4-10), etc.

Falling in love with Christ, choosing Christ, and being sent by Christ are graces. These are the graces to be asked from God; for which we can prepare ourselves by removing from our lives those obstacles that keep us from Christ. But the transforming miracle by which we become someone sent only happens when we allow the core of our being (one's affections) to be touched by God's grace.

### HOW IGNATIUS SEES MISSION

When we are ready to be sent, we are like Jesus. He is the Son sent by the Father; he is the **available one**, as Father Arrupe said, creating a new christological title.

Ignatius of Loyola perceived in God a Trinity of love (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and was touched by God's solidarity with the human family. This solidarity moved the Father to send the Son into the world for the redemption of the human family (Contemplation of the Incarnation in the Spiritual Exercises). What touches Ignatius about Jesus Christ is that he sends his disciples as he was sent. The ideal of Ignatius' life is this *apostolic life*. He finds himself in the middle of this double sending: the Son by the Father and the disciples by Jesus.

Those persons who find their Christian vocation through CLC are introduced into this experience of mission. Can this apostolic life, with a mission similar to that of Jesus, be the ideal of an association of Christian lay faithful? Let us remember that when Ignatius received this charismatic grace and acted accordingly, he was a lay person, had not yet founded the Society of Jesus, nor had he received his priestly ministry.

In the growth process of the CLC at local, national and world levels are we not lacking what is precisely our most characteristic grace? The order is not: first lifestyle and then mission. On the contrary, first we are sent, and then we develop an apostolic lifestyle accordingly.

#### THE ORIGIN OF OUR MISSION

We know God's love – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – by the Son's mission from the Father, and the Spirit's from the Father and the Son. *God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him (1 Jn 4:9).*

***The Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life (Jn 12:49).*** Faith consists in knowing Jesus whom the Father has sent (Jn 7:28-29).

Our mission, too, draws its origin from the Father, is realized in the Son, and is accomplished in the Spirit. *The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you (Jn 14:26).* We are associated with the Son's mission in the Spirit: *As the Father has sent me, so I send you ... Receive the Holy Spirit (Jn 20:21-22).* Jesus also said: *As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you (Jn 15:9).* The Gospel reveals to us the link between falling in love with Christ and the sending in mission. *You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appoint you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name" (Jn 15:16-17).*

#### MISSION IS COMMUNAL

Mission is always communal. A task carried out personally becomes a mission when it is

part of the Church's mission. The World Community, recognized and integrated into the mission of the Church, is for us the mediator who, by means of the national and local communities, transforms into mission our apostolic tasks and our humanitarian services. Being ready to be sent demands much humility and transparency before the community to which we belong, because it is the community who will give the task back to us as a mission after it has been discerned. Personal discernment to choose is completed by communal discernment to send.

## D. OSCAR ROMARO – WHO WILL SPEAK?

*“The world that the Church must serve is the world of the poor. Persecution of the Church is the result of defending the poor. My life has been threatened many times. I have to confess that, as a Christian, I do not believe in death without resurrection. If they kill me, I will rise again in the Salvadoran people.”*

*Oscar Romero/Archbishop of El Salvador*

Who will speak for the poor and the broken?  
Who will speak for the peoples oppressed?  
Who will speak so their voice will be heard?  
Who will speak if you don't?  
Who will speak for the ones who are voiceless,  
Speak the truth in the places of power?  
Who will speak so their voice will be heard?  
Oh, who will speak if you don't?  
Who will speak for the children of violence  
Who will speak for the women abused?  
Who will speak so their voice will be heard?  
Oh, who will speak if you don't?

Who will speak for the shunned and the outcast?  
Who will speak for all people with AIDS?  
Who will speak so their voice will be heard?  
Oh, who will speak if you don't?  
Who will work for the thousands of homeless?  
Who will work in the ghettos and streets?  
Who will work so their voice will be heard?  
Oh, who will work if you don't?  
Who will care for the plants and the creatures?

Who will care for the land and the sea?  
Who will work so their voice will be heard?  
Oh, who will work if you don't?

## E. COMMUNAL SPIRITUAL FREEDOM PRAYER EXERCISE

### PREAMBLE

The following prayer exercise is designed to assist discerning groups in their prayer for Spiritual Freedom. We know that the Spiritual Exercises written by St. Ignatius are a marvelous instrument to help people come to an inner freedom and make apostolic decisions in tune with the mind and heart of Christ.

#### *Let us pray:*

Let us listen and meditate on Jeremiah (6:16), "Stand at the crossroads and look, ask for ancient paths; which was the good way? Take it and you will find rest for yourselves.

God is in us; we are in Christ. As members of the mystical body, we Christians actually partake in the divine nature of the Trinity. We do not merely watch the dance; we dance the dance. We join hands with Christ and the Spirit flows through us and between us and our feet move always in the loving embrace of the Father.

In that we are the mystical body of Christ, we see the joyful love of the Father through the eyes of the son (The Christ).

I take a relaxed position with a straight back, my body poised for prayer. I make a gesture of reverence and humility. I become conscious of my breathing. "At the very dawn of creation your Spirit breathed on the waters, making them the wellspring of all holiness." At our Baptism we recall the words, "At the very dawn of creation your Spirit breathed on the waters, making them the wellspring of all holiness."

And as we become aware of our breathing and with every breath we breathe the Holy Spirit.....

Ask the Holy Spirit to dwell within CLC, as a world body and as a branch of this body CLC Canada. Let us seek together and to understand what is God calling you to become as a discerning community....a communal heart large enough and spiritually

free to together follow God's call as it becomes clear in the process that we embark on in this meeting.

Read Scripture Eph 1: 17

*"I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power".*

Looking back over your own CLC group life, what signs of God's presence have you noticed? Silently name those signs. Reflect on what the signs may be saying about how God has been at work with you and in your group.

Looking back over your CLC group life a second time, what impediments to God's life are in you? Reflect silently on such impediments as, fearing to speak, irritation at another's manner, holding on to a past hurt, overpowering less powerful members of the group, failing to recognize that you are part of a larger community...

Silently confess these failures and ask God's forgiveness and empowerment for the future...

Now look at your CLC group behaviour for impediments in your group life. Bring them to light and ask for God's forgiveness and empowerment...

With new realism regarding your CLC group as a beloved community that has at times fallen short of its vocation, ask God to enliven you collectively to desire what God desires...

Commit yourself to asking for this gift frequently throughout this assembly. You may want to put a little note to that effect in your pocket.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

*We give thanks to our loving Creator for any new clarity and energy that comes through this prayer as we say the Lord's Prayer. AMEN*

## F. FAITH AND COMPASSION

**FAITH:** *The following are some descriptions of FAITH... taken from "Uncommon Gratitude"*

*by Joan Chittister and Rowan William*

- *Faith is belief that God is leading us to become in tune with the universe, however different we see ourselves to be.*
- *Faith is trust in the unknown goodness of life without demand for certainty in the science of it.*
- *Faith is belief that the God we call "Our God" is either the God of all or cannot possibly be God at all.*
- *Faith is confidence in darkness, for the willingness to trust in the deep-down humanity of others as well as in our own may be the deepest act of faith we can possibly devise.*
- *Faith is the willingness to see God in others---in their needs and ideas, their hopes and plans---as well as in ourselves.*
- *Faith is the certainty that God is working through others just as certainly as God is working through us for the good of all humankind, indeed all of the community of life. For these things are surely the only things that can possibly save the globe from our own unmaking of it.*
- *Faith, real faith, real willingness to forgo our own need to either understand God's ways with humankind or control them ourselves, is the real reason for celebration. Because, faith is not about understanding the ways of God. It is not about maneuvering God into a position of human subjugation, making a God who is a benign deity who exists to see life as we do.*
- *Faith, in reality, is not about understanding at all. It is about awe in the face of the God of all. And, it is about awe that inspires jubilation in the human soul.*

- *Faith is about reverencing precisely what we do not understand---the mystery of the Life Force that generates life for us all. It is about grounding ourselves in a universe so intelligent, so logical, so clearly loving that only a God in love with life could possibly account for it completely.*
- *When we centre our power outside ourselves, which is the essence of faith, we have something greater than our smallness. We take our lack of control as a sign of God's presence in the world. It is precisely because of our smallness that we can come to see and trust the greatness of God that surrounds us. It is only then that we can really see the face of God in the face of others.*
- *Faith is what we cannot control, do not see, cannot understand destroys the idol that is ourselves. It is the deep down belief that we are not the be-all and end-all of the universe that can save us from ourselves. It is the awareness of being part of something vast and intelligent and well intentioned that gives purpose to life, that leads us to seek beyond the horizons of our smallness to the hope that tomorrow, warped as we may be today, we can all be better.*
- *Faith in God is the only ground we have for faith in ourselves, in humanity, in life itself. Then, we may care enough about others, about the purpose of God for all life, to go beyond the kind of religion that turns God into a local deity and life into a zero-sum game in which the winner takes all and losers abound.*
- *Faith is one long song of gratitude, sung into a dark night, the only end of which is another challenging dawn.*

### **COMPASSION:**

That (human) disposition that fuels Acts of kindness and mercy. Compassion, a form of love, is aroused within us when we are confronted with those who suffer or are vulnerable. Compassion often produces action to alleviate the suffering, but sometimes geographical distances or lack of means prevent people from acting upon their compassionate feelings. Compassion is not a uniquely Christian response to suffering (cf. [Exodus 2:6](#), [Luke 10:33](#) ), even though Christians have unique reasons for nurturing their compassionate dispositions.

The Hebrew (*hamal, rachum*) and Greek (*splanchnisomai*) words sometimes translated as "compassion" also bear a broader meaning such as "to show pity," "to love," and "to show mercy." Other near synonyms for compassion in English are "to be loved by," "to show concern for", "to be tender-hearted," and "to act kindly."



Compassion means to “suffer with.” It involves a process of identifying with our neighbors and recognizing our common humanity. Competition pits neighbor against neighbor; it seeks to set one above another. Competition divides; compassion unites. It’s so much more than simply feelings of empathy or care. Based on the Latin roots of the word, the **meaning of compassion** is to “suffer with”. The **meaning of compassion** is to recognize the suffering of others, then take action to help.

The meaning of compassion can be expressed in many ways.

- Author Fredrick Buechner describes the meaning of compassion in these words: “Compassion is sometimes the fatal capacity for feeling what it is like to live inside somebody else’s skin. It is the knowledge that there can never really be any peace and joy for me until there is peace and joy finally for you too.”
- U2 lead singer Bono explains that the meaning of compassion for Christians is to focus on those in need. “To me, a faith in Jesus Christ that is not aligned with the poor ... it’s nothing.”
- The Bible defines the meaning of compassion in several ways. We are to “speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves ... defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Proverbs 31:8-9, NIV). We do this by taking action instead of just talking about helping others: “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:18, NIV).

# SECTION SIX

6.1 DISCERNMENT .....	259
A. THE GIFT OF DISCERNMENT .....	259
B. THE 'WHY' OF DISCERNMENT .....	262
C. DISCERNMENT - AN INSIGHT .....	264
D. DISCERNMENT IN A NUTSHELL .....	265
E. DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS .....	267
F. HOW DO I KNOW I'M EXPERIENCING GOD? .....	269
G. EVIL COMES CLOAKED AS AN ANGEL OF LIGHT .....	273
6.2 IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY AND DECISION-MAKING.....	275
A. GOD IN ALL THINGS.....	275
B. THREE PERSPECTIVES INFLUENCING DECISION-MAKING.....	277
C. DISCERNING PERSONAL INTERIOR MOVEMENT OF SPIRITS .....	278
D. SIX STEPS IN DISCERNING: A SIGNIFICANT COMMUNAL DECISION ...	280
6.3 SPIRITUAL INTIMACY AND COMMUNITY .....	283
A. MOMENT OF DECISION - DIRECTIONS FOR PRAYER.....	283
B. JESUS TEACHES HIS FOLLOWERS .....	285
6.4 SPIRITUAL FREEDOM .....	287
A. INTRODUCTION .....	287
B. WHAT IS SPIRITUAL FREEDOM? .....	288
C. THREE KEY EXERCISES AND THE DECISION-MAKING DYNAMIC .....	289
D. COMMUNAL SPIRITUAL FREEDOM PRAYER EXERCISE.....	290
6.5 DISCERNMENT/DECISION MAKING: THEORY - PROCESS - PROCEDURES.....	292
A. MOVING TOWARDS GREATER FREEDOM .....	292
B. THREE PHASES AND FIVE STAGES: THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS	295
C. THE COMMUNAL APOSTOLIC DISCERNMENT MEETING PROCESS .....	300
D. CONSENSUS IN A COMMUNAL DECISION .....	303
E. DISCERN - SEND - SUPPORT - EVALUATE (DSSE) .....	304
F. EVALUATING THE DSSE COMMUNAL PROCESS OF A GROUP .....	308

## 6.1 DISCERNMENT

### A. THE GIFT OF DISCERNMENT

*'Beloved, do not believe every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world'.*

*1 John 4:1*

How can we know if something comes from the Holy Spirit or if it stems from the spirit of the world or the spirit of the devil? The only way is through discernment, which calls for something more than intelligence or common sense. It is a gift which we must implore. If we ask with confidence that the Holy Spirit grant us this gift, and then seek to develop it through prayer, reflection, reading and good counsel, then surely, we will grow in this spiritual endowment.

#### **An urgent need**

The gift of discernment has become all the more necessary today, since contemporary life offers immense possibilities for action and distraction, and the world presents all of them as valid and good. All of us, but especially the young, are immersed in a culture of zapping. We can navigate simultaneously on two or more screens and interact at the same time with two or three virtual scenarios. Without the wisdom of discernment, we can easily become prey to every passing trend.

This is all the more important when some novelty presents itself in our lives. Then we have to decide whether it is new wine brought by God or an illusion created by the spirit of this world or the spirit of the devil. At other times, the opposite can happen, when the forces of evil induce us not to change, to leave things as they are, to opt for a rigid resistance to change. Yet that would be to block the working of the Spirit. We are free, with the freedom of Christ. Still, he asks us to examine what is within us – our desires, anxieties, fears, and questions – and what takes place all around us – “the signs of the times” – and thus to recognize the paths that lead to complete freedom. “Test everything; hold fast to what is good” (1 Thess. 5:21).

#### **Always in the light of the Lord**

Discernment is necessary not only at extraordinary times, when we need to resolve grave problems and make crucial decisions. It is a means of spiritual combat for helping us to follow the Lord more faithfully. We need it at all times, to help us

recognize God's timetable, lest we fail to heed the promptings of his grace and disregard his invitation to grow. Often discernment is exercised in small and apparently irrelevant things, since greatness of spirit is manifested in simple everyday realities. It involves striving untrammelled for all that is great, better, and more beautiful, while at the same time being concerned for the little things, for each day's responsibilities and commitments. For this reason, I ask all Christians not to omit, in dialogue with the Lord, a sincere daily "examination of conscience". Discernment also enables us to recognize the concrete means that the Lord provides in his mysterious and loving plan, to make us move beyond mere good intentions.

### **A supernatural gift**

Certainly, spiritual discernment does not exclude existential, psychological, sociological, or moral insights drawn from the human sciences. At the same time, it transcends them. Nor are the Church's sound norms sufficient. We should always remember that discernment is a grace. Even though it includes reason and prudence, it goes beyond them, for it seeks a glimpse of that unique and mysterious plan that God has for each of us, which takes shape amid so many varied situations and limitations. It involves more than my temporal well-being, my satisfaction at having accomplished something useful, or even my desire for peace of mind. It has to do with the meaning of my life before the Father who knows and loves me, with the real purpose of my life, which nobody knows better than he. Ultimately, discernment leads to the wellspring of undying life: to know the Father, the only true God, and the one whom he has sent, Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 17:3). It requires no special abilities, nor is it only for the more intelligent or better educated. The Father readily reveals himself to the lowly (cf. Mt 11:25).

The Lord speaks to us in a variety of ways, at work, through others and at every moment. Yet we simply cannot do without the silence of prolonged prayer, which enables us better to perceive God's language, to interpret the real meaning of the inspirations we believe we have received, to calm our anxieties and to see the whole of our existence afresh in his own light. In this way, we allow the birth of a new synthesis that springs from a life inspired by the Spirit.

### **Speak, Lord**

Nonetheless, it is possible that, even in prayer itself, we could refuse to let ourselves be confronted by the freedom of the Spirit, who acts as he wills. We must remember that prayerful discernment must be born of a readiness to listen to the Lord and to others, and to reality itself, which always challenges us in new ways. Only if we are prepared to listen, do we have the freedom to set aside our own partial or insufficient ideas, our usual habits and ways of seeing things. In this way, we become truly open to accepting a call that can shatter our security but lead us to a better life. It is not enough that everything be calm and peaceful. God may be offering us something more, but in our comfortable inadvertence, we do not recognize it.

Naturally, this attitude of listening entails obedience to the Gospel as the ultimate standard, but also to the Magisterium that guards it, as we seek to find in the treasury of the Church whatever is most fruitful for the "today" of salvation. It is not a matter of applying rules or repeating what was done in the past, since the same solutions are not valid in all circumstances and what was useful in one context may not prove so in another. The discernment of spirits liberates us from rigidity, which has no place before the perennial "today" of the risen Lord. The Spirit alone can penetrate what is obscure and hidden in every situation, and grasp its every nuance, so that the newness of the Gospel can emerge in another light.

### **The logic of gift and of the cross**

An essential condition for progress in discernment is a growing understanding of God's patience and his timetable, which are never our own. God does not pour down fire upon those who are unfaithful (cf. Lk 9:54) or allow the zealous to uproot the weeds growing among the wheat (cf. Mt 13:29). Generosity too is demanded, for "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Discernment is not about discovering what more we can get out of this life, but about recognizing how we can better accomplish the mission entrusted to us at our baptism. This entails a readiness to make sacrifices, even to sacrificing everything. For happiness is a paradox. We experience it most when we accept the mysterious logic that is not of this world: "This is our logic", says Saint Bonaventure, pointing to the cross. Once we enter into this dynamic, we will not let our consciences be numbed and we will open ourselves generously to discernment.

When, in God's presence, we examine our life's journey, no areas can be off limits. In all aspects of life, we can continue to grow and offer something greater to God, even in those areas we find most difficult. We need, though, to ask the Holy Spirit to liberate us and to expel the fear that makes us ban him from certain parts of our lives. God asks everything of us, yet he also gives everything to us. He does not want to enter our lives to cripple or diminish them, but to bring them to fulfilment. Discernment, then, is not a self-absorbed self-analysis or a form of egotistical introspection, but an authentic process of leaving ourselves behind in order to approach the mystery of God, who helps us to carry out the mission to which he has called us, for the good of our brothers and sisters.

*Excerpt from the Call to Holiness in Today's World,  
Pope Francis Apostolic Exhortation Gaudete Et Exsultate, 2018*

## B. THE 'WHY' OF DISCERNMENT

### *How do you define discernment?*

Discernment is living aware of the constant interplay in energy particularly among head, heart, and hands. So, what we *think* changes what we feel and what we do. What we *feel* changes what we think and what we do. And what we *do* changes what we feel and what we think.

### *Why should lay people care about discernment?*

The reason is they do it constantly, but don't reflect on it and might not be aware that they're doing it. Ideas they pick up in the marketplace affect their feelings about the church. Things that they do in consumer society *affect* what they feel about their generosity, about their love of God - but they're unaware of that. So, the reason people need to learn about discernment is it's what they're doing all the time, and to be a mature Christian requires reflecting on what you do all the time.

### *How can lay people practice discernment today?*

To practice discernment, you have to be praying. You have to be a prayerful person. Now praying doesn't mean sitting for long periods of time in communion with God. Praying for the ordinary person begins with examining conscience and being aware of the virtues that the Holy Spirit has infused into us. The Holy Spirit gives us a supernatural life and all the strengths we need to live it. But most people are quite unaware of wisdom, understanding, counsel; they're unaware of prudence, justice, fortitude. Discernment requires that you think about these things and pray about them.

### *What does St. Ignatius of Loyola teach us about discernment that seems especially relevant to our 21st century context?*

Probably the most important thing Ignatius taught us is to discern among spirits. What spirit am I following? Is it a spirit that's leading to good or a spirit that's leading to bad? Those spirits come to us perhaps as ideas or as convictions of our heart. The spirits move us to do this or that and Ignatius teaches us to discern among the movements of the spirit to good and the movements of the spirit to bad.

The next important thing he teaches us, is the need for indifference. That is to say, the need to not be deeply attached in feeling, or idea, or action, to anything which could lead to sin, to anything that's unloving.

***What does Pope Francis contribute to our understanding of discernment?***

Pope Francis' main contribution is that he's constantly doing it and speaking it out. His homilies and writings are full of discernment. Francis believes "[*what*] you think affects or changes what you do and what you feel", a statement from psychologists.

***What does the Scripture teach us about discernment?***

Scripture is filled with it. Once you understand the need to notice head, and heart, and hands, you find out that Scripture is full of references to this. For example, in 1 Timothy, Paul tells Timothy that the final goal of the instruction he's going to give is love issuing from a pure heart, a clear conscience and a sincere faith. Pure heart is the heart of what you're convinced of - what you're aimed at. Clear conscience, that's your mind being instructed to know what is right and what is wrong. And a sincere faith, as James says, is not faith if it's not what you do. The Scripture is filled with references like that once you get the pattern of head, and heart, and hands.

***In the Catholic Church, how do lay people experience discernment differently from clergy and vowed religious?***

The main thing is that religious have the luxury of a long period to pray every day. Priests have the gift of prayer in their lives. Laypeople have to struggle to get it. What I find is introducing laypeople to the Examen, to discernment, encourages them to spend time at the beginning of the day—or during the day—in prayer. But I would say we are all disciples, mature disciples, of Jesus Christ. If we're mature disciples of Jesus Christ, we are discerning. And that's true of laity, priests and religious.

***How does the Ignatian Examen help us discern?***

The big thing is it makes us aware of reflecting on our actions, our thoughts and our feelings, and it gives us the time to do that. I would say the Ignatian Examen has focused tightly on correcting faults. We've forgotten that Ignatius points out, in Annotation 18 of the Spiritual Exercises, to little ways of praying. And in paragraph 245, he says you can do this with the Examen or with the vices or with the virtues. Reflecting on the virtues is something that Ignatius offers us that we've forgotten.

***What do you hope people will take away from your life and work?***

Prayer. I hope the brief notes I've written will help people think straight and rightly about our service and praise of God our Lord. I suppose that in my book, *Always Discerning*, in a way captures what I've been trying to do all my life, which is to help people live aware of the way the Holy Spirit deals with us — not just in ideas but in our head, and in our heart, and in our hands. The Holy Spirit comes to us sometimes by an inspiration to "do," which will change what we think and what we feel;

sometimes by an inspiration about what we're feeling, to clarify or to correct a feeling we have; and sometimes by an idea.

***What advice would you give to a layperson who wants to try discernment for the first time, but doesn't know how?***

Whenever I preach a retreat, I give a certain amount of instruction on how to understand and practice discernment. When you tell a person what you think really affects how you feel and what you do, when you understand you're an enfleshed spirit and your whole self is involved in this, you learn to go to prayer as you really are. So, if you have a headache, you tell the Lord you have a headache and ask him for consolation. I think that's the big thing. You don't need to tell people much beyond that we go to prayer to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord with our whole self—our head, our heart and our hands.

*Joseph A. Tetlow, S.J.: Mature Catholics are thirsting for spiritual help.  
Excerpts from an interview by Sean Salai SJ contributor to America.  
Slightly edited*

## **C. DISCERNMENT – AN INSIGHT**

The holiness of Francis of Assisi (1182-1226), like all holiness, was unique and never merely a copy or imitation. In his *Testament*, he tells his brothers, "No one showed me what I had to do," [1] and then, at the very end of his life, he says, "I have done what is mine; may Christ teach you what is yours!" [2] What permission, freedom, and space he thus gave to his followers!

We are each unique incarnations of God, bringing to visible and tangible expression God's presence in the world. Sr. Ilia Delio paraphrases Francis' message from his *Later Admonition and Exhortation*:

*'When love transforms our actions in a way that Christ is "represented" – then we become mothers, sisters, and brothers of Christ. This birthing of Christ in the life of the believer... is a way of conceiving, birthing, and bringing Christ to the world in such a way that the Incarnation is renewed. It is making the gospel alive.'*

So, how do we discover what is ours to do? How do we connect with our sacred vocation in service to the needs of the world? How do we give birth to Christ in the world? How do we renew the Incarnation and give flesh to the Word? First, we must go through a process of discernment. Henri Nouwen explains:



**Christian discernment is not the same as decision making.** Reaching a decision can be straightforward: we consider our goals and options; maybe we list the pros and cons of each possible choice; and then we choose the action that meets our goal most effectively. Discernment, on the other hand, is about listening and responding to that place within us where our deepest desires align with God's desire. As discerning people, we sift through our impulses, motives, and options to discover which ones lead us closer to divine love and compassion for ourselves and other people and which ones lead us further away.

**Discernment reveals new priorities, directions, and gifts from God.** We come to realize that what previously seemed so important for our lives loses its power over us. Our desire to be successful, well liked, and influential becomes increasingly less important as we move closer to God's heart. To our surprise, we even may experience a strange inner freedom to follow a new call or direction as previous concerns move into the background of our consciousness. We begin to see the beauty of the small and hidden life that Jesus lived in Nazareth. Most rewarding of all is the discovery that as we pray more each day, God's will - that is, God's concrete ways of loving us and our world—gradually is made known to us.

*Fr. Richard Rhor*

## D. DISCERNMENT IN A NUTSHELL

Human beings are moved by a dense complex of motives, both in the things we do from day to day and in our big decisions. What drives a young woman to become a doctor or a young man to be an engineer? Many things contribute: success, altruism, interest. Or what drives a woman who has smoked for years to quit or an obese man to get thin? Again, many things contribute: fear of death, desire for health, concern of family. But they all interact in a kind of movement that eventually drives the person to act. Master Ignatius learned to think about those dense complexes of motives—images, ideas, attractions, revulsions—as “spirits.”

We can all name many spirits. There is school spirit, in which everyone cheers together for the football team. There is fear, which can depress an entire city, and exultation, which can cause a whole nation to rise up. But spirits are not only secular. A thrill of devotion fills St. Peter's Square when a saint is canonized. A spirit of prayer drives people to make retreats. Christians under atheistic control are moved to remain faithful.

## Consolation and Desolation

Master Ignatius noted that these dense complexes of motives and energies take on two configurations, which he identified with consolation and desolation. He discovered that both consolation and desolation can move you toward God or pull you away from God. Then he noted that sometimes consolation comes from a good spirit and sometimes from a bad spirit, and he noted the same thing about desolation.

Ignatian spirituality applies this to interpreting major decisions and daily experience as well. The movement of spirits, obviously, involves a set of complex variables: consolation and desolation, good and evil spirits, movements to and away from God.

## How Spirits Work

Some basic patterns are easy to grasp. For instance, as you would anticipate, the good spirit usually brings love, joy, peace, and the like; the evil spirit characteristically brings confusion, doubt, disgust, and the like. Another pattern: when you are leading a seriously sinful life, a good spirit will visit you with desolation to turn you around; an evil spirit will keep you content so that you will keep sinning. Another clear pattern is the opposite of this: when you are seriously serving God, the spirits change roles. The evil spirit clouds your day with desolation to lead you away from God, while the good spirit fills your day with trust and love of God. And a final, easily grasped pattern: a spirit that works in light and openness is good, while a spirit cloaked in secrecy and deception is evil.

## What to Do about Feelings

Some basic practices are also easy to figure out. When you have made a good decision to serve God better and after a while go into desolation, you should not change the decision; it's hardly a good spirit moving you. When you are feeling down, you would do well to pray a little more and increase the help you give to others. When, without warning or any preparatory activity, you are consoled with the love of God above all things, you can trust that it is a good spirit (particularly if it comes with tears). But when you are thinking or praying and grow consoled or disconsolate—well, test those movements. They could come from either spirit, as we have seen.

There is a good deal more to Ignatian discernment, and it gets no simpler. It is not, however, a merely human discipline. "Now instead of the spirit of the world, we have received the Spirit that comes from God, to teach us to understand the gifts that he has given us" (1 Corinthians 2:12). Serious disciples cherish this gift and put it to good use.

*Excerpt from Making Choices in Christ by Joseph A. Tetlow, SJ.*

## E. DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS

Discernment of spirits is the interpretation of what St. Ignatius Loyola called the “motions of the soul.” These interior movements consist of thoughts, imaginings, emotions, inclinations, desires, feelings, repulsions, and attractions. Spiritual discernment of spirits involves becoming sensitive to these movements, reflecting on them, and understanding where they come from and where they lead us.

St. Ignatius of Loyola began to learn about the discernment of spirits while convalescing from serious battle injuries. He noticed different interior movements as he imagined his future. In his autobiography, Ignatius writes (in the third person):

*“He did not consider, nor did he stop to examine this difference until one day his eyes were partially opened and he began to wonder at this difference and to reflect upon it. From experience he knew that some thoughts left him sad while others made him happy, and little by little he came to perceive the different spirits that were moving him; one coming from the devil, the other coming from God” (Autobiography, no. 8).*

### Good and Evil Spirits

Ignatius believed that these interior movements were caused by “good spirits” and “evil spirits.” We want to follow the action of a good spirit and reject the action of an evil spirit. Discernment of spirits is a way to understand God’s will or desire for us in our life.

Talk of good and evil spirits may seem foreign to us. Psychology gives us other names for what Ignatius called good and evil spirits. Yet Ignatius’s language is useful because it recognizes the reality of evil. Evil is both greater than we are and part of who we are. Our hearts are divided between good and evil impulses. To call these “spirits” simply recognizes the spiritual dimension of this inner struggle.

### Consolation and Desolation

The feelings stirred up by good and evil spirits are called “consolation” and “desolation” in the language of Ignatian spirituality.

**Spiritual consolation** is an experience of being so on fire with God’s love that we feel impelled to praise, love, and serve God and help others as best as we can. Spiritual consolation encourages and facilitates a deep sense of gratitude for God’s faithfulness, mercy, and companionship in our life. In consolation, we feel more alive and connected to others.

**Spiritual desolation**, in contrast, is an experience of the soul in heavy darkness or turmoil. We are assaulted by all sorts of doubts, bombarded by temptations, and mired in self-preoccupations. We are excessively restless and anxious and feel cut off from others. Such feelings, in Ignatius's words, "move one toward lack of faith and leave one without hope and without love."

The key question in interpreting consolation and desolation is: *where is the movement coming from and where is it leading me?* Spiritual consolation does not always mean happiness. Spiritual desolation does not always mean sadness. Sometimes an experience of sadness is a moment of conversion and intimacy with God. Times of human suffering can be moments of great grace. Similarly, peace or happiness can be illusory if these feelings are helping us avoid changes, we need to make.

### Rules for Discernment

Ignatius Loyola summarized his approach to discernment of spirits in two sets of Rules for Discernment, which he included in the Spiritual Exercises. The rules deal with ways to interpret the states of consolation (joy, peace, gratitude, and the like) and desolation (depression, anxiety, fear) that people typically experience in the course of cultivating a spiritual life.

The first set is 14 rules [313–327] that give practical spiritual advice about dealing with desolation—those times when the heart feels far from God and spiritual vigor wanes. They are intended to be used by an experienced spiritual director who is helping people understand the nature and meaning of the emotions they are experiencing in prayer. They are especially intended for people embarking on a serious spiritual life. They assist people in identifying the spiritual forces involved in these emotions: the Good Spirit (God, the Holy Spirit) and what Ignatius called "the enemy of our human nature" (the world, the flesh, the devil).

For people who have closed themselves off from God's grace, the good spirit disturbs and shakes up. It stirs feelings of remorse and discontent. The purpose is to make the person unhappy with a sinful way of life. On the other hand, the evil spirit wants such people to continue in their confusion and darkness. So, the evil spirit tries to make them complacent, content, and satisfied with their distractions and pleasures.

The second set is eight rules [328–336] intended to help people who are firmly established in a spiritual life. These rules focus on spiritual consolation. They help people discern when the spiritual consolation they are feeling is an authentic sign of God's presence.

For people who are trying to live a life pleasing to God, the good spirit strengthens, encourages, consoles, removes obstacles, and gives peace. The evil spirit tries to

derail them by stirring up anxiety, false sadness, needless confusion, frustration, and other obstacles.

Discernment of spirits is a challenging task. It requires maturity, inner quiet, and an ability to reflect on one's interior life. Discernment takes practice. It is something of an art. Ignatius Loyola's rule for discernment provide a framework, not a program. We must be ready to improvise and adjust because God works in each of us so uniquely. That is why most counselors recommend undertaking discernment of spirits with the assistance of a spiritual director.

*Fr. Joseph Tetlow SJ on Discernment*

<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/making-good-decisions/discernment-of-spirits/>

## F. HOW DO I KNOW I'M EXPERIENCING GOD?

Fortunately, in order to discern what is of God, we do not have to figure out all the influences—for example, what is due to what we ate for dinner or how we were brought up by our parents. Discernment of spirits does not require an archaeological dig through all the layers that make up every experience. We just need to pay attention to what we experience and then apply a few simple rules.

### The Orientation of Your Life

In Ignatius's rules for the discernment of spirits, his first piece of advice is to ascertain the orientation of your life: Am I straying from the right path, or am I trying to live a decent Christian life? As a reader of this book, you should have an easy time answering this question! You would not be reading this if you were straying—that is, if you were turned against God and God's way. Scrupulous people may say that they are afraid they are on the road to hell, but the fact that they are trying so hard to make sure that they do not sin shows the fallacy of their assessment.

### Rule One

Just to be complete, let me explain what Ignatius says about the different ways God's Spirit and the evil spirit operate with those who have deliberately and seriously turned away from God. The evil spirit tries to get such people to rationalize their behavior and attitudes: "I'm not such a bad guy. I may steal money, but it's only what I deserve for all that I have done for this company." "Compared to Helen, I'm a saint." "I take care of my wife and kids; my affair with Jane doesn't hurt them because they don't know." In other words, the evil spirit tries to douse the conscience pangs of anyone who is acting contrary to what is right. The pangs of conscience, on the other hand,

come from God's Spirit. They do not attack us, but rather raise questions about our behavior: "Are you really happy acting this way?" "Don't you feel a twinge of regret when you come home to your wife and family after an evening with your mistress?"

### ***An Example: Alcohol***

A real example may help. I don't think I was deliberately turned from God, but my consumption of alcohol was troubling others and me. Still, I did not want to look at the issue. I remember telling myself things like "You need a drink to relax after a hard day," "You never lose a day's work because of drinking," and "Your health is good. It's not having that bad of an effect."

These were rationalizations induced by the bad spirit and by my own unwillingness to take an honest look at my alcohol consumption. On the other hand, I had recurring feelings that something was wrong. I wondered at times about what alcohol was doing to my health. I blushed with shame when I remembered how harsh I had been with someone after having a couple of drinks, or when one of my friends expressed concern about my drinking. I believe that God's Spirit was trying to get me to look seriously at my drinking habits and do something about them, and the evil spirit was just as happy to see things remain as they were.

Finally, by the grace of God, I paid attention to the good spirit. I mention this personal experience to show that discernment of spirits is not esoteric (hard, deep, or mystical). It just means paying attention to our experience in order to live more in accord with the way of God.

### **Rule Two**

Now let's take up the orientation of most of us, who are trying to live honestly and uprightly to the best of our ability. In this case, Ignatius says, the good and bad spirits act in ways *opposite* to how they act with those turned away from God's path. The bad spirit raises doubts and questions that cause inner turmoil and self-absorption, while the good spirit tries to encourage us and to increase our peace, joy, faith, hope, and love.

If you are trying to live as a good Christian, you might have thoughts like these: "Who do you think you are—some kind of saint?" "Everyone else cuts corners in this office. What's the matter with you? Are you holier-than-thou?" "God doesn't have time for the likes of you." "Most people, even if they believe in God, don't try to live the way you do." Such questions and thoughts have only one aim, to trouble your spirit and keep you troubled and questioning. Moreover, you will notice that all the questions and doubts focus on you, not on God or God's people.

The good spirit, on the other hand, might inspire thoughts like these: "I'm genuinely happy with my decision to make amends with my estranged sister." "I wish that I had stopped drinking a long time ago. I'm much happier and healthier now, and easier to

live with." "God seems so much closer to me since I began to take some time every day for prayer, and I feel less anxious and insecure." I hope you can see in your own experience how these two spirits have led you.

### ***An Example: Retreat Derailed***

Here's an example. Some years ago, a woman had three days of very consoling prayer on her annual retreat. She felt close to God, happy, and full of life and faith. Then, on the fourth day, she told me, "This is too highfalutin for me. I need to spend time preparing for my classes instead of praying." The next day, she could not pray and was miserable. When we looked at what had happened, it turned out that the closeness to God had frightened her. Instead of telling God that she was frightened, which would have continued the conversation, she let her feelings of unworthiness get in the way of her experience. The evil spirit used her fear of closeness to God to move her to focus on her classes instead of on her joyful prayer. The interruption in prayer did not lead her to prepare for her classes, but only to a miserable day in the retreat. This is how the bad spirit operates with those who are trying to lead a life in conformity with friendship with God.

In summary, if you are somehow out of tune with God in your life, God will try to move you to change, and you will feel pangs of conscience. These pangs of conscience, however, will not lead to anxious self-examination and self-absorption, but will gently point out where you have gone wrong. The bad spirit, or your own desire not to change your life, will whisper rationalizations, trying to convince you that nothing is wrong. On the other hand, if you are trying to live in tune with God, God's Spirit will console you and encourage you, but the bad spirit or your own fear of closeness with God will try to make you doubtful of your experience. One sign of this bad spirit is that you become self-centered, rather than centered on God and others.

Ignatius provides a good example of how the bad spirit works with someone on the right road. At one point he had the thought "And how are *you* going to be able to stand this life [of prayer and penance] the seventy years you're meant to live?" Ignatius quite rightly answered, "Can you promise me one hour of life?" Alcoholics know this temptation well, hence the advice of Alcoholics Anonymous to take things one day at a time.

### **Rule Three: Spiritual Consolation**

Ignatius believed that God wants us to life will be without pain and suffering; it means that God wants to be a consoling presence to us even in the inevitable pains and sufferings of life. Therefore, the agonies of scrupulous people cannot come from God, since they are trying to live a good life. Ignatius himself, after the first fervor following his conversion, had a terrible bout with scruples be happy and fulfilled and that the way to be happy and fulfilled is to be in tune with God's dream for the world and for us. The way to be happy and fulfilled is to accept God's offer of friendship and to live

in accordance with that friendship. If we are trying to do this, according to Ignatius, "consolation" is the order of the day. This does not mean that about confessing his past sins. Things got so bad that he contemplated suicide. He finally came to the conclusion that these scrupulous thoughts could not be from God and decided never to confess past sins again.

What, exactly, is consolation? Consolation refers to any experience of desire for God, of distaste for one's past sins, or of sympathy for Jesus or any other suffering person. It refers, in other words, to "every increase in hope, faith, and charity, and every interior joy which calls and attracts one toward heavenly things and to the salvation of one's soul, by bringing it tranquility and peace in its Creator and Lord" (*The Spiritual Exercises*, n. 316). Paul's letter to the Galatians lists the fruit of the Spirit as "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (5:22-23). When you experience this group of movements in your being, you can be relatively sure that God's Spirit is moving you.

#### **Rule Four: Spiritual Desolation**

Desolation is the opposite of consolation. Ignatius gives these examples:

1. Obtuseness of soul, turmoil within it, an impulsive motion toward low and earthly things, or disquiet from various agitations and temptations. These move one toward lack of faith and leave one without hope and without love. One is completely listless, tepid, and unhappy, and feels separated from our Creator and Lord. [317]
2. Provided that we are trying to live as friends of God, experiences of feeling out of sorts, ill at ease, anxious, unhappy, listless, and so on are experiences of desolation. They do not come from God.
3. If we are trying to live as friends of God, we can trust that our experience is of God's Spirit when we find ourselves more alive, more peaceful, more energized, and also more concerned about others than about ourselves as a result of the experience. These simple rules of thumb are not absolute guarantees that we are right or that our way of proceeding will succeed, but they give us some assurance that we are on the right path. If we follow the impulses of such experiences, we can move forward with confidence, trusting that God will continue to show us the way.

*Excerpt from A Friendship Like No Other: Experiencing God's Amazing Embrace  
by William A. Barry, SJ.*



## G. EVIL COMES CLOAKED AS AN ANGEL OF LIGHT

Later Ignatius had other occasions to discern "spirits" and to note how the evil spirit cloaks himself as an angel of light for those who have advanced a bit in their journey into a deeper intimacy with God. For example, upon his return from Jerusalem he decided that he needed to study in order to be able to help souls.

So, returning to Barcelona, he began to study with great diligence. But one thing was very much in his way: when he began to memorize, as one must in the beginnings of grammar, there came to him new insights into spiritual matters and fresh relish, to such an extent that he could not memorize, nor could he drive them away no matter how much he resisted.

So, thinking often about this, he said to himself, "Not even when I engage in prayer and am at Mass do such vivid insights come to me." Thus, little by little, he came to realize that it was a temptation. After praying he went to Our Lady of the Sea, near the master's house. So when they were all seated, he told them exactly all that went on in his soul and what little progress he had made until then for that reason; but he promised this same master, saying, "I promise you never to fail to listen to you these two years, so long as I can find bread and water in Barcelona with which I might support myself." As he made this promise with great determination, he never again had those temptations.

In this instance Ignatius had to decide in faith that these "spiritual favors" were not from God. Such experiences lie behind his fourth rule for discernment appropriate for the Second Week of the Exercises.

It is characteristic of the evil angel, who takes on the appearance of an angel of light, to enter by going along the same way as the devout soul and then to exit by his own way with success for himself. That is, he brings good and holy thoughts attractive to such an upright soul and then strives little by little to get his own way, by enticing the soul over to his own hidden deceits and evil intentions.

Ignatius had to act in faith on his discovery that God is not the only source of pious thoughts.

The discernment of the spirits rests on the belief that the human heart is a battleground where God and the evil one struggle for mastery. Jesus of Nazareth himself believed this. In the desert he had been tempted by the evil one masquerading as an angel of light. If these were real temptations, then he, like us, had to discern the movements inspired by God from those inspired by the evil one. He, too, had to make an act of faith in who God really is, based on his experiences and his knowledge of the Scriptures of his people. Jesus came to recognize who the

real enemy of God's rule is. He cast out demons and equated his power over the demons as a sign of God's coming to rule: "But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." The majority party of the Pharisees and most Jews of the time saw the real enemy of Israel, and therefore of God, as the pagans, and especially the Roman occupiers. Over and over again Jesus warned his hearers that the real enemy was Satan. Jesus faced this enemy and refused to use the strategies and means of the evil one to carry out his vocation. God's rule cannot come about through the means proposed by Satan. Jesus, like any faithful Jew, believed that God was acting in history to bring about his rule (this notion may be called "God's project" or "God's intention"). He also believed that whoever is not God's enemy "is for us." John Meier puts the matter this way:

"It is important to realize that, in the view of Jesus, ... human beings were not basically neutral territories that might be influenced by divine or demonic forces now and then... Human existence was seen as a battlefield dominated by one or the other supernatural force, God or Satan (alias Belial or the devil). A human being might have a part in choosing which "field of force" would dominate his or her life, i.e., which force he or she would choose to side with. But no human being was free to choose simply to be free of these supernatural forces. One was dominated by either one or the other, and to pass *from* one was necessarily to pass *into* the control of the other. At least over the long term, one could not maintain a neutral stance vis-À-vis God and Satan".

Jesus' own discernment of spirits rested on his Jewish belief that God was acting in history and that the evil one was acting to thwart God. Once again, we see that the **discernment of spirits is a matter of faith put into practice.**

Indeed, faith is not just an intellectual affirmation of truths; faith is a verb. Faith is a graced response to our self-revealing God. This goes for the faith of the church as well as for the faith of the individual who is trying to discern a path through life.

*Excerpt from "Discernment of Spirits as an Act of Faith"  
by William A. Barry, SJ, in An Ignatian Spirituality Reader*

## 6.2 IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY AND DECISION-MAKING

### A. GOD IN ALL THINGS

Spirituality focuses on the dynamic and concrete character of our relationship to God *in actual life situations*. It concerns our experience rather than issues of faith or morality. For example, Celtic Spirituality asks: "How did the Celts relate to God?" Marital Spirituality asks: "How does my relationship with my spouse relate to God?" The Spirituality of Work asks: "How is my relationship to my work influencing my relationship with God?" The Spirituality of Suffering asks: "How can I relate to God in what I am going through?" Ignatian spirituality asks "How can I find God in all things and respond to what I find?"

**Ignatian spirituality is primarily a spirituality of decision making**

St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491—1556) spent his life learning how to make good decisions in the fast-changing period of the Reformation and discovery of the New World. As one of the great "movers and shakers" of his time, his goal was to find God in all things- and respond to what was asked of him. His influence has actually increased rather than lessened over the past 500 years, for he has much wisdom to offer as we search for God in the whirlwind of our contemporary lives.

My life, and who I become, is shaped by decisions. No decision I make is unimportant to God. God has dreams for me, respects my current reality, and invites me to grow at my own pace. Ignatian spirituality helps me recognize that...

- I am important to God and to God's world right now.
- I have unique gifts, imagination, and creativity.
- I have a special role to play in the unfolding of human history.

Ignatius tells us that God deals *directly* with me and will always draw me to what is true and good and loving. This unfolds through my imagination, feelings, desires, needs, talents, and energy. Through reflective living I can become sensitive to how God touches my heart and inspires my mind. There are no limits to the intimacy and creativity that can grow when our two hearts are in harmony. The salvation of the world is ultimately a communal affair! Ignatius often referred to himself as "Someone led by Another." And he believes that we can all learn to say that about ourselves! Ignatius invites us to believe this is possible because the Holy Spirit is close to us, deep in our hearts. We can notice the Spirit's nudges like he did. He tells us that

when we are 'in tune with the Spirit' we experience peace, confidence, joy, authenticity, even though we might be taking on some demanding task, or even standing up against injustice. But when we're off track, we sense ourselves disturbed, unsure, fragmented, untrue to our best selves, and focused inward rather than outward.

He also tells us that when we are open to God's Spirit – and to the world into which God sends us – we will need to stop, like Jesus did, to ask God, "And so, what's next? What will we do now, Father?"

Ignatian spirituality *focuses on the making of good decisions.*

### Choosing Well

What Ignatius would want for us is "discerning love"—that is, all our decisions should flow from a wise love. Solomon in the Old Testament asked for an 'understanding and discerning heart, (to lead God's people) and so can we. This discerning, or well-thought-out, love, is not easy to come by. But with practice it becomes more spontaneously the pattern of our lives... as it did for Jesus. Jesus' life had no fixed pattern. But he was the one who was pre-eminently led by the Spirit - the Spirit which "blows where it will"- and this led him into an extraordinary variety of situations. The one constant in his life, however, was that he put the Father and the Father's plans for the world first. We are invited to do the same.

### God Among Us

The God of Ignatian spirituality is not only the God of the tabernacle or the cloister, but also the God of the ordinary, of the marketplace and the Stock Exchange. In becoming human, God constantly "moves house" because God is a God-with-us. Ignatian spirituality does not float above our messy world, but it is grounded among people, wherever and however they may be. It embraces the poor. It stands with the marginalised and the victims of our world. Because it is sympathetic to the human condition, it is also a flexible spirituality in regard to structures and institutions, open to be continuously adapted and transformed in order to truly serve the both the individual person and the common good.

### Keeping God in View

Ignatius did not lay down rules about the length of our prayers (except when making the Exercises). Instead, he advised that to keep going in the way God desires for us – that we **should keep God always before our eyes** – to touch base with God in everything we intend to do... to allow our life and prayer to merge so that we will find ourselves in the company of the God of Surprises. And together with God, we

will discern and choose what to do next with that harmony of two sets of desires, God's and mine.

*Taken and adapted from "God Is Right In Front of You, by Brian Grogan SJ*

## **B. THREE PERSPECTIVES INFLUENCING DECISION-MAKING**

"Religious experiences in those not conscientized societally do not move automatically to stances and actions that question structures which dominate." (Orientations B. p. 466) The following describes various facets of a consciousness of "sin" that influence decision-making.

### **1. Individual-personal 'CONSCIOUSNESS / SPIRITUALITY'**

- \*Understands sin as the breaking of one's personal relationship with God and others... personal purity and charity as having higher values than other virtues, and consequently perceives sexual irresponsibility, for example, as a greater evil than greed.
- \*Focuses on the need for wholeness and holiness, stresses personal freedom from one's own sinfulness and addictions and from being sinned against in one's past history.
- \*Desires to be united with Jesus in order to improve one's own relationships with others.
- \*Understands compassion as going out of oneself in order to love another/ others.

### **2. Personal-societal 'CONSCIOUSNESS / SPIRITUALITY'**

- \*Understands sin not only as a breaking of one's personal relationship with God and others, but also being carried over into social structures which enslave others as a higher value than other virtues and sees greed, for example, as a more serious evil than sexual irresponsibility.
- \*Focuses on society's needs for wholeness and human/social development and is free enough to contribute to that.
- \*Desires to be united with Jesus, The Christ, in order to help create graced structures by replacing evil ones with those which 'incarnate' God's desires for us, guarding the dignity and rights of all persons.

\*Understands and develops compassion as helping to create a more just world by the fair distribution of resources and the proper stewardship of the earth.

### 3. Communal–societal 'CONSCIOUSNESS / SPIRITUALITY (A + B)

\*Understands sin as 1 & 2 above but beyond that sees sin as oppressive **structures and institutions** that damage/devour people by enhancing the wealth and power of the rich minority over the poor and destitute. The destructive power of social sin is not from the malice of individuals but from the twisted logic of institutions themselves. Colonialism for example, is an institutional evil. It subjugates people, makes them economically and politically subservient, and exploits them for the benefit of political power.

\*Focuses on **working with** others of good will (even with different belief systems) to change social structures by addressing roots causes – makes use of the skills, gifts and insights that others have to make decisions to act in new ways together.

\*Sees life as a mutual affair with God and **with others** – desires to be united with others and with Christ, free enough to seek the common good. '**Common good** 'agendas become more intentional and pressing than personal agendas, especially in decision-making.

\*Understands compassion from the viewpoint of God's Word about creation, including an ecological understanding of human activity.

\*Understands salvation as **communal** hope, seeing oneself as a very small part of the universe, living in a very small moment of time, and yet, **with others**, desiring to become **agents of change** ready to take radical steps to help share the world's resources in creative ways.

*John Veltri SJ., Orientations B*

## C. DISCERNING PERSONAL INTERIOR MOVEMENT OF SPIRITS

*"It prepares one to seek God's will when the options are all good and the choice is left to me..... Discernment of spirits answers the question:*

*How may you understand the spiritual movements in your heart (consolation and desolation) with their related thoughts (of the good spirits or of the enemy) and how may you most fruitfully respond to them?"*

*Tim Gallagher OMV, Discerning the Will of God*

The basic insight that St. Ignatius was given at Loyola and Manresa was the awareness and understanding of interior movement of spirits. He describes these in his *Spiritual Exercises* (313-336) as spiritual consolation and spiritual desolation. These are basically movements about one's spiritual relationship with the Trinity. In this sense they are more than physical or psychological experiences, although they may begin with the physical or psychological. Spiritual consolation is an interior movement that carry one beyond the immediate sense perception or feeling to an appreciation of God. One experiences the felt presence of God and the love of God flooding one's heart. Spiritual desolation is the opposite of this. One has a felt absence of God and considers oneself totally separated from God. There are also deceptive experiences in which the enemy attracts us under the guise of light, and only later do we recognize that we have been deceived.

The art of discernment is gained by reflecting on one's life experiences and judging one's experiences in terms of these descriptions. Discerning such movements is important for two main reasons: that we may have a new awareness of life and the presence of God with us; that we will make good decisions with Christ. The key role in the latter is stated by St. Ignatius. In the time of desolation, one must never make a serious decision but act against the desolation, for the enemy is guiding and counseling. The time of correct decision-making is when one is in consolation for then the Holy Spirit is guiding and counseling.

### **Discerning Personal Decisions**

As mentioned above, serious decisions are made in the time of spiritual consolation. This means that a person or a community needs to have an intimate knowledge of the lineaments, qualities, characteristics of one's own spiritual consolation. There is an exercise for describing the spiritual consolation of the community in the CLC Canada Formation Manuals.

### **Recognizing The Impact of Culture on Our Community Life (Social Analysis)**

Besides individual interior spirits there are also external forces that have an impact on our personal lives. These external forces are known by the interior movement they cause in a person or in a community. Much serious consideration should be given to these, because they are often hidden from us, and our culture is very deceptive in promoting the good life.

### **Discerning Exterior Movement of Spirits**

Somewhat the same process as discerning interior movements of spirits is required. Again, reflection on various external forces and their impact on the interior of the persons and the community as a whole is necessary. But the communal sharing (speaking and listening) is very necessary. After this the community should try to describe the impact of these forces in terms of interior movements of spiritual consolation spiritual desolation or deception.

## D. SIX STEPS IN DISCERNING: A SIGNIFICANT COMMUNAL DECISION

Our experiences of prayer in the Spiritual Exercises can help us to make decisions, either individually or communally. Making a communal decision occurs over a number of weeks of prayer and discussion.

Ignatius asks us to make an important life decision while contemplating the life of Jesus. The Two Standards, The Three Types of Persons and The Three Kinds of Humility help with this by giving us a context for recognizing our interior movements and learning the correct criteria for making a decision. By following this formal process, we are better able to attain some spiritual freedom and, therefore, make a better decision. The steps for making a communal decision are given below. Read them, but don't worry about remembering the steps, they will become familiar to you and your community as you use them.

**1.** The first step in making a communal decision is to research an issue you think might be of interest to you and your community. This step is taken in the light of the graces and insights given to you and your community during your prayer with the Spiritual Exercises. An example of an issue might be homelessness in your city. Leave time to share on various issues at your community meeting. Listen to the issues and the discussion around them. In a second round of sharing, identify any common themes or insights that emerge. Try to articulate a common issue.

**2.** The second step in this process is to pray in the coming week over what you have heard and then compose an open-ended question, i.e., one that has many answers, which you think is in the hearts and minds of community members. An example might be, "How can our community help the homeless this year?" Bring this to the next meeting and share it. If similar questions are given by other members, use part of your meeting to formulate a clear open-ended question, such as, "How can we help at the homeless shelter this year?" If there is time begin listing possible answers.

**3.** The third step is to agree on a specific answer and reword it to the satisfaction of all. An example might be, "We will help at the homeless shelter on five weekends this coming year. In addition, the group will compose its opposite, which in this example would be is, "We will NOT help at the homeless shelter on five weekends this coming year." Each member takes these two statements home and before the next meeting lists the advantages and disadvantages of each statement, thus producing four columns. Bring your four columns to the next community meeting. Share your four



columns by going around the circle, each person giving his or her reasons for one column until the community has a complete list for that column. Do the same for the other three columns. Pray over what you have heard in the sharing in the coming week. Come to the next meeting with a provisional decision, having read step four.

4. At this meeting each member first shares one reason, taken from the four columns, which influenced him/her the most, without naming their provisional decision. This process helps the group recognize whether there is CONSENSUS. The description of CONSENSUS is found below. Read this before your meeting. If consensus is evident, then the fourth step follows, which is each person, in turn, indicates his or her provisional decision. A communal provisional decision is then made.

## **CONSENSUS**

Consensus in a group is a special form of confirmation. It is not simply majority rule or unanimity. It means that everyone in the group will be satisfied they and others have been listened to, that the gifts of each member have been acknowledged and that a free and effective process has been followed. The group will know itself as loved by God. Members will have a sense of wonder and of being drawn into the future, despite the groups' limitations and past sufferings. The group will experience consolation as a gift from the Holy Spirit.

The group will have an awareness of transcendence and experience the beauty, truth, and goodness of God as well as union with God. The fruits of consensus for the community are:

- the consoling insight of seeing the Paschal mystery in the life of the group, since the decision means dying to self for the sake of the universal community of life,
- group members may feel a special sense of wholeness and consolation,
- all are committed to the decision and its implementation with realistic hope and joy,
- an experience of a freeing and creative love operating in the group.

Consensus is experienced as a unanimous decision, made in true consolation. All are satisfied with the process and the decision. It may also be experienced as a high degree of agreement. If this is the case, try to get unanimity by asking those not in agreement to state their objections to the decision and discover what will satisfy them in implementing the decision. Keep in mind the reasons against the decision, even as the group implements it. If there is a low degree of agreement, the group would be wise to revisit the general issue and look for another proposal for discernment.

5. The fifth step is SEEKING CONFIRMATION of the decision. If consensus is reached, go round the circle once again, this time indicating whether or not you experienced consolation. Describe your experience briefly. If you are not in agreement with the communal decision, state your objections and make suggestions for change.

6. The sixth step is implementing the decision. Many a well-discerned decision is lost in implementation. Make sure that communications and delegation are dealt with as soon as possible after the decision is made. As the group works through various items of implementation it will become aware of the costs to the group. When members face these costs in union with Christ suffering and still wish to do the work, they will have another experience of consolation. On the following pages you will find two examples of Ignatian prayer, which may help you and your community make a significant communal decision.

*From the 24 Spiritual Exercises for the New Story of Universal Communion  
PROGRESSIO Supplement # 57 pgs. 145-147*

## 6.3 SPIRITUAL INTIMACY AND COMMUNITY

*"There are three notable purposes of spiritual discernment:*

*The first is enhancement of self knowledge and well being. This is the product of much prayer and reflection on oneself.*

*The second is through spiritual discernment we learn greater appreciation of the presence and activity of God in me/us in relationship to the Universe.*

*The third purpose of Spiritual discernment and the natural flowering of the other two is to enable us forward to fulfil our ultimate purpose and desire: to be instruments of God's oneness, beauty, truth and goodness in our world, that is, to be one with Christ in serving both God and humanity.*

*John English SJ, SPIRITUAL INTIMACY AND COMMUNITY pg. 27*

### A. MOMENT OF DECISION - DIRECTIONS FOR PRAYER

*Discernment really makes sense only when it is situated in the context of prayer. It is seeking, desiring, and yearning attitude that penetrates our whole life. It is like the palmist says in Ps 27: 8-9*

*"To You my heart speaks; You my glance seeks, Your presence, O Lord, I seek. Hide not your face from me."*

I contemplate the action of the early Christian community in Acts 11:27-30 as an example of a communal discernment.

#### OFFERING OF MYSELF

I beg God for grace that all my intentions, actions and operations may be directed purely to the praise and service of the Holy Trinity.

#### A PREFACE TO THE MYSTERY

It is not always possible, due to time and circumstances, to use a formal process of decision-making. However, the weeks of prayer over the Spiritual Exercises are times

of grace and spiritual growth for communities. They provide the foundation for making an important communal decision.

This work involves increasing the beauty, diversity and novelty in the universal community of life by living in an attitude of forgiveness and by befriending humans, plants and animals that are suffering or oppressed. When we do this, we contribute to the evolution of greater freedom for the cosmos.

### **BRINGING MY WHOLE SELF TO THE MYSTERY**

I read Acts 11:27-30 and place myself with the early Christian community.

### **THE DESIRE OF MY HEART**

I ask for an intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ, who became a creature like one of us for the sake of the universal community of life, that I may imitate Him in His respect for all life and love Him in the fullness of communion with all creation.

### **SOME POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND CONSIDERATION**

**First point:** I see the disciples making a decision to contribute to famine relief. I hear what they are saying.

**Second point:** The reading from Acts describes a moment of decision for the early Christian community. As I reflect on this reading, I think of how the Spirit was active in this young Christian community and what resulted from the decision they made.

**Third point:** I consider the four elements that precede a good decision. They are:

- first, an intimate knowledge of Christ's beauty, goodness, truth and oneness with us and the Trinity.
- second, a knowledge of true and false impulses coming to us from our cultural, political and social environments.
- third, an awareness of our usual ways of making decisions and meeting a commitment.
- fourth, responding with a deep desire to be with Christ in His work.

### **DIALOGUE**

I ask Mary to ask Jesus to help our faith community focus on making a communal decision and to guide us to an issue that is important for our community. I go with Mary to Jesus to ask for the same guidance. I go with Mary and make the same request of the Trinity. I close with the prayer Jesus taught us.

**PREPARATION FOR SHARING MY PRAYER.** As I recall my prayer, I write in my journal what I wish to share with my community.

## B. JESUS TEACHES HIS FOLLOWERS

### DIRECTIONS FOR PRAYER

This contemplation on Jesus' teaching can help us when we begin the process for making a communal decision.

### OFFERING OF MYSELF

I beg God for grace that all my intentions, actions and operations may be directed purely to the praise and service of the Holy Trinity.

### PREFACE TO THE MYSTERY

Freedom can be thought of as external. So, one is a free citizen or free to move. Freedom is also an internal disposition. In Jesus there is a new stress on *interior freedom*, and on making decisions to start something unpredictably new. Jesus brings about the latter by being with the poor as a friend and healer, living in an attitude of forgiveness that informs all His words and actions and making liberation and freedom an interior movement, as well as an external event. His life provides us with a way to liberate and restore healthy relationships of all in Earth's community of life. He is an evolutionary force for freedom and hopes we will follow His example.

### BRINGING MY WHOLE SELF TO THE MYSTERY

I read Luke 6:27-38 or Matthew 5:38-48 and place myself in the crowd, listening to Jesus.

### THE DESIRE OF MY HEART

I ask for an intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ, who became a creature like one of us for the sake of the universal community of life, that I may imitate Him in His respect for all life and love Him in the fullness of communion with all creation.

### SOME POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND CONSIDERATION

**First point:** I see and hear Jesus talking to the crowd, giving us His new vision for the community of life, one of compassion and forgiveness. I watch the expressions of amazement or, perhaps, disbelief on the faces of those in the crowd.

**Second point:** Darwinian thinkers believe that morality is hardwired in our brains and therefore, determined by our genes. So, the choice is not whether an action is moral or immoral, but whether or not to choose the nerve cell activity in our brains, which

we call morality. This attitude is an example of what John Haught calls "a metaphysics of the past" because it "rules out the coming of something genuinely new." (God After Darwin, p. 86) Jesus is the genuinely new expression of spiritual freedom giving us a way to make good decisions by cultivating a forgiving, loving attitude.

**Third point:** I ask for the humble freedom of Jesus as I consider the steps in making a Communal Decision. Are there any tasks or issues facing my community? What are they? I develop an open-ended question related to the one I consider most significant and list the answers to this question. I use this for entering into a discerning process for making a communal decision.

## **DIALOGUE**

I ask Mary to ask Jesus to help my faith community and me to focus on and make a communal decision and to guide us to an issue that is important for our community. I go with Mary to Jesus to ask for the same guidance. I go with Mary and make the same request of the Trinity.

I close with the prayer Jesus taught us.

## **PREPARATION FOR SHARING MY PRAYER**

As I recall my prayer, I write in my journal what I wish to share with my community.

*From the 24 Spiritual Exercises  
for the New Story of Universal Communion  
PROGRESSIO Supplement # 57 pgs. 150-151*

## 6.4 SPIRITUAL FREEDOM

### A. INTRODUCTION

*'My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work'.  
John 4:34*

*'I cannot do anything on my own; I judge as I hear, and my judgment is just,  
because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me'.  
John 5:30*

*'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you  
will.'  
Matthew 26:39*

When you read the above statements, it is quite clear that Jesus was entirely single-hearted. His life was all about doing the will of the One who sent him, the One he loved above all. To Jesus, it was that simple.

As Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) so beautifully put it, “purity of heart is to will one thing.” No wonder Jesus said that the pure of heart would see God (Matthew 5:8). They alone keep their eyes in one constant and consistent direction, and thus overcome the divisions created by the divided hearts and loyalties which plague the rest of us. As we grow spiritually, our lives become more and more centered and simple. There are only a few things that matter, and eventually really only one.

Howard Thurman (1899-1981), the esteemed theologian and spiritual teacher to Martin Luther King, Jr., reached this point of single-hearted focus. The following excerpt from his book *Meditations of the Heart* reveals how Thurman prayed that God's will might be done in and through him.

*The central element in communion with God is the act of self-surrender. The symbol of my prayer this day is the open heart. It is most natural for me to think of prayer in terms of the open hand. My needs are so great and often so desperate that there seems to be naught besides my own urgency. I must open my heart to God. This will include my own deep urgencies and all the warp and woof of my desiring. These things, deep within, I must trust with the full awareness that more important even*

*than self-realization is the true glorifying of God. Somehow, I must make God central to me and in me, over and above the use to which I wish or need to put His energy and His power.*

*I surrender myself to God without any conditions or reservations. I shall not bargain with [God]. I shall not make my surrender piecemeal, but I shall lay bare the very center of me, that all of my very being shall be charged with the creative energy of God. Little by little, or vast area by vast area, my life must be transmuted in the life of God. As this happens, I come into the meaning of true freedom and the burdens that I seemed unable to bear are floated in the current of the life and love of God.*

Thomas Merton quotes Meister Eckhart [1260–1328] as saying, “*For God to be is to give being, and for (humanity) to be is to receive being.*” Our true self is a received self. At each moment, we exist to the extent we receive existence from God who is existence.

Our deepest freedom rests not in our freedom to do what we want to do but rather in our freedom to become who God wills us to be. This person, this ultimate self God wills us to be, is not a predetermined, static mold to which we must conform. Rather, it is an infinite possibility of growth. It is our true self; that is, a secret self hidden in and one with the divine freedom. In obeying God, in turning to do God’s will, we find God willing us to be free. God created us for freedom; that is to say, God created us for God’s self.

Thomas Merton identifies that freedom from the futility of . . . laying hold of God as a possession. Only when we are able to “let go” of everything within us, all desire to see, to know, to taste, and to experience the presence of God, do we truly become able to experience that presence with the overwhelming conviction and reality that revolutionize our entire inner life.

*Two edited articles from Daily Meditations by Fr. Richard Rohr*

## **B. WHAT IS SPIRITUAL FREEDOM?**

The meaning of spiritual freedom can be compared to the parable of the Treasure in the Field (Mt.13:44). When the householder finds such a treasure, he goes out and sells everything he has and buys the field. That is, he becomes ‘indifferent’ to all the other possessions because he has his eye on the treasure.

In discernment, spiritual freedom or indifference is that inner strength of looking for God and being willing to sell any other possession/good thing in order to move towards God’s heart for us at a particular time (individually or communally). It means



no longer being bound by any option, outcome, point of view, ideology, person, strong impulse or towards any single outcome.

This is the grace we seek when we enter a decision-making process in a discerning way.

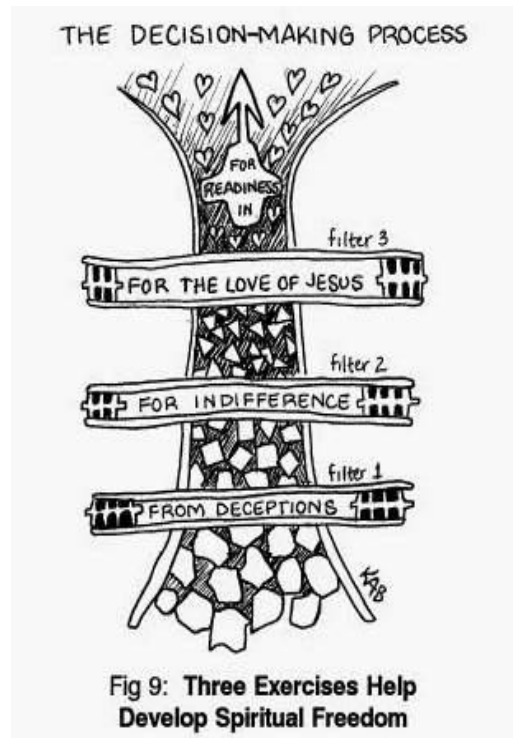
*Elizabeth Liebert, The Soul of Discernment, p 49*

### C. THREE KEY EXERCISES AND THE DECISION-MAKING DYNAMIC

In order to come to a good decision, a group must be free, that is, open to the Spirit, controlled by fears, hurts, passivity, over enthusiasm, pride, etc. with regard to the issue being considered, so that God may take the initiative. Moreover, members of the group should be ready to give over personal control of the decision, to let go of their natural hopes and plans for the matter at hand, so that the new life of the risen Jesus may act in and with the group. In order to make a good, discerned decision, the group should either be in consolation, or at equilibrium –not moved one way or the other– at the time of making the decision.

The three exercises - Two Standards, Three Classes and Three Kinds of Humility - are important for the decision-making dynamic of the Second Week. They are like three separate filter systems through which experience is passed in to truly be a carrier of God's call and not a carrier of the influence of the Bad Angel masquerading as light.

- **The Two Standards Exercise** helps to free one from deception in the decision-making process: free from fears, exaggerations, deceptions, and misguided generosity so that what is perceived to be God's calling is God's calling.
- **The Three Classes of Persons** helps to free one from inordinate attachments to certain possessions - spiritual, material, or psychological - as they affect the decision-making process.
- **The Three Kinds of Humility** indicates one's level of freedom and readiness for making a choice as part of the decision-making process. Theoretically, one is



sufficiently free enough to discern a choice if his/her desires and the affectivities that flow from them are in harmony with the Third Class of Persons and the Second Kind of Humility.

*Excerpts from JOHN VELTRI SJ Chapter 26 of Orientations Vol 2 Part B*

## **D. COMMUNAL SPIRITUAL FREEDOM PRAYER EXERCISE**

### **PREAMBLE**

The following prayer exercise is designed to assist discerning groups in their prayer for Spiritual Freedom. We know that the Spiritual Exercises written by St. Ignatius are a marvelous instrument to help people come to an inner freedom and make apostolic decisions in tune with the mind and heart of Christ.

#### **Let us pray:**

Let us listen and meditate on Jeremiah (6:16), "Stand at the crossroads and look, ask for ancient paths; which was the good way? Take it and you will find rest for yourselves?"

God is in us; we are in Christ. As members of the mystical body, we Christians partake in the divine nature of the Trinity. We do not merely watch the dance; we dance the dance. We join hands with Christ and the Spirit flows through us and between us and our feet moves always in the loving embrace of the Father. In that we are the mystical body of Christ, we see the joyful love of the Father through the eyes of the son (The Christ).

I take a relaxed position with a straight back, my body poised for prayer. I make a gesture of reverence and humility. I become conscious of my breathing. "At the very dawn of creation your Spirit breathed on the waters, making them the wellspring of all holiness." At our Baptism we recall the words, "At the very dawn of creation your Spirit breathed on the waters, making them the wellspring of all holiness."

God is in us; we are in Christ. As members of the mystical body, we as members of the World CLC partake in the divine nature of the Trinity. We do not merely watch the dance; we dance the dance. CLC joins hands with Christ and the Spirit flows through us and between us and our feet moves always in the loving embrace of the Father. In that we are the mystical body of Christ, we see the joyful love of the Father through the eyes of the son (The Universal Christ). And as we become aware of our breathing and with every breath, we breathe the Holy Spirit.

Ask the Holy Spirit to dwell within CLC, as a world body and as a branch of this body CLC Canada. Let us seek together and to understand - what is God calling us to become as a discerning community - a communal heart large enough and spiritually free to together follow God's call as it becomes clear in the process that we embark on in this meeting.

Read Scripture Eph 1: 17

*"I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power".*

Looking back over your own CLC group life, what signs of God's presence have you noticed over your CLC group life a second time, what impediments to God's life are in you?

Reflect silently on such impediments as, fearing to speak, irritation at another's manner, holding on to a past hurt, overpowering less powerful members of the group, failing to recognize that you are part of a larger community.

Silently confess these failures and ask God's forgiveness and empowerment for the future.

Now look at your CLC group behaviour for impediments in your group life. Bring them to light and ask for God's forgiveness and empowerment.

With new realism regarding your CLC group as a beloved community that has at times fallen short of its vocation, ask God to enliven you collectively to desire what God desires.

Commit yourself to asking for this gift frequently throughout this assembly. You may want to put a little note to that effect in your pocket.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

*We give thanks to our loving Creator for any new clarity and energy that comes through this prayer as we say the Lord's Prayer. AMEN*

## 6.5 DISCERNMENT/DECISION MAKING: THEORY - PROCESS - PROCEDURES

### A. MOVING TOWARDS GREATER FREEDOM

Presently, as members of the human world can only be solved by our cooperation with each other for the benefit of humankind family, we are more aware than ever that the problems of our contemporary and the planet.

Ignatian spirituality can foster such active cooperation through its encouragement of human responsibility through conscious decision-making in harmony with God's initiatives in the nurturing of God's reign on our planet. The two notes from the Contemplation to Gain Love in the Spiritual Exercises attest to this:

- "Authentic love manifests itself in deeds rather than in words" [230].
- "Authentic love is mutual and it consists in a mutual sharing of goods. The lover gives and shares with the beloved what one possesses or something of that which one has or is able to give and the beloved shares with one's lover... " [231].

Why do you think that Ignatius hope's that, through the instrument of the exercises, God's Spirit will communicate immediately with the person.....?

So that, through the instrument of the Exercises, a person can MOVE TOWARD GREATER FREEDOM (Spiritual) AND LOVING ATTITUDE enough to make concrete choices affecting the arrival of God's reign in society, in one's own life, and in the lives of others.

This is what the "praise and service of God" means, and this is the intent of the Exercises journey in the cultural context of the responsible Christian today [P & F note 23]

The ability to make decisions is essential to what it means to be a human person. In the moment of judgement and decision when one says inwardly to oneself, "Yes, I make this decision and I will go with it," WE experience OUR OWN humanity and "personhood" more than at any other time. During that concrete moment of conscious decision-making, a person experiences oneself as an "I" -- the conscious, personal, free self -- in all its concreteness and mystery.

Although the arrival at a final decision is mysteriously unique to each person, the various aspects of the process leading up to this final decision can be explained as a dynamic model with a series of phases that *generally* fit any person.

Although the ways in which persons go about the decision-making process are ultimately unique, the application of any model must be adapted and suited to the readiness and discerned movements within oneself. In day-to-day living, people make their decisions in different ways. That is why it is wise to know your own history and pattern in making choices.

### **DECISION-MAKING CONTENDS WITH 3 BIASES**

1. *Biases in our spiritual culture* - Conscious decision-making does not have good press in the spiritual culture of our times. We seem to accept the need for explicit and prayerful decision-making with regard to a major career commitment, calling, or vocational choice. However, when other matters are involved, many of us seem to resist the need for explicit decision-making.

For example, using the process of Spiritual Discernment and decision-making

- to take a leave of absence for six months to study or to travel
  - to do something about a de-energizing relationship
  - to write a book
  - to adopt a child
  - to invest one's money in a particular company or not
  - to sell your home and move to another area.
2. *Biases in the exercises themselves* - The Exercises text itself has helped to create this quandary. Ignatius himself makes a distinction between the Election and other forms of decision-making which he places under the rubric of Reformation of Life to which he allots very little space. Perhaps it is unfortunate that all the major exercises, along with their Graces, are written from the perspective of a choice involving a permanent lifestyle commitment; that is, a calling or vocation.
  3. *Biases in unique persons* - There are two basic exaggerations in the way with which people make their decisions. Some people put closure on the decision-making process too quickly; others keep avoiding placing closure on the decision-making. The first group is made up of "closure artists" who appear to enjoy the making of decisions. They make decisions quickly. They easily come to closure on what-should-I-do or what-needs-to-be-done questions. People who are affected by these exaggerations (biases) need to appreciate several truths in human decision-making.

For example:

- Our decisions always rest on partial understanding. Only God is in touch with the whole of God's self and all the possibilities of any situation. As humans, our knowledge is never complete because we live our lives through units of time.
- Decision-making is always limited by time and space. Mistaken decisions are inevitable. It is better to take a risk of being mistaken than it is to give up our right to decide.
- God adapts God's saving and redeeming work to the vagaries of human choices.
- NOT TO MAKE A DECISION is a decision.
- We live our lives between two unknowns, the unknown of self and the unknown of God. Yet we are invited to make responsible choices, all the variables behind which we can never know.

JEAN MARC LAPORT SJ writes in an article in the web site Orientations:

*The Ignatian Paradox explains that God has a stake in our decision in some mysterious way. So, I pray as if everything depends on me. After carefully discerning what action will be more in tune with God's action, then I act as if all depends on God. That is, I leave the success, the failure of what I do up to God and to the other actors in our world and to events. This is what Jesus had to do in his discernment, in spite of danger that he would go to Jerusalem once again calling people to repentance and belief in him. He faced death trusting that God's dream could and would be fulfilled even in this mysterious way.*

**HEALING MODE** The Exercises were not written for PERSONS THAT ARE in the Healing Mode. The only healing passages suggested in the Exercises are those which describe physical healing as part of Jesus' public ministry.

But the Spiritual Exercises can be used in a healing mode.... but at some point, usually as one approaches the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> week graces this is where the Exercises are truly rooted in A CALL OR A MAKING OF A DECISION. (Confirmation of the elections is what the 4<sup>th</sup> week is all about)

## B. THREE PHASES AND FIVE STAGES: THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Although the definitive moment in which all the aspects of a decision fall into place for a person is quite mysterious, the developmental phases that lead to it are not. From the moment when the need for a decision is conceived, through the moments of labour when this need is clarified and its aspects begin to coalesce, until the moment the decision is born, its phases are fairly predictable.

Let me explain by describing the overall developmental process in terms of the following three interlocking circles which represent the three major phases of the decision-making process.

#1

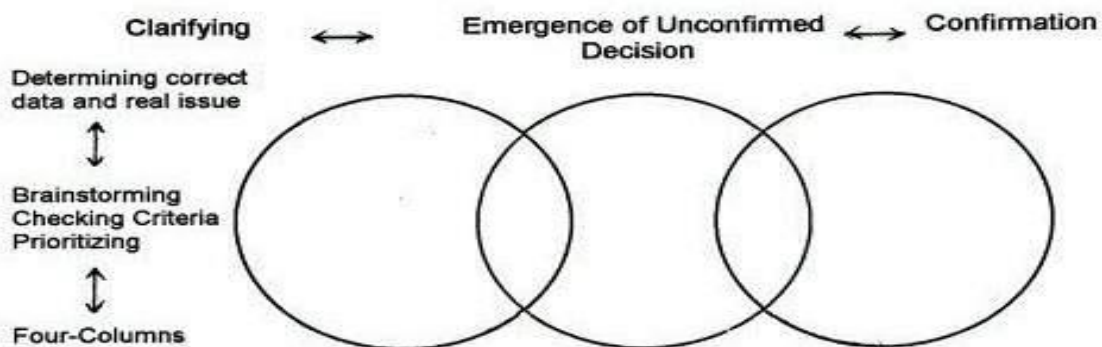


Figure 10: Decision Phases Blend With And Emerge From Each Other

Each circle in the diagram represents a basic phase within the decision-making process. The vertical arrows on the left indicate that the processes within the first circle can come about interchangeably and in different sequences.

The reason why the circles interlock is that each phase is dynamically interwoven with the next phase. As one enters into the first phase of the process, one is already dealing with the next phase, and as one is moving into the second phase, the third begins to be present. And so decision-making is like a seedling which grows, develops, and flowers. It is dynamic and every part contains the whole.

Its phases can be present in one moment or over several moments.

A more practical way to describe the decision-making process is by using a set of procedures, made up of individual steps which are likely to foster the phases represented by the three interlocking circles that we just talked about.

## **#2. Five Steps of The Decision-Making Process**

The phases on the right-hand side show how these steps coincide with the three-circles diagram to recall the dynamic quality underlying these steps.

The comments on the left-hand side indicate how the movements of spirits -- Consolation with Cause, Consolation Without Cause, Temptations Under the Guise of Light (or Good), Desolation, Water on a Stone, Water on a Sponge, etc. -- happen anywhere along the process. Consequently, discernment is required through the whole process.

### **STEP 1 "WALKING AROUND" THE QUESTION**

Often the need for making a decision is expressed in a general statement or question. The purpose of this first step is to recognize the precise question or problem or issue calling one to make a decision.

This "walking around" is a very natural activity. Some questions such as these could help:

- "Why do I need to make a decision at this time? How do I feel about that?"
- Research THE data: "What? Why? How? Where? When? So what? ... What difference would it make if I did not make this decision now?"

As you get a sense of the general problem from different angles, separate the presenting issue from the real issue that needs to be addressed. Separate the key issue from lesser issues. Sometimes in this attempt to understand, through dialogue and prayer in combination with each other, the issues change. A lesser issue may emerge as the key one.

### **STEP 2 CHECK THE ASSUMPTIONS AND/OR DETERMINE THE CRITERIA**

Behind the determining of the key question (or issue) from lesser questions, there are often assumptions -- beliefs which we take for granted. These assumptions are, in fact, implicit criteria which determine whether we look at these particular data rather than some other data.

Take time to find some material for your study, reflection, discussion. In what ways would you agree or disagree with the following assertion: If a decision is to be fully



human and realistic, one cannot avoid having criteria whether they are implicit or explicit?

### **STEP 3 FOCUSING**

Focusing includes all those activities that help to define the viable solutions or options. This can include all or some of the following:

- a. Brainstorm the various possible solutions.
- b. Prioritize these possibilities.
- c. State the solution clearly as a positive statement followed by its contrary:

For example:

*I will accept the move to Montreal; I will not accept the move to Montreal.*

If there are several key issues, this kind of double statement is done for each solution in order of priority.

- d. Set up the Four Columns for each double statement.

**REMEMBER:** The Four Columns are not the key method of decision-making in the Exercises. Rather the key method for decision-making is the method explained in notation [Sp Ex 176] based on the discernment of spirits.

*The Four Columns belong to the Supplementary Decision-Making Techniques outlined below that I will explain later (pg. 39).*

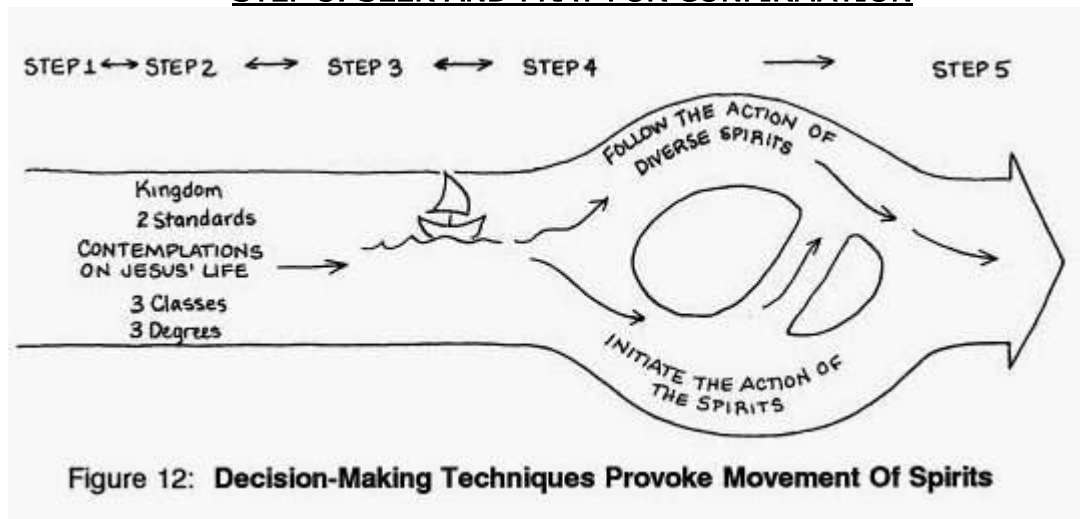
### **STEP 4 PRAY AND WAIT FOR THE CHOICE TO EMERGE OR TO BE GIVEN**

Composing oneself with the data, the person returns to Gospel Contemplation asking the Spirit to help surface the Unconfirmed Decision. By this time, the person has, as it were, all the data in her heart, so now you move forward in the process by saying "Don't try to figure out anymore. Don't manipulate your prayer. SIMPLY GO TO PRAYER ... and in a kind of generalized way, be with all the data. Use your imagination again on the gospel events. Look at Jesus and be with him and through your interaction with Jesus, some choice will emerge!

Often spending a week in this way could surface the preliminary choice or, more technically, the Unconfirmed Decision.

**THE PERSON MIGHT THEN GO ON WITH STEP 5.** Be respectful and careful, and then trust that God will do the rest. As always, we do what we can in the hope and trust that God will give what we are seeking. (Ignatian Paradox)

## STEP 5. SEEK AND PRAY FOR CONFIRMATION



In the diagram Figure 12, the arrow is like a river. It represents the flow of the one's affective experiences during the decision-making/discernment process. It also illustrates the Five Steps AT THE TOP OF THE DIAGRAM and their relationship to this flow.

The First Step is pictured as taking place before the Two Standards exercise. Notice how Gospel Contemplation is the instrument for this experience to emerge. The normal flow of experience is along the northern channel of the two islands. If the ship cannot sail in this channel - that is, if the spiritual movements give no clarity - it can sail through the southern channel with the use of the supplementary techniques. But the hope is that the ship will still be able to sail through the two islands and into the northern channel before the final step of praying for Confirmation is begun.

After making the I-am-quite-sure-this-is-what-I-ought-to-do choice, one offers it to God and asks for Confirmation. (If Confirmation is not received, one repeats part of the decision-making process.)

With the I-am-quite-sure-this-is-what-I-ought-to-do choice in her heart, the person enters the Gospel Contemplations on the passion and death of Jesus. As one does this, one asks God for Confirmation. Thus, the dying and rising experiences of Jesus become a tuning fork to discover whether there is a harmony between these events and the choice one is about to finalize.

Unless the choice was given in a Consolation Without Cause, one has still not received confirmation in the sense that the process has not yet come to closure. Confirmation is not so much the seal of approval that what was decided will turn out with success. Rather it is the sense of closure and Consolation that one has made as good a decision as one can at this time.

**REMEMBER GOD CONFIRMS THE PERSON, NOT THE DECISION.**

In addition to this subjective and experiential Confirmation, a married person may need to seek the objective Confirmation from her spouse; and a person living as part of a community, from the community.

**INCORPORATING THE FIVE STEPS**

The Five Steps just outlined are a helpful way to incorporate the elements of the decision-making process during the Exercise journey (Ann 19 or 20) or even at other times such as closed directed retreat days for discernment and decision-making.

**REMEMBER THE FIVE STEPS CAN BE ADAPTED TO ONE'S UNIQUE EXPERIENCE AND NEEDS.**

If discernment by way of evaluating one's Consolations and Desolations does not work, stay with Step 4 and try to facilitate this step by using some other methods such as those given in notations [177]-[188] which Ignatius calls the Third Time [177]; that is, a time of tranquility when there is no evident movement of spirits.

In other words, these techniques should be used only if the process of discerning the spirits has not been effective enough.

**HERE IS A LIST OF SUPPLEMENTARY DECISION-MAKING TECHNIQUES:**

1. *The Offering-of-Dishes Method*: This very effective method comes from Ignatius' manuscript called the Autograph Directory: one might offer to God one day to follow one path, another day another path. Then one is to observe what preference God indicates.
2. *The Four-Column Method* [178]-[183]
3. *Imagining Self at Moment of Death* [186]
4. *Imagining Self at Last Judgement* [187]
5. *Imagining Self Giving Advice to Another* [185]
6. *Guidelines for Distributing of Alms* [337]-[344]. These guidelines contain Criteria that may be helpful with decisions involving distribution of money and other resources.
7. *Guidelines for Eating* [210]-[217] Though these guidelines ones concern is on our use of food, and apply to our use of anything that can be misused in an addictive way such as the use of computer, television, car, physical exercise, volunteer work, time for prayer, etc.

## **CONCLUSION**

Spiritual discernment of spirits and decision-making can be summarized in this way:

*A consoling experience of being led by the Spirit to a deeper union with God in conjunction with a particular course of conduct (tentative decision) joining me more intimately to the slain (3<sup>rd</sup> week) and risen Christ (4<sup>th</sup> week) in his body the Church.*

*A and B Parts (above) from  
JOHN VELTRI SJ Chapter 27 of Orientations Vol 2 Part B*

## **C. THE COMMUNAL APOSTOLIC DISCERNMENT MEETING PROCESS**

### **PART I OF A MEETING**

1. *Opening prayer and call to attentiveness.* The opening prayer distinguishes the communal prayer time from ordinary time; it also invites people to intentionally listen. In the prayer, the leader can ask for the light of the Spirit so that the group may recognize what God is doing among them. The leader can also ask that people be given the grace to speak from their felt knowledge of God, or from what happened in their prayer, as well as the grace to listen receptively.
2. *The 1st round.* Each person shares what they have decided to share. This is done in an orderly fashion, and it is the leader's role to ensure this. The leader can indicate who will begin, then continue with the next person and so on in a circular fashion until all have spoken. No one should take so much time so that others do not have enough, so the leader or group can decide in advance how much time there will be for each sharing. A respectful pause should follow each sharing until all have spoken.
3. *Prayerful pause.* Once the first round is complete, the leader invites the group to reflect on how they have been affected by what they have heard. Sufficient quiet time should be allowed for people to become aware of what they are feeling and to put words on the awareness. A few minutes are usually enough, but this depends on the nature of the group and on what has been shared. The leader may also mark this transition from the first to the second round with a prayer that acknowledges gratefully what has been shared, and that asks for the grace that the group recognize the Lord at work in them.

4. *The second round.* This is where the communal movements of spirits become manifest. The leader invites the members to share how they have been affected by what one or some persons shared, by a pattern in the whole group, by something that was absent, etc. The leader may ask the questions for the second round suggested below:

- **What did I hear?**
- **What impressed me as others shared? How was I affected?**
- **What new insights have I gained?**
- **Where did I experience harmony with the others as they shared?**

This can be done in a more spontaneous manner than the first round, without going around to everyone in the group. Usually, this sharing is briefer than first round sharing. It is important that the discipline of only sharing and listening from the first round be maintained during the second round.

5. After a reflective pause following the second round, in a third round of sharing people seek to identify the spiritual movements in the group especially as manifested in the second round. This third round is especially useful when the group is discerning an apostolic action or when the group is using the DSSE method. For example, the group can share where they have found unity, truth, acceptance, etc. Such a third round of sharing focused especially but not exclusively on the second round, gives the group practice in discernment, and engages them intentionally in their communal and apostolic spiritual life. The leader may ask the question:

- What is the Trinity saying to us and/or what needs to be further addressed? What seems to be emerging or converging for us as we listened. Is there a sense of the Spirit preparing us for something more (mission), affirming what we are doing, challenging us to evaluate (DSSE) what we are or are not doing etc.?
- *Members should feel free to pass or affirm another expressed insight.*

*NB: What has surfaced in the 3<sup>rd</sup> round could be a matter to bring forward in PART TWO of the meeting.*

## **PART II OF A MEETING**

### **SIX STEPS IN DISCERNING A SIGNIFICANT COMMUNAL DECISION**

1. The **first step** in making a communal decision is to **research an issue**. In the light of the graces and insights given to you and your community during your prayer, an issue or concern surfaces in a group member or emerges from group prayer/ discussions/processes. An example might be the encounter of a homeless person.

Take time to have some conversation about the issue (most issues have many answers) and try to articulate a common issue. Aim to formulate a clear open-ended question, such as, "How can we help the homeless find shelter this year?" If there is time begin listing possible answers. Identify any common themes or insights that emerge.

2. The **second step** is to clarify the issue / concern. Search out the facts, the background, the genesis of the issue / concern. Identify the **feelings** that pertain. (Social analysis may be helpful at this stage.) Alternative responses/ possibilities will likely emerge during this phase.

**Personal and communal prayer** before, during and after discernment for

- light
- purification

is necessary for a group. The prayer should be Christic and thematic (not centering prayer) in order to seek self-knowledge and the spiritual freedom to be open.

3. The **third step** in this process is to **decide** upon a **key open-ended response**. This may involve prioritizing until one is found. From among these: write the **key** answer / response in a brief, clear statement. (Each word must add to the clarity.) **This is the explicit choice to be discerned.**
4. The **fourth step** is to decide who in the group has the capacity to assimilate the data and able to enter the discernment process. The timelines and processes to be used are determined, including dissemination of data to all who will participate in the discernment.

When the group is in a graced place of 'poised spiritual liberty' (ready to move where the Spirit indicates), they are in a position to consider the question for discernment. (There must be "sufficient" freedom as a felt experience for the group to move beyond this point).

5. Given this freedom, **the fifth** step is group **consideration of the data**, giving separate and quality time first to the reasons **against** the key response statement identified

earlier, and then the reasons for. It is not problem-solving but attending to the leadings of grace.

6. The **sixth step** is to agree on a specific answer and reword it to the satisfaction of all. An example might be, "We will join the coalition advocating for more homeless shelters. In addition, the group will compose its opposite, which in this example would be, "We will NOT join the coalition advocating for more homeless shelters." Each member takes these two statements home and before the next meeting lists the **advantages and disadvantages** of each statement, thus producing four columns. Bring your four columns to the next community meeting. Share your four columns by going around the circle, each person giving his or her reasons for *one column* until the community has a complete list for that column.

*Taken from the 24 Spiritual Exercises for the New  
Story of Universal Communion PROGRESSIO  
Supplement # 57*

## D. CONSENSUS IN A COMMUNAL DECISION

*Eph 1:17 20*

*"For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places..."*

Consensus in a group is a special form of confirmation. It is not simply majority rule or unanimity. It means that everyone in the group will be satisfied they and others have been listened to, that the gifts of each member have been acknowledged and that a free and effective process has been followed. The group will know itself as loved by God. Members will have a sense of wonder and of being drawn into the future, despite the group's limitations and past sufferings. The group will experience consolation as a gift from the Holy Spirit.

The group will have an awareness of transcendence and experience the beauty, truth, and goodness of God as well as union with God. The fruits of consensus for the community are: the consoling insight of seeing the Paschal mystery in the life of the group, since the decision means dying to self for the sake of the universal community of life, group members may feel a special sense of wholeness and consolation, all are committed to the decision and its implementation with realistic hope and joy, an experience of a freeing and creative love operating in the group.

Consensus is experienced as a unanimous decision, made in true consolation, that is to say, all are satisfied with the process and the decision. It may also be experienced as a high degree of agreement. If this is the case, try to get unanimity by asking those not in agreement to state their objections to the decision and discover what will satisfy them in implementing the decision. Keep in mind the reasons against the decision, even as the group implements it. If there is a low degree of agreement, the group would be wise to revisit the general issue and look for another proposal for discernment.

1. SEEKING CONFIRMATION of the decision. If consensus is reached, go round the circle once again, this time indicating whether or not you experienced consolation. Describe your experience briefly. If you are not in agreement with the communal decision, state your objections and make suggestions for change.

2. IMPLEMENTING the decision. **Many a well-discerned decision is lost in implementation.** Make sure that communications and delegation are dealt with as soon as possible after the decision is made. As the group works through various items of implementation it will become aware of the costs to the group. When members face these costs in union with Christ suffering and still wish to do the work, they will have another experience of consolation.

## E. DISCERN - SEND - SUPPORT – EVALUATE (DSSE)

DSSE is a four-step dynamic process that, when lived out in a CLC group, can bring about a greater awareness of mission while addressing and clarifying the meaning and understanding of communal apostolic activities.

Since its beginnings in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century of what we now know as the Christian Life Community, the Spirit of God has been leading us into an ever-deepening understanding of what it means to be CLC in the world today.



Today, there are two points to keep in mind:

The first is:

- CLC's purpose is not to be a prayer group, not a support group, not a cultural group, not a social group. **CLC's 'raison d'être' is "a community for discerning mission"**. Of course, implied in this we do indeed find that we are support for one another; we do share prayer together; we find value and vitality in our cultural identities etc.

The second is:

- To live out our call as Baptized Christians we are called "to love one another", to live the Beatitudes, to feed the hungry, visit the imprisoned, care for the sick etc. **To live out our call to the CLC way of life means to live this Christian life in a particular way rooted in the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius and guided by the GP/GN, the CLC Charism, the Common Mission.**
- The particularity of this way of life is the call to the 'Magis'... to go a step further and ask 'why?' Why in this time of plenty and progress are more and more people hungry? Why is there a growing number of persons using soup kitchens and food banks? What makes people in various regions sick with cancer and other specific illnesses? Why do aboriginals/blacks make up the majority of those imprisoned? etc.
- The CLC spirituality is to look at world through the eyes of the Trinity and ask, what is the Spirit calling me/us to do in helping to establish the reign of God? What is the most pressing need that will have the greatest impact, on the greatest numbers to bring about the greater good and will have a multiplying effect?

The question, what is the Spirit calling me/us to do in helping to establish the reign of God is answered by four words; **discerning, sending, supporting and evaluating** that has arisen in the recent history of CLC.

It is not 4 successive steps that occur in every community meeting but is the normative function of a CLC group that identifies itself as an "Apostolic Community".

## 1. DISCERN

- To DISCERN means to enter this first phase of apostolic discernment in our local CLC groups by sharing our individual experiences about our areas of service.

- It means listening to our own sacred stories while meditating on the Word of God, especially to contemplate Jesus in action and to share how the movement is calling us to be more like him.
- Integrating and sharing our experiences is based on the theory of "Spiral Dynamics" which helps the community to clarify the meaning and understanding of those experiences. We can then consider how God might be calling us to join Christ in the enterprise.
- This may mean discerning new calls or changes in our present areas of apostolic activities. It is about seeking the 'Magis', meaning THE MORE or THE BETTER for the glory of God **within the signs of the times of our daily activities.**
- This tool can lead us to personal and communal discernment around specific choices. Not only is a community invited to discern apostolic actions, but CLC also offers a way for the community to help an individual member to DISCERN their personal choices.

## 2. SEND

- To SEND is to 'mission' the community or the CLC member into a specific activity that is to be transformed by the decision that has been discerned and where one is called to co-labour with Christ and to grow in love, peace and justice from one's quality of presence through one's particular gifts and abilities.
- The activity of a collective sending also helps the community or individual members to integrate their experiences with their apostolic choices/priorities. The 'connecting' aspect of apostolic activities helps to 'deepen' the sense of being sent by God while being affirmed and of being with Christ in the mission.
- The Sending could also involve a recording of those apostolic commitments in a group spiritual journal. This recording of a groups apostolic action heightens the awareness of one's identity while appropriating the God's presence throughout the groups Graced History.

## 3. SUPPORT

- To SUPPORT a CLC member who has discerned with the community an apostolic service means to accompany that member in concrete ways by addressing personal needs, being present in moments of discouragements, depressions that are always related to a prophetic mission.

- This could mean that the CLC group members offer advice at times, give encouragement, affirm, give specific help according to their gifts/abilities etc.
- Support also includes praying for the one on mission and/or for those that are missioned in a group apostolic action.
- Support, depending on the needs of the community or the individual, the community could need to study specific aspects of the mission so as to help deepen the community's understanding. This could mean seeking the expertise of other persons or organization.
- Support could also mean financial support i.e.: mandating and sending a member of the group as a delegate to a National Assembly, World Assembly or other roles of leadership within the community.

#### 4. EVALUATE

- To EVALUATE a mission undertaken means to **critically analyse** the apostolic experience of the member or the group with a grateful attitude.
- It means to continuously return to the cycle of Evaluation in the Power Cycle by focusing on our goal to live as a discerning apostolic community that shares responsibility for one another's mission.
- It means that that the group takes time to listen to the experience(s) of the one (or those persons in the group) living out their mission and ask questions that will help them reflect on how their mission engages and extends the mission of Jesus' values-beatitudes.
- It means revisiting GP #8 and evaluating the apostolic action according to the guidelines given in that CLC principle on mission.
- It means challenging one another at times, giving advice, even offering correction in a loving way, whenever necessary.
- Evaluation in the Power Cycle is cyclical in the sense that it can lead to further discernment on the decision itself or on other ways of proceeding because other factors may have surfaced that warrant a change of the apostolic action.

*Taken and adapted from an article by Jose Reyes  
in Progressio - Supplement # 59, p. 64-65*

## F. EVALUATING THE DSSE COMMUNAL PROCESS OF A GROUP

### PREAMBLE

An apostolic community is to be intentionally engaged in each other's personal missions. How? By *helping each other* first discern our service, then send each other into that mission... and then as a group, find ways to support the one on mission as it is being lived and from time to time evaluate it.

### A COMMUNAL SUPPORT-EVALUATION PROCESS

**WHAT FOR:** When a group member has discerned a decision for service/apostolic action with the help of the group, this process can be used to support the member and evaluate with him/her the living out of that choice.

**HOW:** By means of contemplative listening and offering comments and questions to the one sharing.

**WHY:**

1. To gain deeper insight into his/her personal mission/call
2. To discover the need for further discernment/decision and invite the group's help in discerning a decision as in Ph I, Week 26.
3. To allow the community to be part of discerning a member's personal mission. In this way, the whole group 'hops on 'the DSSE train at the first step.

### Addendum

*What else might happen as a result of such a support-evaluate communal process with an individual member? It is possible that the group could hear a call to discern a communal action from entering such a contemplative process with an individual member. In this case a communal discernment process is needed, and the GROUP gets on the DSSE train in another mode.*

# SECTION SEVEN

7.1	GROUP DYNAMICS.....	310
A.	PATIENT TRUST.....	310
B.	GUIDING TO HELP WITH GROUP DYNAMICS.....	311
C.	THE ROLE OF THE GROUP GUIDE.....	312
D.	PAYING ATTENTION TO THE DYNAMICS IN A GROUP.....	314
7.2	POWER.....	316
A.	PRINCIPLES FOR UNDERSTANDING POWER AND FOR ITS LEGITIMATE USE.....	316
B.	EXERCISE: CLUES ABOUT WHAT MAKES A GOOD GROUP.....	318
C.	GROUP NORMS.....	319
7.3	WORD OF GOD/WILL OF GOD AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.....	320
A.	CHRISIAN LIFE AND SPIRITUAL LIFE.....	320
B.	APOSTOLIC SPIRITUALITY.....	321
C.	ELEMENTS IN A SPIRITIAL EXERCISE OF THE CORPORATE PERSON....	322
7.4	PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT.....	323
A.	OUR GIFT TO THE WORLD - OUR RESPONSIBILITY.....	323
B.	THE SEVEN ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT.....	324
C.	COMMUNAL AWARENESS EXAMEN.....	326
7.5	GUIDE LISTENING AND DISCERNING.....	328
A.	THROUGH THE LENS OF COMMUNAL SPIRITUALITY.....	328
B.	WHAT DO GUIDES LISTEN FOR AND DISCERN?.....	329
C.	GUIDING CLC APOSTOLIC COMMUNITIES: COMMUNAL MOVEMENT OF SPIRITS.....	331
7.6	WORKING THROUGH CONFLICT.....	335
A.	CONFLICT HAPPENS.....	335
B.	SKILLS NEEDED FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICT.....	336
C.	WORKING WITH CONFLICT.....	339
D.	PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS IN GROUPS.....	344
E.	COMING TO PEACE.....	345

## 7.1 GROUP DYNAMICS

### A. PATIENT TRUST

*Above all, trust in the slow work of God.  
We are quite naturally impatient in everything  
To reach the end without delay.  
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.  
We are impatient of being on the way to something  
Unknown, something new.  
And yet, it is the law of all progress  
That it is made by passing through  
Some stages of instability –  
And that it may take a very long time.  
And so I think it is with you,  
Your ideas mature gradually – let them grow,  
Let them shape themselves, without undue haste.  
Don't try to force them on,  
As though you could be today what time  
(that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will)  
Will make of you tomorrow.  
Only God could say what this new spirit  
Gradually forming within you will be.  
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing*

*That His hand is leading you,  
And accept the anxiety of feeling yourself  
In suspense and incomplete.*

*Pierre Teilhard de Chardin sj 1881-1955  
(a French paleontologist whose writings integrate science and spirituality)*

## **B. GUIDING TO HELP WITH GROUP DYNAMICS**

Group dynamics refers to a method under which groups learn to increase their skills for effective group work by examining their

- structures,
- purpose,
- setting,
- procedures, and
- interpersonal dynamics.

The effective group would have

- clear, cooperative goals to which every member is committed,
- accurate and effective communication of ideas and feelings,
- distributed participation and leadership,
- appropriate and effective decision-making procedures,
- productive controversy,
- high levels of trust, acceptance of its members and
- a high level of cohesive, constructive management of power and conflict,
- adequate problem-solving procedures.

### **Criteria for Effective Groups**

1. Understanding, mutual agreement and identification with respect to the primary task. Clarity and commitment to the mission.
2. Open communication about the task at hand. Being absolutely open is not necessarily effective.
3. Mutual trust.
4. Mutual support. Presence of care, concern and active help towards each other.
5. Management of human differences. Effective groups value difference of views. Produces a higher quality decision.
6. Know how to have a good meeting.

7. Appropriate member skills. In the group there are those with relationship skills and those with task skills.
8. Leadership. The group leader is the prime coordinator, seeing that the various responsibilities for effective group work are shared among group members.

### **Rules for Understanding Group Dynamics**

1. Groups will move through the cycle of infatuation, manipulation, crisis of projections, before moving into a deepening of their commitments to each other and the and the community.
2. Dysfunction in a group, whether social, physical or psychological is a defence against anxiety and needs a systemic as well as a personal remedy.
3. The group as a whole is more than the sum of its parts.
4. Persons of similar individuation and emotional dependency tend to group together and create comfort and additional dependencies for each other.
5. Change involves loss as well as gain. The losses need to be mourned and the grief integrated before free movement of the group can be resumed.
6. Hanging on to a past problem is a way of avoiding the present agenda.
7. The rush to be finished inhibits many in the group from articulating their real agenda.
8. A community offers an individual an opportunity for growing and developing beyond what that individual would be capable of on his or her own.

*Atlantic Canada Group Guide Manual 2005*

## **C. THE ROLE OF THE GROUP GUIDE**

### **Question #1: What is meant by group dynamics?**

Group dynamics refer to:

- The process involved when people in a group interact.
- The interaction that influence the attitudes and behaviours of people in a group.
- The changes that take place within groups that affects their attitudes and behaviours.
- The influences of personality and power that affect all of the above.

### **Question #2: Why is some understanding of group dynamics important?**

- Groups are living cells which are a complex of all sorts of personalities with different ways of seeing.



- Different ways of responding to life and differing habits and skills.

**Question #3: If becoming a discerning apostolic community is the goal of CLC formation, how would attention to group dynamics contribute to becoming 'effective' groups for mission?**

Group dynamics that assist the development of an effective group (CLC or not) would have:

- Clarity and commitment to the goals, objective and norms of the group.
- Good listening skills (accurate and effective communication of both ideas and feelings).
- High levels of mutual trust and acceptance among its members.
- Shared participation, facilitation, leadership – managing personal power for the sake of the group.
- Openness towards different points of view, making for higher quality decisions.
- Ability to deal with conflict and adequate problem-solving procedures
- Effective meeting structures and decision-making processes to move the group forward.
- A willingness to create a mission statement that will drive its vision and efforts.

**Question #4: What are some INDICATORS that hinder the development of effective CLC groups?**

- Lessening of commitment to the group – a pattern of missing meetings or meetings a low priority.
- Lessening of a commitment to or practice of the CLC process of meeting (the 3 parts).
- Lack of commitment to prayer and/or the Examen, to personal preparation for the meeting.
- Resistance in working with CLC formation material/documents or to the group' *articulated vision* or way of proceeding.
- Poor listening or lack of honesty which affects the quality of disclosure among members.
- Distracting or disproportionate need for socializing.
- Lack of openness to belonging to the larger CLC.
- Concern for only the relation needs or for personal growth, the group is seen as more important than the call for mission...avoidance of seeking an apostolic vision.
- Lack of unity, trust or apostolic freedom...not following through on what was decided upon, sense of being stalled in the group.
- Confusion, discouragement, apathy, listlessness, withdrawing attitudes, anger, projection, doubt.
- Unwillingness to risk, confront issues, deal with conflict, intellectualizing, false reasoning.
- Critical attitudes/behaviours in the interchanges among members or

towards those outside.

- Peace at any price patterns to prevent others from leaving the group.
- Helplessness, too overwhelmed by the group task, giving up rather than finding a better way.
- Refusal to move through the power cycle – especially to evaluate the group’s experience in order to reach better ways of proceeding or make better choices.

*Notes adapted and synthesized by the following sources  
John Sumarah, Eileen Burke-Sullivan, C. Tuckman*

## **D. PAYING ATTENTION TO THE DYNAMICS IN A GROUP**

Group guides need to pay attention to the following dynamics in a group. These observations will help guides understand where a group is situated dynamically and where it needs to be affirmed and challenged. Some of the dynamics are simply noted and registered by the guide while other dynamics will need to be addressed with the group.

Who are the high participators and the low participators?  
When is there a shift in participation?  
Are you able early on to identify potential leaders?

Who are the high and low influencers?  
Is there a shift?  
What effect does it have on the group?  
Is there rivalry in the group?  
Is everyone respected and accepted?

Does anyone attempt to impose their will or values on others?  
Who pushes the group to get organized?  
Who are the peacemakers?  
Who hands the power over to others?  
Are the peacemakers avoiding conflict?  
Who goes along with a decision even when not committed?  
Who expresses feelings and opinions freely without judging others?

Who makes a contribution which does not receive much recognition?  
What effect does this have on the group?

Are decisions about the time and date of meetings arrived at by consensus?  
Who are the problem solvers?

Who keeps the group on target?  
Who looks after the morale of the group?  
Who invites others into the discussion?  
Who interrupts others?  
How do members react when their ideas are rejected?

Are negative feelings frowned upon?  
Are people able to share their opinion without fear of judgment?  
Do members agree with each other too readily?

## 7.2 POWER

### A. PRINCIPLES FOR UNDERSTANDING POWER AND FOR ITS LEGITIMATE USE

1. A group forms for a reason, a purpose or a goal.
2. The function of the group is to empower all its members in achieving the purpose and goals of the group.
3. Power is a good thing. It is graced energy to move towards the goals and objectives of the group.
4. To function in an orderly way the group must follow the power cycle: action, evaluation, recommendation and decision.
5. Power resides in all phases of the power cycle.

#### Types of formal power:

- Commitment power - is the free commitment of individuals to goals and objectives which they have freely chosen.
- Coercive power- fear of sanctions
- Reward power – anticipation of return for one’s involvement
- Expertise power – knowing how, what, when and how to do
- Friendship power – personal power, the power of relationship
- Informal power - that is used outside the power cycle can be a drain or a boost to a group

#### Some Assumptions about Group Development

1. All life is characterized by a pattern of life-death-resurrection.
2. Change is inevitable. The choice is between a proactive stance or a reactive stance toward it.

3. Distinguish between “What’s happening and what’s really going on.” What’s happening may be a change in member commitment but what is really going on is a call to leadership or a maturing process for the community. God is at work. That is why we are not always certain of the good that will come from an action or decision.
4. People are more important than the systems they create.
5. It’s OK for people to be who they are.
6. Problems multiply faster than leadership can deal with them so some understanding of this is a good thing.
7. It is important for people to understand where the group is on the life-death-resurrection cycle and to participate in the contemplative dynamic of organizational life; that is, to accept and appreciate that there are different movements at different times in the life of the community.

### **QUESTIONS?**

1. When you hear these assumptions about group life what resonates with you?
2. What presents a challenge to you and your group?
3. What attitudes and assumptions do you find in yourself that are at variance with the group?
4. What dynamics of the life-death-resurrection cycle have you been more or less unaware of?
5. What methods are used when the group is on the downside of the LDR cycle?

### **What Would You Claim To Do Well and What Do You Need to Work On?**

1. Do I help others to express their ideas?
2. Do I listen attentively and with understanding to what others are saying?
3. Do I communicate my ideas well?
4. Do I avoid conflict when I shouldn’t?
5. Am I overly stubborn about my opinions?
6. Do I often provide leadership for our group?
7. Do I seek and use other people’s ideas well?
8. Am I overly aggressive?
9. Do I give in too quickly when I am opposed?
10. Am I sensitive to others’ feelings?

11. Do I take responsibility readily?
12. Am I more often disruptive than constructive?
13. Am I too quiet?
14. Do I participate enough?
15. Do I appear to believe people?
16. Am I tolerant of opposition viewpoints?
17. Do I dominate the conversation?
18. Do I appear willing to support other people's ideas?
19. Do I own my ideas and feelings?

## B. EXERCISE: CLUES ABOUT WHAT MAKES A GOOD GROUP

What things happen that are a sign of an effective group?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

What things happen that are clues that the group is not working the way you would like it to work?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

What are some things that should happen a lot more than they do to make the community a better place for everyone?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## C. GROUP NORMS

What is OK and not OK in terms of behaviour?

- The rule might state that “people can speak openly” but the norm might be that people are careful about what they say.
- The rule might be that “people can be open with their feelings” and the norm might be that feelings are expressed if they are positive.
- The rule might be “people support people here” but the norm might be that people talk about each other in negative ways.

## 7.3 WORD OF GOD/WILL OF GOD AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

### A. CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

The Christian Life: The life of faith in Jesus Christ that issues in a morally good life; characterized by keeping the commandments, some prayer, occasional worship, circumscribed sacrificing service. Sustained by occasional worship and sermons, general lectio. ("Those who love me keep my commandments.")

The Christian spiritual life differs from the Christian life by three characteristics

1. A more intense integrated human experience. A deeper sensitivity to life in general; loves are more loving, sorrows are more sorrowful, angers are more angry. Truth is more compelling. Reality is more real. The interpersonal relationship with God and others is more challenging and occupying.
2. An ever-growing delicacy of conscience. Moral and social issues are more vividly seen and appreciated, interpersonal relationships are more honest and respectful, material creation is more deeply cared for, a more profound and personal awareness of sin and sinfulness, a deeper concern for the "total body of Christ."
3. The ever-present desire and effort to grow in the first two characteristics. The magis. ("Blessed are the poor in spirit...") The Christian life is concerned with God's universal salvific will and its effects and consequences in the world. The Christian spiritual life, beyond the Christian life, is concerned with the will of God as it becomes operative in the interpersonal relationship between God and the individual. It is concerned with the particular will of God as differentiated from the universal. Because the spiritual life is concerned with the particular will of God as it enters into the personal relationship with the individual, the image or notion of "the will of God" must be approached with theological and psychological maturity.



## The Will of God/The Word of God

1. The plan of God, from eternity, for each and all and everything. We must somehow learn this plan and fulfill it in its every detail. (Dt 30:11-20)
2. A more dynamic and evolutionary image of the will of God; interpersonal, freedom to freedom, evolving (discipleship).
3. Prophetic Word of God + Existential Word of God = Word of God to me (or us) here and now. (Jn 17 etc.) · hyper listen

## **B. APOSTOLIC SPIRITUALITY**

Why and what are Ignatian spiritual exercises for the corporate person? The most vital and characteristic activity of any cohesive group is its decision-making. That group which cannot come to peaceful and empowering decisions will atrophy and die. The decision-making process of a group should be consonant with the nature of that group. A professedly Christian group should have a professedly Christian decision-making process. The end not only does not justify the means, but the means flow into, color, tone, and qualify the end. One cannot achieve peace by unpeaceful means. The decision-making process of a group flows into, colors, tones and qualifies the decision of the group. It is our assumption that good Christian decisions are made when a group is in consolation, for it is then that the group is working in the power of God and being directed by his Presence and drawing on grace

Apostolic spirituality is a spirituality of choice at the level of faith. It is built on a mysticism of loving service and finding God in all things. It is a different way of loving God and neighbor than the contemplative spirituality of St. John of the Cross, for instance. This latter is built on a mysticism of fruitive love, and purification and union with God comes, for the most part, in prayer. The purification and union with God in apostolic spirituality is measured by the quality of our apostolic choices, and for the most part, is affected in, and transparent in, the active apostle's work.

### Thesis

Our conviction is that we can discover or create just structures that persons can live and work by and promote. Justice is found first in our personal interior life, then in

our interpersonal group life and eventually beyond the group in the larger world. But socially sinful structures are also found first in our personal interior life, then in our group life before they are found beyond us. Grace-filled, socially just structures demand that persons find grace in their personal and group life and that they relate to each other in graceful and just ways. We know that there are instruments and processes given to us by psychology, sociology, and spiritual theology that will make it possible for us to develop and create grace-filled socially just structures. Among these processes are the acknowledging of different gifts among us, different ways in which we relate to each other in gifted and in sinful ways, the ways in which we grow spiritually, the ways in which we make decisions together, the ways in which we sense that we are cooperating with the grace of the Holy Spirit leading us.

### **C. ELEMENTS IN A SPIRITUAL EXERCISE OF THE CORPORATE PERSON**

**A.** Begin with a brief reflection on what the group has already shared.

1. What did I hear?
2. What impressed me as the others shared?
3. What new insights have I gained?
4. What are the inevitable consequences of the truths that we have shared?
5. When did I experience affective harmony with the others as they spoke?

**B.** The group then engages in sharing and discussing where the group has found unity, clarity, truth, acceptance.

**C.** Close with some appropriate prayerful acknowledgement of what the group is experiencing.

## 7.4 PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT

### A. OUR GIFT TO THE WORLD - OUR RESPONSIBILITY

*“But we hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us.” 2 Corinthians 4: 7*

We are living in strange times, unprecedented times, worldwide. More than ever, we are invited to be contemplatives in action, to be present to the situation and discern our response.

Pope Francis makes discernment a constant call through all his major writings to the Church and the world. YES, discernment is not for the Ignatian family alone, it is not even for the Christian community alone. **Discernment is a timely gift of the spirit to the whole world.** In this context, our mission is both urgent and delightful. We share in the work of the spirit to invite all people to learn to tune in to the spirit in their hearts, in their community. At a time when many wonder if God has deserted the world, we can play our role to remind humanity how so close and active God is in our midst and to help them to tune it to God’s loving and life-giving presence. It is our responsibility. It is our call. It is not an option anymore. Of course, discernment is not easy. We have experienced that at an individual level. To understand the movement of the Spirit within our own selves, to know the promptings that lead to life and not to death dealing. This is the grace of the First Week. Then God calls us and others in movements characteristic of the school of discernment of the Second Week of the Exercises, a much more intricate business. In these different levels of discernment, we are much assisted by our discerning CLC community as well as by the treasures brought through individualized spiritual accompaniment. We are invited to embrace these gifts in our own lives and care to cultivate them for the use of others.

To help our CLC communities become places where discernment is constantly supported is a unique responsibility of all of our members. Here we support each other in our own discernment and enable ourselves to accompany others as they learn to walk this way. Remember that discernment is learned and deepened as we discern.

To live a life of discernment, it is important to have time for personal prayer, to get to know our spiritual sensitivity, to be aware of what we are seeing, feeling and living in our day-to-day life. To be well informed by gathering information, for example, identifying and reading respected sources of information, studying analyses by thoughtful and spiritual leaders. To be indifferent, which means to be clear about what we are living for. Accompanying others in various situations can assist us gain information, in addition to being of immediate service.

The experience of Buenos Aires confirmed that discernment is our way as well as our mission. It is the most precious gift received from the Lord for the church and the world through CLC

*PROJECTS Nº 174, June 2020*

## **B. THE SEVEN ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT**

### **1. An explicit attitude and atmosphere of faith**

A person or group needs its faith consciousness in full awareness at the time of the discernment process. In our everyday awareness the things of faith are an ever-present but often implicit awareness. Through a good use of symbol and ritual - Eucharist, faith-sharing, personal prayer - we must bring our faith to consciousness, awareness, and desire.

### **2. Prayer - before, during, after: for light and purification**

The individuals in the group, and the group as group need contact with the Lord in the discerning process. Our prayer during the time of discernment should be Christic prayer. It should not be anathematic or centering prayer, but prayer that is consciously striving for true self-knowledge and seeking purification.

### **3. Interior freedom: poised spiritual liberty**

The discerning members and the group as a whole need to be repentantly aware of their limitations, sinfulness, and lack of awareness. They do not need to be free enough to face any decision, but free enough to face this decision here and now. Freedom can be partial. It can also be temporary: I could not face this decision last year, but I can do it now. This is Ignatian "indifference."

### **4. Information: disseminated, assimilated**

- (a) Focus on the issue in a simple declarative sentence. It should not be put in the negative. Giving reasons against a negative statement is confusing. It should

be simple, not containing many issues either implicitly or explicitly. Generally, the issue "rises up" out of the life of the individual or the group.

- (b) Discernment does not dispense with the need for having concrete information about all sides of the issue. This information should be available and assimilated by all the participants. Discernment is not illuminism; it does not do away with normal channels of knowledge. In a group discernment this ability to assimilate the data can be a criterion for who is able to enter into the discernment process.

### **5. Formulation of the issue and the separation into con and pro reasons**

The discerners are asked to give separate and quality time to the articulation of the reasons against and for the issue at hand. Discernment is not a debate with myself or with others. Neither is it problem solving. It is paying attention to the leadings of grace and my quality of presence to the issue. One always gives the negatives or cons or reasons against first. The positives or pros or reasons for the issue follow. Negative reasons are very hard to contain. They color everything else until they are out.

### **6. Attempt at consensus; a testing for congruence**

Discerners are asked to name the consensus that has formed in their own hearts and in the group; does this decision fit my name of grace: who we are before God as a faith-grace person. Is the decision a further specification of who we are before God?

### **7. Confirmation (congruence) is both internal and external**

a. Internal: joy and peace in the Holy Spirit

b. External:

1. How does the decision work out over time?

2. Is the decision congruent with legitimate authority? After the decision has moved into action, continuing discernment is necessary.

© 1974, 1989 George J. Schemel

*Members focus on increasing their awareness of being created and loved by God, as well as fostering their desire to work as a companion of Jesus to continue his mission in the world. This is done through the practices of continual prayer, individual and communal discernment to discover how God speaks to our soul. All CLC groups use this time with the Trinity to move into apostolic action within the world.*

## C. COMMUNAL AWARENESS EXAMEN

### PREAMBLE

At the conclusion of a meeting, a day workshop or any time together in a mode of communal discernment the following is a brief process (approximately 10 to 15 minutes) to review the group work together. To keep the vision of CLC as discerning communities of apostolic service/action before the group is the responsibility of the guide. Nairobi's "discern, send, support and evaluate" must forever be in our minds and hearts.

### NOTE:

The leader of the GROUP is not necessarily the leader of the group MEETING. There is a difference. The whole group is itself the 'leader' of the group - it's a shared responsibility. Not all are called/have the charism to lead the group meeting. The guide determines the leader of the meeting in the beginning stages ... and may need to input around any other leader chosen by the group - even at a later stage of development. It is not about taking turns - it is about the GROUP LIFE and FORMATION as CLC that determines who should lead the meeting. The guide has more knowledge to bring to this selection of leader of the meeting.

### PROCESS:

- Signal the end of our work together by inviting all to put away all meeting material. Prepare yourself to pray by reverently making a sacred gesture by bowing, sign of cross, or palms open to receive God's love. Now you are invited to take several slow deep breaths whole flexing your shoulders, straightening your back, putting your feet on the floor - whatever helps you mark this time as a sacred time of recollection.
- Continue to be conscious of your breathing inhaling God's love and exhaling God's love out into all of creation. Deepening your awareness of God's presence, who in fact, has dwelt in our meeting today? Allow the gifts that God has bestowed on us, throughout our graced history of our Community within so many other Communities, to surface in your imagination. Speak to them briefly in turn and give thanks for them...
- Read slowly and reflectively the sacred scripture Jer. 29: 11 -14.

- *“For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says [God], plans for your welfare and not harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me...”*
- Ask God that for the next few minutes be a time of special grace and revelation...
- With God, review our meeting from our beginning session to its completion today. Review the stirrings of your heart, your thoughts, and your actions during the time of our meeting.
- Ponder which of this thoughts, feelings, and actions created openings for the work of the Spirit in you individually and in our meeting...
- Turn to another person beside you and speak these to that person (optional).
- Ponder, once again in silence, which of these thoughts, feelings, and actions created blocks for the work of the Spirit in you individually and in the meeting... Speak to them silently to God.
- Ask God for forgiveness for any failure or omission and for healing from these effects.
- Look forward to the next day that we will gather together and ask God to continue nourishing us with such diversity the grace of God’s unity and infinite love.

**CLOSING PRAYER:** Say together the Lord’s Prayer.

## 7.5 GUIDE LISTENING AND DISCERNING

### A. THROUGH THE LENS OF COMMUNAL SPIRITUALITY

#### *Preamble*

*We speak of CLC as having a COMMUNAL SPIRITUALITY for the sake of mission. We recall the 3 dimensions/pillars of the CLC charism/way of life: community, (Ignatian) spirituality and mission. Let us first consider 3 bases of any Christian communal spirituality.*

#### **1. COMMUNAL SPIRITUALITY HAS 3 BASES:**

##### **PHILOSOPHICAL:**

Communal spirituality moves *from* and *towards* the human person as a 'being in relationship'. That is, only in community does a person find and appreciate his/her own personhood ... in meeting others we find ourselves. ... unity of friendship and unity of cooperation for a common purpose. Interestingly, even our post-modern world reveals evidence of this trend in the way it tries to move away from dualism and bring together polarities in its own way ... Bringing together the masculine and the feminine, ecology and economics, tradition and process, the individual and the global.

##### **SCRIPTURAL:**

Salvation is a communal affair – "we are saved together." The primary concern of the early Christian Community is expressed in John Ch. 13-17 and in St. Paul as the action of a loving 'Eucharistic' community.

##### **THEOLOGICAL:**

Theology explains how a person realizes his/her personal uniqueness in the community of humanity and its service - not as a series of private salvation histories but rather, the 'one history' of the human race. (See Vatican II Document, Lumen Gentium (Light to the Nations) and re Eucharist (1 Cor. 10:7) Karl Rahner).



## **2. CLC COMMUNAL SPIRITUALITY HAS A DYNAMIC OF GROWTH:**

### **IDENTITY:**

WHO we are/Who we are becoming.

### **VOCATION:**

HOW we are to be in relationship with Jesus and one another... How we are attracted by Him towards DOING.

### **MISSION:**

WHAT we are to accomplish (where and with whom).

### **CELEBRATION:**

HOW we are drawn to express gratitude and praise for mission.

Because CLC spirituality is IGNATIAN (based on the Spiritual Exercises (G.P.5) discernment of God's will and of our ways of proceeding will be the primary instrument in this cyclic dynamic pattern.

## **B. WHAT DO GUIDES LISTEN FOR AND DISCERN?**

Because CLC COMMUNAL SPIRITUALITY is marked by recognizable experiences, a guide must listen for...

### **1. HOW THE GROUP PERCEIVES THE LOCATION OF CHRIST**

A spiritual change happens when a group 'perceives' the location of Christ as no longer JUST being 'up in heaven' or 'out there' as in the Blessed Sacrament, but 'in their midst', as mystical body without denying His Otherness. Christ is found living in the community - in its weaknesses, its sufferings, its energy.

### **2. THE QUALITY OF SHARING AND RISK**

A spiritual change happens when a group enables its members to risk more intimately with one another especially in sharing both their light and dark histories.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF PRAYER**

A spiritual change happens when a group 'commits' not only to personal prayer but to communal prayer which leads its members to discussion, discernment, decision, and action. Both individual and communal discernment is needed - if

either one is neglected, BOTH spiritualities (the personal and the communal) will become distorted.

#### 4. THE WHOLE IS MORE THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

A spiritual change happens in the group because communal spirituality builds on cooperation and looks for the *presence of the Holy Spirit* in its communal interchanges as much as in individual members' experiences of grace and consolation.

#### 5. THE FOCUS OF DISCERNMENT

The focus of discernment in communal spirituality goes beyond movements in individuals to

- a. the movement of spirits in the groups' interchanges and
- b. in the group's decision-making including its ways of proceeding as a group.

#### 6. THE STAGE OF GROWTH AS CRITERION FOR JUDGING

The criterion for judging movement of spirits varies however ... the CLC stage of growth the community is in is important while attending lovingly to both the individual members and to the community as a whole.

#### 7. THE QUALITY and DIRECTION OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES:

Guides must help group members watch for:

- **Sincere expressions** of spiritual experiences/interior movements Ignatius guidelines in SE [351] says that... *when in doubt, to GO WITH any interior movement in keeping with God's service or at least not opposed to it (even if it raises feelings of vainglory and needs purification) - or GO WITH it even if it is thought to be 'less good' than something else (and trust growth in discernment will unfold in them).*
- **Exaggerations** ... inner movements which lead to extreme positions of either individualism or collectivism.
- **Consolation and Desolation Patterns** ... help the group ponder and describe these patterns together.

#### 8. THE PRESENCE OF AUTHENTIC LOVE

Love is the main motive in decision-making even though it can be deceptive. The guide must learn to help a community discern true experiences of love and consolation from counterfeit ones (a Second Week discernment skill).

*Written by Pam Daigle 2008*

## C. GUIDING CLC APOSTOLIC COMMUNITIES: COMMUNAL MOVEMENT OF SPIRITS

*The following is 'primarily' focused on CLC Growth more typical of Stages 3, 4, 5*

### Some Assumptions:

Discerning the movement of spirits in myself or in another person is often easier than discerning them in a group UNLESS it sees itself through the lens of the following assumptions:

- The group sees itself as a *corporate person*, that is as "a" Body of Christ within the Body of Christ.
- The group is composed of maturing persons who know themselves, are committed to the group, and willing to extend themselves for the sake of the group.
- Spiritual conversation, as an art and a skill, is well developed.
- The group's decision-making processes are consonant with the nature and charism of the group or the charisms of its members.
- The group principles, values, norms and structures form and shape their 'availability' for mission and their group development emerges from evaluation in an on-going way.

For such groups, the rules for personal discernment of spirits in the Spiritual Exercises can **apply** to communal discernment of spirits, especially Ignatius' descriptions of **spiritual consolation, spiritual desolation, and deception**. Group dynamics will also influence this understanding.

### Some Considerations:

Spiritual (religious) experiences

### Possible Descriptions of Communal Spiritual Consolation:

The GROUP:

- affectively senses itself as loved and loveable 'as a community'.
- has a sense of belonging to one another or a capacity to be in solidarity with those beyond themselves.
- responds to an experience of peace with the desire to be available to God.
- has a tangible commitment for building their way of communal life.
- has an energy for serving one another (and others) which is felt within the group.
- has resolve and energy for mission, the greater good (Magis) moves them forward.

- can suffer 'with', offer compassionate presence to their own members or others beyond.
- receives or responds to a felt increase of faith, hope, love.
- is lovingly willing to ask hard questions of one another or the group itself.
- is able to stay with conflict and difficulty with an attitude of relying on God's grace.
- is given a graced capacity to make hard decisions for the sake of God's call to them.

### **Possible Descriptions of Communal Spiritual Desolation:**

The GROUP:

- is caught in confusion, discouragement, apathy.
- experiences a shift in the group related to commitment to meetings or to their way of communal life.
- experiences resistance to the group's articulated vision or ways of proceeding which may be manifest by behaviors of withdrawal, anger, doubt.
- experiences less trust, vulnerability in the group – keeping things 'hidden'
- feels a loss of energy for mission.
- slides into patterns of intellectualizing, rationalizing, scapegoating, projection.
- objects to moving through the power cycle or to taking the necessary time to evaluate their experience in order to reach better decisions.
- feels helpless, overwhelmed by a task and wants to give up rather than find a better way.
- experiences a lessening in their willingness to listen actively to one another, especially during decision-making processes.
- resists the efforts of their leaders to move them forward in the CLC way of life
- becomes turned in on itself.

### **Possible Descriptions of Communal Spiritual Deception**

The GROUP:

- begins to take shortcuts towards a 'good' option/action.
- begins to exaggerate or minimize its strengths OR limitations.
- experienced a tone of exaggerated enthusiasm seeping into the group.
- a tendency to be 'nice' and not confront starts to prevail.
- grabs onto bright ideas that appear to be inspired but are rooted in false assumptions.
- is being subtly influenced by compulsions typical of the Enneagram.
- places great emphasis on the ideas brought forth in conversation but fails to take action – they don't do what they said they would do.
- is caught in imitating deceptive cultural patterns such as 'busyness' versus balance, 'rewarding' people for overwork, or 'consuming more'.

### For Reflection:

- What in the any of above have I noticed happening in the group(s) I guide?  
How might I need to respond to be more effective in my role as CLC guide?

### Essential Steps for An Individual Mission

#### 1) DISCERNING:

We are invited to live a process of apostolic discernment

- to recognize the will of God,
- to grow in awareness of where God is calling us to serve, and
- to join in *the Mission of Jesus*.

In this discernment it is important for each member to reflect back and relish the sacrament of Baptism when s/he was welcomed into the Christian community as well as return in contemplation to the point in life when s/he decided to follow Jesus & continue to do so.

This can be done by:

- ❖ praying my Graced History. Manual of Formation Phase III pg. 141
- ❖ reflecting on "Who have I been called to be with?" One Apostolic Community: Our Way of Life May 2004, Lethbridge, Alta: *Harvest Spring 2004*
- ❖ looking at my personal attitude in everyday life (The Awareness Examen),  
i.e. How I have been:
  - available to follow God's will?
  - open to the signs of the times in today's world?
  - ready to respond with compassion and competence?

As laity, in many cases we did not formally declare our vocation. But, by following Jesus in this world we have been carrying out *the Mission of Jesus* in a multitude of ways. Now it is time to focus on this and to name it specifically by discerning what my individual mission is for this coming year as stated in the Charism "*the different contexts of their life as laity: family, politics, profession, community, local Church.*"

Suggested scriptures found in Manual One Meetings 14-18 on discipleship e.g., Peter and Mary.

## **2) SENDING:**

In sending each other and being sent as a whole community, we repeat in the Church the gesture of Jesus, "As the Father has sent me, I send you."

We wish a renewed awareness of WHO is sending, of WHAT the member is being sent to do and finally of HOW the community sends its members, with certain signs and gestures.

## **3) SUPPORTING:**

When each CLC member shares with the community the necessary information about her/his mission and the community listens to each member and in everyday life expresses its support with concrete gestures, we have responded to this call of supporting one another. Round two provides a forum for the members of a community to "support" each other's individual mission throughout the year.

## **4) EVALUATING:**

We are called to become more aware of what we have done and how we are living the mission received. It is a continuation and confirmation of the original discernment and so the same attitudes are required in daily life. Again, round two provides a forum for the members of a community to remind each other to "evaluate" their individual missions throughout the year.

## 7.6 WORKING THROUGH CONFLICT

### A. CONFLICT HAPPENS

- It isn't always bad.
- It can lead to better understanding of issues and people and can provide opportunities for growth.
- As organizations become less hierarchical, less based on positional authority, less based on clear boundaries or responsibility and authority, it is likely that conflict will increase.
- A resolution involves two levels: a rational decision making (substantive) process and a psychological (emotional) process. The outcome is likely the result of both, although the emotional is the more challenging of the two.

*Conflict usually has something to do with:*

1. the process the group is using;
2. the content being discussed; and/or
3. the people (personalities) involved in the discussion.

*Sources of conflict:*

1. Miscommunication and misinformation, different interpretation of information;
2. Relationships: real or perceived differences in needs and priorities;
3. Real or perceived differences in values, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, ideology;
4. Structural conditions: control, power, unequal distribution of leadership.

*Styles in dealing with conflict:*

1. Avoid conflict.
2. Accommodate others to keep the peace.
3. Compromise: find middle ground.
4. Compete: try to win my own solution.
5. Collaborate: seek a better solution.

*What style best matches the situation and the desired outcome? Some points for Guides to be aware of:*

1. Clarity of purpose-what is CLC and why is it important
2. Understand the level of commitment of the members
3. Group focus for a period of time-do not stray too far
4. Give the group some space and time to deal with issues

## **B. SKILLS NEEDED FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICT**

### **PERSONAL AND GROUP SKILLS**

#### **Preamble**

CLC Leaders need to keep the following in mind:

1. What CLC is – clarity of purpose
2. The level of commitment of the members of the group
3. The capacity of the group to stay focused
4. The amount of time and space needed to deal with issues

#### **1. Skills:**

- Create a safe space for all participants to feel fully heard, respected and supported.
- Set some ground rules: no personal attacks (focus on the ideas not personalities) one person speaks at a time.



- Notice what is going on, both behavior and its impact on the group - decide whether what is going on needs to be mirrored to the group. If you decide it does, describe what you have noticed in a non-blaming way. Ask the group whether it wants to do anything differently or suggest new behavior.
- Communicate very carefully. Subtle verbal and body language can make a difference. Make direct eye contact and use the word "and" instead of "but." And is seen as joining. But is seen as a divider.
- Describe the conflict in such a way that people do not feel personally attacked.
- Ask focused questions so that you can listen for the facts as well as the feelings in the group.
- Ask good questions which invite others to open up about their thoughts and feelings and what they want to see happen.
- Restate and summarize what someone has said so that they feel understood.
- Ask the group if they see any shared interests among the conflicting positions.
- Try to narrow the range of solutions by asking which ones seem to best bring the desired outcomes.
- Test for agreement, evaluate the agreement and modify the solution if needed. (See how willing are people to adopt one or more solutions).

## 2. Personal Characteristics

- Poise
- Judgment
- Maturity
- Ego strength
- Freedom from excessive anxiety
- Avoid self-pre-occupation
- Desire to help people
- Perceptiveness
- Intuition
- Empathy
- Imaginativeness
- Tolerance of frustration

## 3. Guiding Skills

- Active listening-attending to verbal and non-verbal communication
- Restating-to understand
- Clarifying-getting the core of the message
- Summarizing-pulling everything together
- Questioning-open-ended to learn more
- Interpreting-offering explanations for certain feelings, thought and behaviors
- Challenging-seeing discrepancies, bringing greater awareness
- Reflecting feelings
- Supporting-encouraging words

- Empathizing-understanding
- Facilitating- help group assume greater responsibility for group direction
- Evaluating-the process and group dynamic
- Giving feedback
- Suggesting
- Disclosing
- Modeling
- Dealing with silence
- Blocking-counterproductive behavior
- Terminating-finalizing the group's history

#### **4. What We Do**

- We deal with resistance, Transference, Countertransference.
- We interpret, clarify and challenge in loving way.
- Ambivalent feelings must be acknowledged.
- So should commitment to the process.
- Willingness to try new behaviors and attitudes within the group.

#### **5. What Does a Leader Do When Conflict Escalates?**

The atmosphere becomes charged with anger, frustration, resentment and hostility. Communication breaks down and people look for someone to blame. The original issues become blurred. The conflict becomes personalized. Perceived differences become magnified.

It is not easy to shift this situation but we can:

- Reduce tension through humor;
- Let the people vent and acknowledge their view point;
- Rephrase comments so that you are sure that you understand them and that they hear them through you;
- Slice the larger issue into smaller issues;
- Separate the issues from the people;
- Focus on common goals; and/or
- Focus less on your position and more on their need to move forward.

## C. WORKING WITH CONFLICT

### International Leadership Formation Encounter Module 7

#### The nature of Conflicts in CLC

Conflicts are natural and inevitable part of people living and working together and so CLC is not an exception. It must be appreciated that conflicts are not necessarily a bad thing. Sometimes the existence of conflict is a sign of interest in the organization or that which is being done. On the other hand the absence of conflicts could indicate apathy.

The conflicts experienced in CLC are for the most part not big, emotional scenes of physical violence. They usually involve the small stuff, like someone discounting what the other says. Too often when someone in CLC is angry or disappointed in the direction CLC is taking, they just go away or are pushed away rather than addressing the disagreement. The main causes for such conflicts are:

- **Communication Causes:** ineffective communication or misunderstandings
- **Personal causes:** ego, biases, lack of empathy, differing backgrounds, differing values and beliefs, prejudices and personalities.
- **Process causes:** differing views about what should be done or how it should be done, such as differing goals, differing approaches to problems, perspectives on issues and differing sources of information

Leadership must play a central role in helping the community move through conflict. Effective conflict resolution skills are essential for leaders and again, CLC is no exception. Leaders need to be aware of their own beliefs about conflict, their style of handling conflict, and develop effective resolution skills

Conflict can be defined as disagreement between individuals. It could be a clash of interests, values, actions, views or directions.

#### Why Conflicts arise?

- People disagree when they see things differently. This can happen due to differences in understanding, communication barriers, unresolved prior conflicts, disposition, awareness, background or outlook. (Ladder of Inference)

- People have different styles, status, thinking styles, principles, values, beliefs and slogans which determine their choices and objectives.

### Theories of Conflict Management

**The Traditional Theory:** considers conflicts are bad, are caused by trouble makers, and should be subdued.

**Contemporary Theory:** recognizes conflict as a natural and inevitable outcome of human interaction. Conflicts are the natural result of new ideas and change.

*Ask:* How is conflict perceived in your culture?

### Some Types of Conflict

We can think about different **categories of conflict:**

1. **Relationship conflicts:** concern the way people view and treat one another.
2. **Identity conflicts:** occur when people sense that the very essence of who they are has been attacked, belittled, or ignored.
3. **Data conflicts:** are disagreements about information (data), its interpretation, is relevancy, procedures used to gather or analyze it, or any combination of these.
4. **Structural conflicts:** are about time, (either too little or too much), roles. It results from the organization's structural systems.
5. **Value conflicts:** occur when one group of people tries to force their value or belief system on another.
6. **Interest conflicts:** are about actual or perceived incompatible needs or desires.

### Five Styles of Conflict Resolution Behavior:

- **Coercion/Force/Competition (My way or the highway):** is a win-or-lose style of handling conflicts. It has high concern for personal goals and low concern for relationships.

- **Collaboration (Let's do it together):** aims at finding some solution that can satisfy the conflicting parties. It involves high concern for both goals and relationship.
- **Compromise (Meet you in the middle):** is a common way of dealing with conflicts. You give up something and so does the other party, but neither of you are totally satisfied. It also shows with the concern for personal goals as well as relationships.
- **Avoidance (Run away):** is based on the belief that conflict is bad or unwanted. It should be delayed or ignored. It has low concern for both goals and relationship.
- **Accommodation (I give up, let's do it your way):** It plays down differences and stresses commonalities. It involves high concern for relationship at the expense of personal goals.

**Negotiation** is a process in which two or more conflicting parties share ideas, information, and options, seeking a mutually acceptable outcome. Negotiation in itself is a conflict resolution process.

### **Prerequisites for Negotiation**

The following conditions are fundamental to the negotiation process:

- Both parties acknowledge that there are issues which need to be resolved.
- There is interdependency —based on mutual needs, values or goals, and/or where the future relationship or reputation is important.
- There is a sense of urgency to resolve the conflict.
- The parties are relatively rational, informed, and skilled in communicating.
- Other options for resolving the issues are less desirable.
- Participation is voluntary.

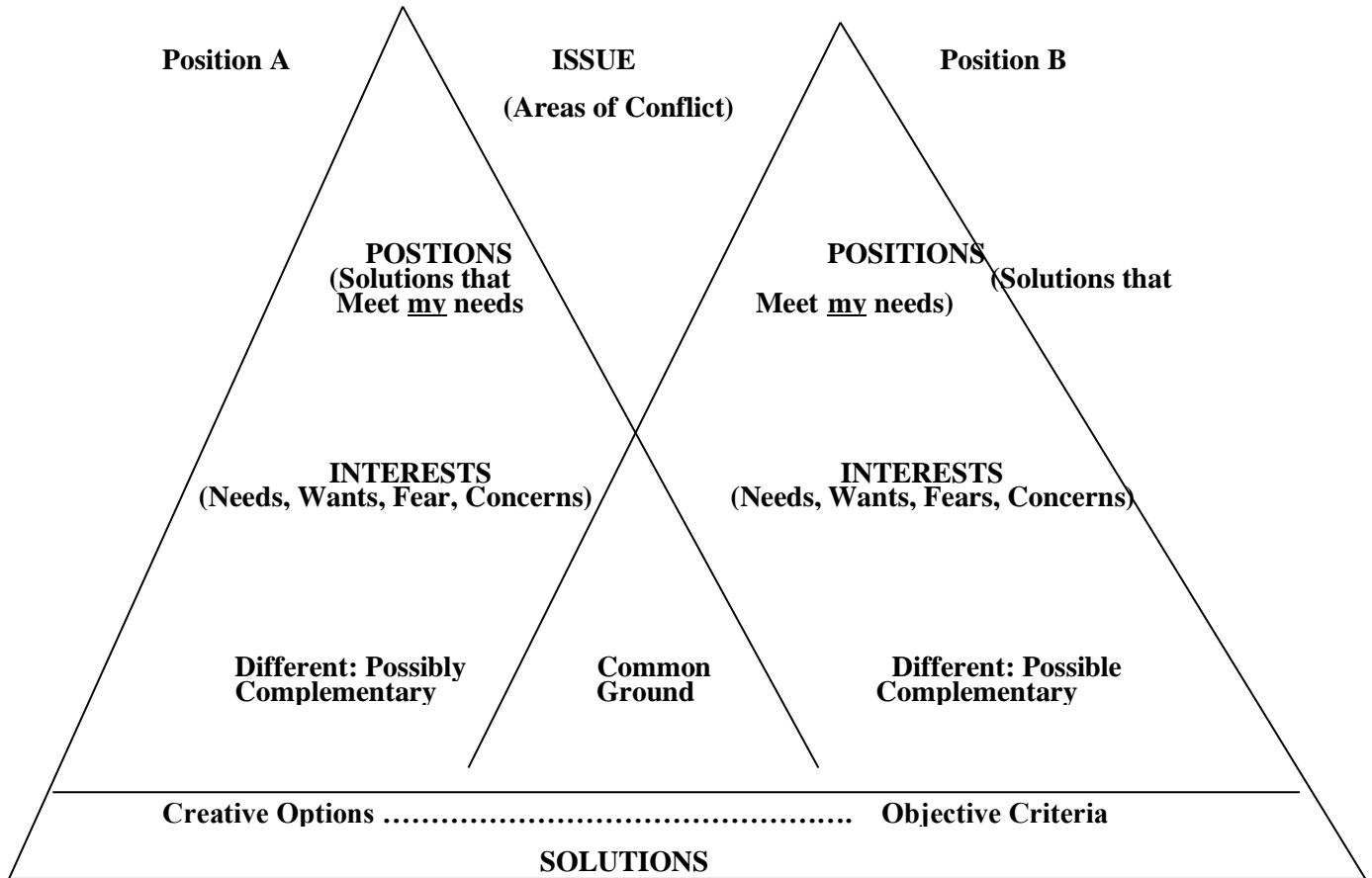
### **Interest-Based Negotiation**

Negotiation was traditionally taught as a win/lose discipline. As the field of conflict resolution developed, theorists have demonstrated that it is possible (and preferable in most cases) to negotiate so that fulfilling one party's wants and needs doesn't have to come at the expense of other party. Interest-based negotiation offers a more effective alternative. By examining the interests underlying the conflicting positions, parties in conflict can design creative solutions to meet shared interests.

As long as the two persons/groups remain focused on positions (see figure), any agreement is at best a compromise. If the persons can inquire about the other's

interests (beliefs, values, desires, fears) that led to their position, together it is often possible to identify creative new solutions—different from either position, but achieving the real desires of each.

**The Negotiation Process: Moving from Positions to Interests**



(Mutually acceptable agreement based on interests rather than positions)

**Four Principles of Negotiation**

**1) Separate the people from the problem.**

- Separating the people from the issues allows the parties to address the issues without damaging their relationship.
- Be soft on the people, hard on the problem.

## 2) Focus on Interests, not positions.

- Good agreements focus on the parties' interests, rather than their positions. (A person's interests such as needs, desires, concerns, fears are what leads to the positions we adopt).

## 3) Generate Options for Mutual Gain.

- The four basic steps in inventing options are:
  - ❖ Stating the problem,
  - ❖ Analyzing the problem,
  - ❖ Considering general approaches
  - ❖ Considering specific actions.
- The parties should come together in an informal atmosphere and brainstorm for all possible solutions to the problem.

## 4) Insist on Using Objective Criteria.

- Frame each issue as a joint search for objective criteria.
- Reason and be open to reason as to which standards are most appropriate and how they should be applied.
- Never yield to pressure, only to principle.

### Ladder of Inference Model and Conflict

The ladder of inference model is a very useful tool for helping leaders and individuals avoid taking actions based on assumptions and inferences rather than on observable and tested data. It can therefore be a very valuable tool for changing communication patterns in conflict settings. In conflict, more than any other time we are in danger of going up the ladder altogether unconsciously. We make assumptions and form our beliefs about the other and then only notice the behaviors that support our judgment. In conflict it can be difficult to separate my assumptions about someone's actions from their real intention. A simple difference in perspective, or even a misunderstanding can sometimes grow into a serious split in a relationship or within a community. (See figure in Leaders' Manual pg. 247)

By consciously using the framework of the Ladder of Inference during disagreements, the parties in conflict can more easily slow the conversation down. Each can ask about the other's real intention and see if their assumptions about the other were accurate.

The ladder of inference is a model that describes an individual's mental process of observing situations, drawing conclusions and taking action. The Ladder of Inference,

a tool developed by management theorist Chris Argyris, simply maps out the natural human process of observing the world, making sense of it, and then acting on it. The ladder of inference facilitates this by mapping out the process of moving from what we observe to what we conclude. When we say "the fact is..." what we are actually saying is the fact, as I understand it based upon my data selection process, culture, personal background, assumptions, etc.

### **Avoid Leaping Up that Ladder**

The simplest way to stop leaping up the ladder of inference is to slow down and challenge your assumptions, inferences, and conclusions. Instead of stepping up the next rung on the ladder:

- Ask yourself a question if you need more data and make sure that what you're seeing and understanding things correctly.
- Suspend your assumptions and judgments by asking questions that explore the meaning of a behavior rather assuming that you know the meaning.
- Setting aside preconceived notions of another person and give that person another chance to explain.

## **D. PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS IN GROUPS**

### **Identifying Anti-Group Roles**

- Blocker
- Recognition seeker
- Self-confessor
- Dominator
- Rescuer
- Do-gooder
- Informer
- Hostile member
- Monopolist
- Silent member
- Long winded dominator
- The side conversationalist
- The quiet participant

The facilitator has to decide whether to address the issue with an individual aside or in the group. No one wants to be embarrassed.



## Confrontation

*Decide whether what is going on needs to be mirrored to the group.*

- *If you decide it does, describe what you have noticed in a non-blaming way.*

Ask the group whether it wants to do anything differently or suggest new behavior.

- Confrontation challenges the group to face themselves realistically.
- It is an open, honest identification of the group's self-defeating behaviors or manipulations. It is a deliberate attempt to examine the consequences of some aspects of the group's behavior.
- Many confrontations are too harsh and insensitive. They must be given in a non-judgmental tone. It is an act of caring.
- Knowing when to confront is very important. Premature confrontation usually produces anger and defensiveness in the group. A solid rapport is needed if the confrontation is to be received.
- Confrontation can address the three dimensions of CLC: communal, spiritual and apostolic.

## E. COMING TO PEACE

Isa Gucciardi is the author of Coming to Peace. She is a psychologist and creator of Depth Hypnosis, a ground-breaking therapeutic model that has won rave reviews from psychotherapeutic and spiritual counselors alike.

She speaks on Conflict and how it is inevitable in our companies, faith communities, families and ourselves. James 4:1 says, *"Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you?"*

In her book, Coming to Peace, she explores a process for moving through conflict in ourselves, our families and groups based on indigenous practices of honest dialogue and self-reflection. But for any process to work, she says these elements must be present in the people involved:

**Equality** – Each person will be given equal time to speak, and every person's experience will be considered of equal value to the experience of every other member of the group.

**Mutual respect** – Each person strives to treat other people with respect. This means not interrupting someone when they are speaking and not making negative comments or characterizations.

**Honesty** – Each person strives to tell the truth of their experience and be forthcoming about their actions.

**Commitment to personal responsibility** – Each person remains fully accountable for their actions and agrees to seriously consider the effects those actions may have had on others.

**Compassion** – Each person strives to hold a compassionate space for themselves and the other members of the group.

**Tolerance** – Each person agrees to practice tolerance even when they do not agree with what is being presented by other members of the group.

**Patience** – Each person agrees to practice patience even when they feel upset by what is being presented by other members of the group.

**Willingness to engage** – Each person agrees to participate in the process even when things become difficult, or when they do not like what is being brought forth.

**Cultivation of inner wisdom** – Each person agrees to do their best to attune to their inner wisdom.

# SECTION EIGHT

8.1 BEST PRACTICES.....	348
A.    AN UNDERSTANDING .....	348
B.    THE CRAFT OF SACRED LISTENING .....	348
8.2 FACILITATING MOTIVATION OF MEMBERS IN A GROUP .....	350
A.    MOTIVATING MEMBERS .....	350
B.    MOTIVATING AND ENERGIZING A COMMUNITY.....	352
8.3 CASE STUDIES OF CLC IN DIFFERENT STAGES OF GROWTH AND DECLINE .....	353
A.    SETTING THE STAGE .....	353
B.    CASE STUDY 1 – PRE-COMMUNITY .....	354
C.    CASE STUDY 2 – INITIATION.....	356
D.    CASE STUDY 3 – REDEMPTION (PHASE A).....	358
E.    CASE STUDY 3 – REDEMPTION (PHASE B).....	359
F.    CASE STUDY 4 – DEEPENING .....	360
G.    CASE STUDY 5 – APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY .....	362
H.    CASE STUDY 6 – DISCERNING MISSION .....	364
8.4 CONTINUOUSLY CALLED AND CHALLENGED .....	366
8.5 NOTES, REFLECTIONS AND PRAYER EXERCISES .....	370
A.    THE CALL OF CHRIST THE KING.....	370
B.    THE TWO STANDARDS AND A MEDITATION ON THE TWO LEADERS....	370
C.    THE TWO STANDARDS: A MEDITATION ON TWO LEADERS, TWO STRATEGIES.....	371
D.    JESUS’ PERSONAL CALL TO GROUP GUIDES .....	373
E.    A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CLC GENERAL PRINCIPLES .....	374
F.    MEDITATING ON THE CLC GENERAL PRINCIPLES 1-9.....	375
8.6 THE CLC CHARISM: EIGHT PRAYER EXERCISES .....	389
8.7 SENDING FORTH CELEBRATIONS .....	400
A.    FOR A MEMBER WHO HAD DISCERNED A MISSION OR MINISTRY.....	400
B.    CLC BLESSING FOR ONE WHO HAS DISCERNED TO LEAVE CLC.....	401

## 8.1 BEST PRACTICES

*'The Christian Life Community is an international association of Christians: men and women, adults and young people, of all social conditions, who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with Him for the building of the Kingdom.'*

### A. AN UNDERSTANDING

"Best practices" is a term that can be applied broadly and across a swath of organizations and serve as a general framework or serve as a roadmap for a variety of situations.

Best practices are the working standards or ethical guidelines that provide the best course(s) of action providing the better way to deal with problems and issues that arise.

Best practices are a set of guidelines, ethics, or ideas that represent the most efficient or prudent course of action in a given situation.

Organic best practices arise naturally as people work. They find that some ways of working produce better outcomes than others. These can come from an individual or from groups as they exchange ideas and experience.

The following pages present a number of articles and practices that speak to the 'What' and 'How to' (Best Practices) in addressing a few specific processes in the development and formation of CLC groups as well as the skills of the Leadership, specifically Group Guides.

### B. THE CRAFT OF SACRED LISTENING

The best practise is the practising of listening – in everyday life, in prayer (conversation with God), to Scriptures, in CLC sharing through the growing stages of Ignatian Spirituality, when God speaks to us through others, and through Creation.

God explains to the prophet Isaiah that to listen is to receive life, that listening is like eating.

*'Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food, incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live.'*

### **Sacred Listening**

**1. Listen before speaking.**

Allow the person who is speaking time to complete their thought; wait a few seconds before responding. Ask "Is there anything else?"

**2. Listen to yourself.**

Be in touch with your inner voice. Ask "What wants to be said next?"

**3. Listen with an open mind.**

Be curious and appreciative of what you are listening to. Listen for new ideas instead of judging and evaluating.

**4. Listen for understanding.**

You do not have to agree with what you hear, or even believe it in order to listen to understand the other person.

**5. Listen with empathy and compassion.**

Put your agenda aside for the moment. Put yourself in their shoes.

**6. Listen with patience and presence.**

Listening well takes time and your full "listening presence."

**7. Listen in relationship.**

Let the speaker know that you are listening. Use body language: nodding, facial expressions.

**8. Listen with reverence to the Divine in the other.**

Every person is created in the image of God. Listen with humility.

## 8.2 FACILITATING MOTIVATION OF MEMBERS IN A GROUP

### A. MOTIVATING MEMBERS

How can a CLC leader facilitate motivation of members to participate actively in the work of the community? (Motivation comes from within people as a consequence of commitment).

The objective is to attempt to understand how CLC leadership can be effective in calling membership to action, in delegating as well as involving others to ensure that the work of the community gets done.

#### **Rationale**

The experience is that too often CLC members are not enthusiastic in taking up assignments or other works of the community. Yet CLC leaders need to encourage membership to get engaged. Besides, "...our life is essentially apostolic" (GP 4). Much of this is a result of formation that focuses on CLC as a way of life.

#### **Content**

The first point to be understood is that CLC as an organization is wholly voluntary. As a result, the majority of its national leadership functions on voluntary basis. Therefore, the power of any leader to motivate comes from his or her ability to empower all its members to achieve the vision of the community. Conversely, the community empowers a member to exercise leadership authority on behalf of the group. However, the authority that such a leader enjoys is only facilitative authority since such a leader can neither reward nor coerce.

The work of ISECP (Ignatian Spiritual Exercises for the Corporate Person) on organization development is very helpful in our appreciation of this. The power of a volunteer organization "comes from people freely choosing to engage themselves in efforts to achieve a goal which they themselves have freely chosen and adopted. This power of free persons is called commitment."

Therefore, CLC leadership is called upon to set free this kind of power among CLC members, a group of people engaged in a common endeavor. For this to happen, CLC members require a constant reminder in a very freeing way the goals that they have freely set for themselves. Why is this necessary? Because all of us suffer occasional

self-doubt. It is the nature of the cyclical life, death and resurrection typical of all of us.

### **Some Assumptions about Spiritual Organizational Development**

1. All life is characterized by a pattern of Life-Death-Resurrection. For this reason, all of us experience high moments and total conviction in our beliefs and programmes and hence high motivation in our actions. However, we too suffer occasional doubt in what we believe in and in our convictions. When this happens, our motivation to our commitments reduces.
2. It is essential to distinguish between **what's happening** and **what's really going on**. What's happening is nations are making war and making peace. Individuals are being born and dying, marrying and given in marriage, buying and selling, laughing and crying. What's really going on is that **the Father is forming the total Body of Christ**.
3. People are more important than the systems they create to organize their lives.
4. It's OK for people to be who they are.
5. It is necessary that leaders of organizations be concerned with the whole: with the various patterns of Life-Death-Resurrection in the organization.
6. When members of an organization are present to one another and engaged with one another intentionally in this process of Life-Death-Resurrection, they are participating in the contemplative dynamic of organizational life.
7. This contemplative organizational dynamic needs shepherding, nurturing, focusing, and ongoing reflection in dialogue with the Spirit of God active in the world.
8. The more comprehensive the responsibility of a leader in an organization, the more their concern must be for the deeper patterns of Life-Death-Resurrection: the myth-level of the organization.
9. This pattern of Life-Death-Resurrection is Christocentric and Christological, and it is always the Spirit who guides, teaches and empowers growth of the corporate person in this mystery.

*Adapted from Ignatian  
Spirituality for the Corporate Person, 1986*

## B. MOTIVATING AND ENERGIZING A COMMUNITY

Following the life-death–resurrection cycle (see Leaders’ Manual pages 237-245), the community needs help whenever doubt occurs. The points of interventions are always in the dream, the shared vision. It is important to **empower** all members in achieving the purpose and goals of the community. Therefore, in order to energize once more, both the individuals as well as the community must be reminded of their commitment one step below where they are on the power generating side of the Life, Death, Resurrection Cycle. You need to review one step below in order to move one step higher. This is when the conscious leadership comes in. A group forms for a reason, a purpose, and a goal.

To be most **empowering** for the community as a whole and for the individual members, the group must function in an orderly, natural way, following its programmes that are freely chosen.

Knowing where the community is on the Cycle and enabling it to keep its commitment so that it can progress to the higher level is one of the major responsibilities of the CLC leader (keep the fire burning).

Following are questions for the Group Guide to ponder:

1. What attitudes and assumptions do you find in yourself that are at variance with what you have just read?
2. How do you understand the reality of the Life-Death-Resurrection Cycle as it applies to your community?
3. What dynamics of the Life-Death-Resurrection Cycle have you been more or less unaware or unconscious of?
4. What is the value of having clear objectives before initiating programs?
5. What is the inherent value of trying to look for a solution to a problem at least one level below where the problem arises?
6. Do we have good methods of handling things on the downside of the Life-Death-Resurrection cycle?
7. What resonates with your own faith experience and understanding?
8. What questions are surfacing in you about the spirituality of group?



## 8.3 CASE STUDIES OF CLC IN DIFFERENT STAGES OF GROWTH AND DECLINE

### A. SETTING THE STAGE

A CLC group of six have been journeying for a number of years. A couple expressed an interest to their friends (a couple within the group) the desire to come and journey with the group. This request was taken to the group. Decision was made to invite starting in the fall and the group would go back to Phase 1 prayer material that had been completed awhile back. (Coordinator met with them individually prior to first meeting)

I observed that meetings seemed to go well. All were involved in discerning mission in the third or 4<sup>th</sup> year of their journey with us. There was some unsettledness with one of the new partners around this because there was a feeling the group was not free but was selecting this mission because it was of interest to another member. This was heard, reflected on as part of the discernment process and further explanation of our early history in this mission area was expanded on. As we journeyed it was expressed that he "could live with the groups decision ". All members were involved in a variety of ways in the mission.

AS we continued to meet, I observed a dynamic occurring between the couple (newer members). One of the partners during faith sharing would make a short comment while the other partner shared or there would be the "eye". Then one would attend and the other would not. One shared very freely when the other partner was not present. I observed discomfort and helplessness in the group (tension). Eventually the couple left the group.

I know you do not have all the specifics but how might you proceed as a Group Guide?

**Grace:**

*I seek - from the Lord, an understanding of the signs of growth and decline (of dying and rising) in a CLC as it progresses in life.*

### **POINTS:**

- A. Consider the following Case Studies (see following case #1).
- B. What movement of spirits in a CLC would indicate the stage of Pre-community? Initiation? Redemption? Redemption? Deepening? Apostolic Community?
- C. 1. When do you affirm and encourage a CLC?  
2. When would you question and challenge a CLC?  
3. What instruments would you use to assist a CLC to learn and practice communal discernment?

**Colloquy:** I speak to the Lord about all I have learned, and I consider questions I might ask in the Assembly. I close with an Our Father.

## **B. CASE STUDY 1 – PRE-COMMUNITY**

**Pre-Community** enabling persons in any given group to become community ... "*Lord, where do you live? (Jn 1:38)*

*This is a group of persons just beginning and who are searching to deepen their faith.*

### **GOAL**

The goal is to discover whether or not they are drawn to move further in this way of living out their Christian faith by forming community.

### **CHARACTERISTIC**

The characteristic of the group is that the persons come from diverse backgrounds. This will create a degree of instability and a vague sense of identity. Members depend on the "CLC Formator(s)" for guidance and leadership.

### **SIGNS**

The signs that this stage is ending are when members are developing a sense of identity and they have a sense of belonging. Some members may at this time indicate that they wish to continue meeting as a community.

### **A SMALL GROUP OF FRIENDS SOMEWHERE IN CANADA:**

- Tom and Sharon... Married, 30 years, RC, Tom is a plant foreman...Sharon is a teacher.
- Shirley and Mike... Married, 40 years Anglican, retired.

- Darlene and Bob... Married, 35 years United Church, Darlene stay at home Mom, Bob a Lawyer.
- Stan... Widow, a committed member of the Knights of Columbus, ministry to the local soup kitchen.
- Paula... Single, 35 years of age, has experimented with several religions but is not satisfied with what she has experienced.

This is a group of 8 persons that are all living in the same general area. They often get together during the summer for a neighbourhood barbecue. Darlene and Bob, during one of those occasions, had heard of CLC and they expressed an interest in CLC. They had heard of the work that they do in the community. They are attracted to this organization and decide that they should find out more about this organization CLC.

Bob, being a take charge type of person, volunteers to contact a CLC person that he personally knows through his law firm. A few days later Bob places a phone call with the CLC member. The CLC member offers to come to their next BBQ and talk to them about CLC.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. As a CLC member, do you think that this is a good way to proceed? If YES, what are your reasons?
2. If NO, how would you deal with this situation?

Following their first meeting the members of this new group have decided that they want to continue meeting. They will meet once a week on Wednesday evening at 7 to 9pm. The place of meeting is to take place at Darlene's and Bob's home. This is decided by Bob because, as he says, Darlene stays at home, and she will have time to prepare for the meetings. Bob will be the facilitator for the meeting.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Is this small faith group in a CLC Pre-Community phase?
2. What do you think that should be done at this point?

The Regional Coordinator has contacted Bob and has suggested that a CLC Group Guide could come to their next meeting. They are introduced to the CLC format of a group meeting, and they all agree that they like this type of meeting. You have been appointed by the members of the group to be the Group Coordinator and Guide. They have discerned to continue meeting as a group.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. What CLC formation resources/tools would you use at this first meeting?
2. What is the group's present "Stage of CLC Growth?"

3. What is this "CLC Stage" related to in the Spiritual Exercises?
4. What CLC formation resource would recommend being used at this stage?

The group has been meeting for 13 weeks. Throughout these weeks you have continued to wear two hats: the Group Coordinator and Guide. You feel that the group is now ready to discern members have been faithful to the weekly meetings. They are developing a sense of identity and sense of belonging. But you have also noticed that Bob has been trying to impose his own agenda at different times. There is tension in the group when this happens, but you have noticed that this is not expressed verbally but rather the body language of members seem to indicate disharmony and tension.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. As a Group Guide what are a few signs of body language that you have observed?
2. How do you confirm that this tension is being felt in the group and how would you address this tension?
3. What CLC formation resources would you use in an attempt to bring about greater harmony in the CLC group.

You have dealt with the tension in the group, and they have moved on by communally discerning the appointing of Darlene as the Group Coordinator.

### **QUESTION**

- As a Group Guide, how would you address the discerning and decision-making process for a Group Coordinator? What formation resources would you use?

## **C. CASE STUDY 2 – INITIATION**

**CLC Initiation: persons who have shown an interest and appear to have the necessary disposition and desire for the CLC way of life ... "Come and see" (Jn 1:39)**

At this stage the group members are getting to know CLC Spirituality and its history; General Principles/Norms, CLC governance, organizational structures, and financial responsibilities etc.

### **GOAL**

The goal is to know and experience the CLC charism on a personal level and as a Community.

## **CHARACTERISTIC**

The emerging characteristics are that members are integrating life and faith; there is a growing honesty, and they accept each other's strengths and weaknesses.

## **SIGNS**

A sign that this stage is ending is when members are showing a readiness to make personal decisions in a communal discernment mode. Members could be ready to make a "Temporary Commitment" to the CLC way of life. This cycle may cause some members to leave and seek other ways of living out their faith (celebrating this moment in appropriate ritual form is a sign that God calls each one of us in a variety of ways).

The group has now begun session 14 in the CLC Formation Manual. As the Group Coordinator, Darlene converses on a regular basis with the Group Guide after the meetings. They have decided that the members of the group are at the stage of beginning to seriously consider an initial commitment to CLC way of life.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. As the Group Guide what resources or tools would assist you and the coordinator in doing an Evaluation and Appropriation of meeting?
2. How would you address the initial stage of discerning a "Temporary Commitment"? What formation resources would you use?

The group has been meeting for 18 weeks. The Group Coordinator, Darlene, continues to facilitate the meetings in a very effective way. You feel that you can now fall into the background and be more of an "objective listener" at this "Stage of Growth". You still find time to communicate with Darlene to evaluate the meetings. Ann has become a good group leader and Bob has now grown into being very supportive of Darlene's leadership role. There is in the group a deeper sense of trust. Through on-going formation there is a deepening knowledge of the CLC.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. At what stage of CLC growth is the group? What do you think is the key characteristics of this stage?
2. What formation resources would you use to prepare the group in making a "Temporary Commitment" to CLC?
3. As a Group Guide how would you introduce: World, National Structures, Financial co-responsibility?

## D. CASE STUDY 3 – REDEMPTION (PHASE A)

**Redemption (Phase A):** To experience and learn how to evaluate this way of life within a community and see CLC as One World Community ... *"Though our conscience may condemn us God is greater than our hearts."* (1 Jn 3:20)

The group is deepening the Ignatian P & F and experiencing the 1st week of the Spiritual Exercises with a growing awareness of personal and collective sinfulness.

### GOAL

The goal of this stage is to discover and develop an awareness of personal and collective sinfulness and limitations. They are experiencing the need for Christ's redemptive love, and God's mercy in acceptance of one another's personal limitations and the limitations of the group.

### CHARACTERISTICS

The special characteristics of this stage are members are becoming more at ease with using the tools of discernment and decision-making, the experience of individual and collective Consolation and Desolation are becoming more real. They are becoming effective in recognizing the 1<sup>st</sup> Week Rules of Discernment of Spirits (Sp. Ex. Rules 313 to 327). The **Communal Awareness process** is helping the group to name conflict within the group and service is becoming an imperative.

The group could be moving into experiencing the dynamics of the 2nd week (Kingdom meditation, the Two Standards, Three types of Persons, Three Kinds of Humility).

### SIGNS

The signs that the community is evolving are that the members have a greater sense of gratitude and a growing commitment to CLC as call/ vocation and to Ignatian Spirituality as a way of life. Members can now face conflict and tension (woundedness) more easily since they are moving toward a deeper sense of inter-connectedness with all Creation and with Jesus who is journeying with them.

The CLC Group is deepening their awareness of the CLC Charism (way of life) by moving through and prayerfully reflecting on Sections 4, and 5 in the CLC Formation Manual Phase I. They sense and experience their need for Christ's redemptive love, and God's mercy in accepting their own brokenness and that of their own small community. They have been introduced to the Rules of the 1<sup>st</sup> week of the SE and find them useful when making decisions. On several occasions group members have talked of making personal decisions in their everyday life. Some members have

shared on their individual mission and have also asked for assistance in becoming more effective in the delivery of their service to others.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. What are the themes of Sections 4 & 5 in the CLC Formation Manual Phase 1 and what specific area do you think that these 2 sections relate to in the SE?
2. What specific Ignatian spiritual tool addresses the growth and awareness of one's brokenness and the redemptive love of God?
3. As a Group Guide how would teach the need for group support in one's daily decision and individual mission.... what resources/tools would you introduce to the group in making personal decisions?

## **E. CASE STUDY 3 – REDEMPTION (PHASE B)**

**Redemption (Phase B):** To experience and learn how to evaluate this way of life within a community and see CLC as One World Community ... *"The glorious freedom (spiritual) of the children of God."* (Rom: 8:21)

The group is now beginning to move into the 2nd week of the SE with greater "Spiritual Freedom."

### **GOAL**

The goal of this stage is to discover and develop an awareness of personal and collective sinfulness and limitations. To experience the need for Christ's redemptive love, and God's mercy in acceptance of one another's personal limitations and the limitations of the group.

### **CHARACTERISTIC**

The special characteristics of this stage are members are becoming more at ease with using the tools of discernment and decision-making, the experience of individual and collective Consolation and Desolation are becoming more real. They are becoming effective in recognizing the 2nd Week Rules of Discernment of Spirits (Sp. Ex. Rules 328 to 336) especially in #332 "...under the angel of light". The group are beginning to move into experiencing the dynamics of the 2nd week (Kingdom Meditation, the Two Standards, Three types of Persons, Three Kinds of Humility).

### **SIGNS**

The signs that the community is evolving are that the members have a greater sense of gratitude and a growing commitment to CLC as call/ vocation and to Ignatian Spirituality as a way of life. Members can now face conflict and tension (woundedness) more easily since they are moving toward a deeper sense of inter-connectedness with all Creation and with Jesus who is journeying with them (Spiritual Freedom).

The CLC group has finished CLC FORMATION MANUAL I. They all have made a "Temporary Commitment" to the world CLC and have been affirmed in their vocational call by the Regional General Councils. There is a growing awareness of individual mission especially in reaching out to the poor and marginalized in their surrounding neighbourhood. The members continue to share at group meetings how they are reaching out to others in their family, their neighbourhood, their workplace in a variety of ways. You notice that they are more committed to doing the Daily Awareness Exercise. But you notice that there is resistance to discerning a communal apostolic mission.

### QUESTIONS

1. As a Group Guide what are some of the signs that you think would indicate that the members are more aware of CLC as a Regional, National and World body?
2. What stage of growth are they in and what are the signs that you are looking for that would indicate to move into the next "Stage of Growth"?
3. Is the resistance to a "Common Mission" a group disorder? What formation resources or tools would you use to deal with the resistance to discerning a communal apostolic mission?

## F. CASE STUDY 4 – DEEPENING

**Deepening:** Deepening the experience on the personal and community level with special attention given to all aspects of daily living, particularly focusing on mission... *"This is eternal life, to know you, the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."* (Jn 17:3)

There is a growing intimacy with Christ, the authentic mission of the Church, and the world leading members to respond with love with a deeper commitment to the mission of Christ especially as He labours in Creation and moves among the suffering and poor of our world (3rd week of the SE).

### GOAL

The goal of this stage is to have the group operate as a contemplative discerning body. The group is assisted in **becoming** a discerning apostolic group by introducing communal diagnostic tools such as, L-D-R Cycle, the Communal Power Cycle, Social analysis etc.



## **CHARACTERISTIC**

The characteristics at this stage are group members are coming to know the many faces of Christ as He challenges but also comforts us; members are growing in discerning mission by recognizing the signs of time.

## **SIGNS**

A sign that the group is ready to evolve is when members are considering "Permanent Commitment" to CLC vocation. The Group Guide could, at this time, offer the group or individual members the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius (Ann. 19, 20, individual or communal).

The CLC group continues to meet on a weekly basis as they begin the journey into the second year of CLC formation. They are deepening their understanding of the CLC way of life as mission as they move into the formation material in CLC Manual II.

As a Group Guide you know that this has not been an easy part of the journey stage, but you have dealt with the resistance by being more pro-active as a CLC Group Guide. You have insisted on staying the course because you are aware that most faith sharing groups do not grow easily into the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> week graces of the Spiritual Exercises.

In these past few months, you have noticed that there has been a greater desire to work collectively. But Stan has been causing tension in the group meetings by insisting that they all should take on a ministry to the soup kitchen. The Group Coordinator, Darlene, is silently frustrated with the growing tension in the group. You know that you must deal with this tension in the group before moving the group into discerning a "permanent commitment to CLC".

## **QUESTIONS**

1. In the rules of discernment in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the SE (#332) Ignatius tells us that, "the evil spirit ordinarily appears as angel of light for those striving to lead a good life". As a Group Guide how would you teach the group in discerning the movements of the evil or good spirit?
2. What other formation resources or tools (other than the 2<sup>nd</sup> week rules of SE) do you think that would be helpful for the transitioning into greater spiritual maturity?
3. Stan feels personally rejected by the group when the group discerns and decides not to serve at the soup kitchen. He expresses his anger and throws the group into desolation. As a Group Guide how would you deal with this situation?
4. As the Group Guide, you have gently yet firmly attempted to have Stan compromise his strong position on the soup kitchen question, but to no avail.

- Stan decides to leave the group. As a Group Guide how would you deal with this situation?
5. The CLC group has moved on from this crisis and you feel that it is now time to deal with the question of "Permanent Commitment". As a Group Guide what would you recommend to the group to help them to prayerfully enter into a process of discerning a "Permanent Decision"?

## G. CASE STUDY 5 – APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY

### Apostolic Community:

**Living DSSE by Discerning decisions in community with all members and by Sending, Supporting, and Evaluating the implementation of the mission ...** *"As the Father has sent me so I am sending you."* (Jn. 20:21)

The members of the group continue to deepen their understanding of the General Principles especially GP #8. This principle clearly defines CLC in mission while challenging us not only as individuals but also as a community.

### ***GP 8 – APOSTOLIC LIFE***

As members of the pilgrim People of God, we have received from Christ the mission of being his witnesses before all people by our attitudes, words and actions, becoming identified with his mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, setting the downtrodden free and proclaiming the Lord's year of favour.

Our life is essentially apostolic. The field of CLC mission knows no limits: it extends both to the Church and the world, in order to bring the gospel of salvation to all people and to serve individual persons and society by opening hearts to conversion and struggling to change oppressive structures.

- a) Each of us receives from God a call to make Christ and his saving action present to our surroundings. This personal apostolate is indispensable for extending the Gospel in a lasting and penetrating way among the great diversity of persons, places and situations.
- b) At the same time, we exercise a corporate or group apostolate in a great variety of forms, whether through group action initiated or sustained by the

Community through suitable structures, or through involvement of members in existing secular and religious organizations and efforts.

- c) The Community helps us to live this apostolic commitment in its different dimensions, and to be always open to what is more urgent and universal, particularly through the "Review of life" and through personal and communal discernment. We try to give an apostolic sense to even the most humble realities of daily life.
- d) The Community urges us to proclaim the Word of God and to work for the reform of structures of society, participating in efforts to liberate the victims from all kinds of discrimination and especially to abolish differences between rich and poor. We wish to contribute to the evangelisation of cultures from within. We desire to do all this in an ecumenical spirit, ready to collaborate with those initiatives that bring about unity among Christians.

Our life finds its permanent inspiration in the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ.

At this stage, the Group Guide facilitates the process by encouraging communal evaluation and appropriation which would help to extend the group's apostolic involvement (4th week SE. #230).

### **GOAL**

The goal of this stage is to live in mission, moving from a community of apostles to an **apostolic community** and to have each member of the group see her/his apostolic activity in light of the group's apostolic commitment.

### **CHARACTERISTIC**

The characteristics of the apostolic group are a greater awareness of Christ resurrected and a greater sense of hope that Jesus is with them, labouring with them in bringing about God's reign in the world.

The members are learning to live in a communal discernment stance; discerning, sending, supporting, and evaluating the common mission by using instruments of social analysis in their group meetings (Power Cycle).

### **SIGNS**

In this stage one must be vigilant for signs of digression and/or doubt since they are always a concern. If this is not addressed and dealt with, the group will eventually die and disband. The "Life-Death-Resurrection" process can be a very important instrument in helping the group to discover why they are struggling and why they might go out of existence. At this time, the Group Guide would play a pro-active role in facilitating and/or challenging the group to move forward to a more life-giving stance.

The CLC group has been meeting for four years. The group has completed the Communal SE (Phase III) and have experienced the graces of the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the SE, "Contemplation on the Love of God". Their prayers and the graces of the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the SE has allowed each member of the group to freely move into making a Permanent Commitment to the CLC vocation. You sense that they are moving into the next CLC STAGE OF GROWTH.

The group has made the decision to meet every second week rather than to meet on a weekly basis so that they can devote more time to their individual ministries. Some members of the group have been appointed to take on leadership roles at the regional and national level.

As a Group Guide, you once again have decided to stand back as an objective listener during this stage holding sacred that this community has its own 'flavour' and its own unique journey.

At one of the CLC meeting, Stan the plant foreman, shares that he has been laid off from work because the plant owners have announced that they are closing the plant and moving elsewhere. This sudden closure of the plant will mean that 200 persons will lose their jobs and increase those needing to use the soup kitchen. This will deeply affect many families in the town. The members of the group are deeply touched by this obvious injustice. As the Group Guide you sense that the members feel powerless and hopeless in this situation.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. As the Group Guide you sense a spiritual movement in the group that could lead into desolation: How would you address the group spiritual movement?
2. What Stage of Growth has this CLC group moved into?
3. What resource material or tools would you use to help the group move from a community of apostles to an "apostolic community" and therefore deal with this situation?

## **H. CASE STUDY 6 – DISCERNING MISSION**

### **PART ONE**

Recall an experience of Spiritual Freedom and be prepared to briefly share on it in a small group.

## **PART TWO**

The 'more' means that we desire to go beyond making good moral choices in our lives. This desire is a reason why CLC is a discerning community in mission. This freedom is a freedom to choose work, ministries, mission and ways of living that go beyond and affect the greater good.

For example, a nurse, who is a widower with older children, and who has executive and business skills, reaches a point in the Exercises journey where she/he foresees choosing one of these two realistic possibilities:

- a) To spend time in a refugee camp helping to care for the needy.
- b) To enter an executive branch of the Red Cross foreign health service.

### **QUESTION:**

1. WHICH IS THE BETTER DECISION and WHY? Be prepared to share your reason(s) why.

## 8.4 CONTINUOUSLY CALLED AND CHALLENGED

In Nairobi, the CLC Assembly invited and encouraged us to recognize some seeds in National Communities that confirmed the direction that we were invited to take, namely discerning, sending, supporting and evaluating one another in mission as an apostolic community. We have no doubts that in CLC we are privileged to have an organization that forms and equips us with the necessary tools to live this challenge. But we are at the same time being continuously called and challenged to take seriously our vocation as CLC members.

The three-fold aspects of CLC, that is, our specific spirituality, community life and mission, fit perfectly the orientation required for shared responsibility in the services that we may offer. CLC always discerns, sends, supports and evaluates. This means that more than ever we are called to be faithful to the life we have chosen to express our Christian faith. Our sense of shared responsibility will be enhanced by each one of us taking formation seriously. We understand that as a vocation, CLC prescribes a unique way of life that surpasses what is considered as nominal of a Christian life. We therefore need to remain steadfast and to embrace consistently all the three aspects of CLC. If we fail to be committed to our annual retreats, daily prayer of awareness, small groups and service to others, then fundamentally we are not being faithful to our charism.

It is for this reason that we may need to reemphasize the basics of our vocation. It is important that the membership of CLC in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, North America, Middle East and Latin America should understand the CLC way of life in the same way and in the same sense. Although as individual members, the specifics of our life will always be different, the basics of our vocation should not be. We have these basics clearly articulated in "The CLC Charism" (Revised edition, December 2001)<sup>2</sup>. It is for this reason that the delegates gathered in Nairobi found it necessary to recommend that all of our formation programmes be informed by the revised edition of "The CLC Charism".

What challenges do we face as individual CLC members and as an organization on this journey, arising from our choice?

As a member of CLC, the desire to remain faithful to the Ignatian spirit, will demand of us to always read the signs of the times and to discover opportunities and challenges facing me. These challenges may be huge and yes, we may fear the

unknown. As an ordinary person we are often tempted to feel that our role does not matter to the wider society. Even as an influential person, where do we begin? My sense of service for others, which should radiate from within, demands that I begin from where I am. My family, friends and associates, colleagues and employers should all experience the warmth of the CLC life in me. If I bring these inner feelings to my small group in whose life I share, I shall be involved in mutual discerning, sending, supporting and evaluating and ultimately my service will have the potential of growing bigger. If I consistently do this, our visibility as a body of believers to the society will take care of itself as it manifests itself through social responsibility. I can draw inspiration from Jesus' response to the disciples of John the Baptist, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard, the blind can see, the sick are cured and the poor have the good news preached to them" (Luke 7:20-22). I seek to constantly ask whether my life bears testimony to what I claim to be. The impact of my inspired service may be far beyond what I imagine.

I understand this from the experience of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Lady. Mary is full of grace and was chosen by God. "Be it unto me according to thy word," was Mary's joyous "yes" to God's plan of redemption. Her obedience initiated the process of my salvation. She did this at great risk to her personal life. Therefore, she must appreciate my personal difficulties. In addition, Mary always bids me to do whatever Jesus says (John 2:5). I take courage in her and ask for her support in the discernment of the decision that the Lord has asked of me at this time in my life. What is the Lord asking of me now? In this way, each one of us is invited to live in an attitude of availability, always ready to question his/her personal way of acting and thinking while trying constantly to integrate experience, reflection and action.

As an organization we must ask; what is our strength? The quality of the community we build will depend on the quality of its individuals who are its building blocks. "CLC hopes that its members are people of prayer, able to listen to the desires of the Lord, able to discern among the many calls of life what is the best suited for the building of God's Reign." To begin with, our CLC way of proceeding can help us successfully perform the many activities which make up our lives. Secondly, in CLC we have a commitment to a way of life and a common heritage that we can share with others from whatever field, which will enhance the reality that they are living. Central to our common heritage are the Spiritual Exercises which prompts us to be in continuous dialogue with our Lord and our experiences. Therefore, the national formation team constantly offers national CLC members the kind of formation that is enabling and which transforms CLC members to be contemplatives in action. In this way CLC members will always be triggered to consider the needs of society around them. But to be effective, we must be clear and precise in our objectives. We need to regularly evaluate our core competencies and accordingly restructure our organizations. We do

this because we realize that we cannot possibly respond to all needs without spreading ourselves too thin. To be effective we make choices using Ignatian criteria.

Our main challenge as an organization is to maintain the clarity of our vision as received in Nairobi, to keep focused and not to be distracted. There are several organizations that are fulfilling different needs, but what is our core competence in CLC?

We are a body of lay people formed in Ignatian Spirituality. Ignatian Spirituality is an inspirational resource that is central to the CLC way of life and capable of transforming our reality. It is our core competence. It is for this reason that the "Spiritual Exercises are not an optional experience, to be made or not, or that once made, belong to the archives of the past"

We know that with this resource we can improve relationships between people and the meaning and quality of life. We know that this spirituality purifies our inner motives, drives us to action and that its applicability is enormous. So, for a national community, a common mission becomes a natural offshoot from a deliberate formation programme. A common mission is a focal point consolidating our organizational effort even though individual members may be engaged in different activities. As an organization we are being asked to be steadfast on what we commit ourselves to but constantly evaluate our ever-changing circumstances and ask God what else we can do as a corporate apostolic body.

### **Questions for reflection for the Group Guide**

1. Does our formation equip me with the essentials of the CLC way of life? How does this formation trigger in me the desire to reach out and join the Lord in the construction of His reign?
2. Do I renew my Ignatian Inspiration through annual retreats as a continuous source of growth? Which challenges do I experience in my efforts? How can I be helped to overcome them?
3. Do I feel empowered and encouraged by my local community meeting and /or formation programmes sufficiently to express the love of God to others?
4. As a body of believers (CLC), how are we responding to the needs around us in an ongoing way? What else do we need in order to grow more in this way?
5. Have we discussed the experiences and shared the expectations of those we relate with as a CLC body (organization)?



6. What challenges do I face in this CLC journey?
7. What provisions exist in my national community to enhance my individual growth?
8. How do I feel about the growth of my community towards an apostolic body?

*Levi Matseshe, Progressio: Supplement no.56, December 2001*

## 8.5 NOTES, REFLECTIONS AND PRAYER EXERCISES

### A. THE CALL OF CHRIST THE KING

Stand with Jesus or with the Way of the World.

All disciples have to choose where we are going to stand—with Jesus or with the world. No matter what life the Spirit has drawn us to, once we are baptized and confirmed we are called to stand in Jesus' company under his flag.

We begin to move under Jesus' standard when we join him in the living conviction that everything we have, and are, is God's gift. However much or little we have, we say gratefully, "Look at all God has given me." Then the way opens through the smoke of self-satisfaction and approval of others. "How can I help?" becomes a daily preoccupation. And through a life of love and service, the Spirit leads us to live as meekly and humbly as the Lord lived—whether we are a famous ballerina or an anonymous computer programmer.

The way of the world differs entirely. The starting point is getting as much wealth as you can. You say, "Look at all this stuff I have." When the world's way opens before you, you shift your focus, saying, "Look at me with all this stuff." As those around you grow more deferential, you start saying, "Look at *me*." You become convinced that you are the center of your world.

### B. THE TWO STANDARDS AND A MEDITATION ON THE TWO LEADERS

Even without subscribing to theories of the subconscious, we can see that the world's standard is as inviting to Christ's disciples as it is to anyone else. In a way, even after we have made a solemn, lifelong choice to follow Christ's standard, we have to purify our daily life of collusion with the world's standard. The collusion comes in three forms.

First, there is benign secularism. Certainly, there are people who do not know Jesus Christ who lead deeply good lives. But even the baptized can live in a benignly secular

way. We join civic movements and help the needy because that's what our neighbors do. We are good to our families and honest in the workplace. There is no immediate harm in this way, but neither is there anything more than a secular spirit, even though people today call it spirituality.

The second form of collusion, seen particularly in the affluent first world, is the search for pleasure. We are surrounded by people who live what St. Paul describes as the way of the flesh. Those who follow this way are the target of advertising; they need to have whatever everyone else has right now. Their less lovely side manifests self-indulgence, lust, envy—all seen as acceptable social mores. The flesh has its own laws, and those who follow this way will readily obey those laws into sin.

Finally, there is the collusion of succumbing to darkness. Think of the report of an adult who forced a twelve-year-old to kill another and then drink some of his blood. It is evil manifest. But most of the works of the dark are not manifest. Hatred, vengeance, violence, self-destructive habits—these flourish in the dark corners of the sinful human self.

In your heart of hearts, you may loathe the dark and leap to the light. But in everyday life, you will find yourself in the twilight of benign secularism or the flesh over and over again. You will find safety in Christ's standard only if you resolutely begin everything with thanks to God and keep watching what you are doing and why you are doing it.

*Excerpts from Making Choices in Christ by Joseph A. Tetlow, SJ.*

## **C. THE TWO STANDARDS: A MEDITATION ON TWO LEADERS, TWO STRATEGIES**

We consider Christ, our Leader and Lord, our God and Brother, and we consider Lucifer, the demonic enemy of humankind, the one who sums up all the evils that beset us.

*Preparation:* I make the usual time to place myself before God in reverence, begging that everything in my day be more and more directed to God's service and praise.

[139] *Grace:* I ask for the gift of being able to recognize the false lights of Lucifer (a name which means "bearer of light") and for the help not to be led astray; I also ask for what I desire: a graced knowledge of true human living exemplified in Jesus Christ, my Lord and my God, and the grace to live my life in his way.

[137, 138, 140, 141, 142] *The Setting*: There are two unequal parts in this consideration, the first one shedding light upon and giving understanding to the more important second part.

*First Part*: To sum up all the forces of evil in the person of Lucifer makes me face the enormous power and oppression of evil itself. Keeping true to my own experience of the world, let me reflect how evil pummels the relations between nations and between peoples within a single country, so that no nation, no city, no state of life, no individual is left unscathed. I want to try to grasp the strategy of Lucifer as I consider how this false angel of light attempts to isolate and enslave men and women and the world according to a certain design. For example, people find themselves tempted to covet whatever seems to make them rich, and next because they possess some thing or things they find themselves pursuing and basking in the honour and esteem of this world. Then getting such deference raises up the false sense of personal identity and value in which a blinding pride has its roots.

So, Lucifer's strategy is simple and seems so light-filled and clear in its direction: riches (or "this is mine") to honor (or "look at me") to pride (or "I AM..."). By these three steps, the evil one entices people to all other vices.

[143, 144, 145, 146] *Second Part*: Now let me look at Jesus Christ, who calls himself "the way, the truth, and the life." I notice how gently, but insistently Jesus continues to call followers of all kinds and sends them forth to spread his good news to all people, no matter what their state or condition. Jesus adopts a strategy which directly opposes that of Lucifer: try to help and free people, not enslave or oppress them. His method: attract men and women to the highest spiritual poverty, and should it please God, and should God draw them to want to choose it, even to a life of actual poverty. Being poor, they will then find themselves accepting and even desiring the insults and the contempt of the world. They will come to live a life of true humility.

Jesus' strategy is simple too, although at first it seems a paradox. If I have been graced with the gift of poverty ("he emptied himself, becoming human"), then I am rich; if I have nothing of myself ("everything I have is from the Father"), I have no power and I am despised and receive the contempt of the world ("even to death, death on a cross"); if I have nothing, my only possession is Christ ("Christ is God's") and this is to be really true to myself — the humility of a person whose whole reality and value is grounded in being created and redeemed in Christ. Through these three steps, Jesus and his apostles lead people to all other virtues.

[147] *Triple Colloquy*: Because of the importance of coming to some understanding of the opposing values and strategies of these two leaders, I enter into the intensity of the prayer by addressing Mary, Christ, and the Father and begging for what I want from them.

## D. JESUS' PERSONAL CALL TO GROUP GUIDES

### Part 1

The *call of an early leader* is to help us contemplate our call, in service with/for Christ our divine leader.

### Grace

I ask for the grace to respond generously to the call of Christ; not to disregard Christ's

words but to hear them from my deepest being and commit my whole self with confidence to the furthering of God's Kingdom on earth (as it is in heaven!)

Points (These are ways of disposing me to receive the grace sought.)

- I imagine a human leader who in response to God's Spirit directs their life towards the improvement of other human beings' standard of living.
- The earthy leader urges others, thus: *"It is my will to overcome evils of injustice and hate in the world and bring about peace and love and to free the oppressed of every kind. Therefore, those who wish to join me must be content with the same food, drink, clothing, etc., as mine. So too, they must work with me day and night that as they have had a share in the toil with me, afterwards, they may rejoice with me in our accomplishments."*
- Consider what the answer of good persons is to a leader so generous and noble minded, and consequently, if persons would refuse the invitation of such a leader, how justly they would deserve to be reproved by everyone and looked upon as unworthy persons.
- Recall great leaders of your choice perhaps including your favourite saint, Mahatma Gandhi, Blessed Pope John XXIII, or Blessed Mother Theresa of Calcutta, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dorothy Day, Cesar Chavez, Jean Vanier, and Thomas Merton. Consider your response to such a leader.

### Part 2

The call of Jesus Christ will consist in applying the example of an earthly leader mentioned above to Jesus.

## Points

- If such an invitation of an earthly leader deserves our attention, what motive is there to follow the Lord Jesus Christ?
- To all Christ summons goes forth, and to each one in particular Jesus addresses these words: *"It is my will to redeem the whole world, and thus to enter into the glory of God. Therefore, those who wish to be with me and join me in this enterprise must be willing to labour with me that by being with me in suffering, they may be with me in glory."*
- Those who wish to give greater proof of their love, and to distinguish themselves in whatever shows greater love and service of the eternal Leader and God of all, will not only offer themselves entirely to Jesus and his work, but will act against selfish desires and need of worldly recognition, and offer them totally to Jesus.

## **Offering of Self to Christ**

*Eternal Sovereign of all things, in the presence of your infinite goodness, and of your glorious Mother, and of all the saints of heaven, this is the offering of me which I make with your favour and help. I promise that it is my earnest desire and my deliberate choice, provided only it is for your greater service and praise, to be with You and to imitate You in bearing all wrongs and all abuse and all poverty, both actual and spiritual, should Your most holy sovereign wish to choose and admit me to such a relationship and way of life.*

**Conclude with an Our Father.**

*It might be helpful to make a record of graces received in your journal.*

## **E. A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CLC GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

Since Christian Life Community is a world-wide organization, it seems necessary to have some kind of "statutes" which delineate the source, expectations, and responsibilities of those who are part of the organization.

Prior to 1967: Certain documents concerning the Matron Congregation (Sodalities) were formed and presented by the Jesuits and the Holy See.

1967: A draft of the General Principles and a New Name was the work of the 4<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Marion Congregation held in Rome. Pope Paul VI accepted these experimentally for three years.

1971: With very few recommendations, the Holy See accepted the General Principles and the General Norms of 1967 and encouraged the new communal expression of Ignatian Spirituality among the laity to proceed.

1990: Between 1971 and 1990, many changes occurred in the life and structures of the CLC with the approval of the General Assemblies every 3 or 4 years. For these reasons, it was felt that an updating of the GPs and GNs was necessary. The current 'General Principles and General Norms' was the work of the 10-day General Assembly at Guadalajara, Mexico in September 1990 and were submitted by the World CLC to the Vatican and approved by the Holy See December 3, 1990.

You can benefit from this geographical, cultural, political, and ecclesial context of many sisters and brothers who authored these Principles.

## **F. MEDITATING ON THE CLC GENERAL PRINCIPLES 1-9**

"Why was I originally interested in CLC and its way of life? What continues to draw me to the meetings – claiming my limited leisure time and energy?" If you have asked yourself this question, the answer may be found in the "General Principles of the Christian Life Community." The nine initial paragraphs contain the fundamental concept and spirit that has inspired CLC at various times and in countless countries and conditions.

There are 17 General Principles but here we will meditate with the first inspiring nine as they pertain to the Communal, Spiritual and Apostolic dimensions of the Christian Life Community. The remaining eight refer to the Life and Organization of the Community, Membership, Way of Life, Life and government of the Community.

As you embark on praying with the General Principles, the hope is that they will clarify and perhaps expand your understanding of the sources of CLC. As you pray with them, recall that –

"...these Principles are to be interpreted not so much by the letter of this text as by the spirit of the Gospel and the interior law of love...This Spirit-inspired love respects the uniqueness of each personal vocation and enables us to be open and free, always at the disposal of God."

(General Principle 2)

## How to use the following pages

Sometime in the period that one is a member of CLC, it seems most beneficial if the individuals and the community pray through the vision which has called women and men to this way of life for over 400 years. The first nine paragraphs of The General Principles can serve this purpose. Each of the pages which follow contains three parts:

1. *The quotation of one of the first nine General Principles.*
2. *Questions designed to deepen your prayer concerning the Principle.*
3. *An extended paragraph of explanation and/or prayer.*

It is suggested that each individual in a community spend time reflecting on the assigned number of the General Principles *before* the meeting and be prepared to share on any insights, challenges, or questions which they encountered. After each prayerful meditation on the GP, you may note in your journal your comments and/or reflections. People may also wish to make notes to assist them in recalling the graces either during the meeting and/or at a future reading of the Principles. The Principle itself could be read aloud slowly at the beginning of the sharing in a local community meeting, followed by faith sharing, and *only* after all have shared, a discussion of the Principle. The group may wish to repeat this process with a second Principle at the same gathering, depending on the time elapsed and if the members had also previously prepared for that possibility.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLE 1 (Preamble)

*"The Three Divine Persons, contemplating the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions, decide to give themselves completely to all men and women and liberate them from all their chains. Out of love, the Word was incarnated and born from Mary, the poor Virgin of Nazareth.*

*Inserted among the poor and sharing with them their condition, Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity within our human family. This gift of God to us, and our response, continues to this day through the influence of the Holy Spirit in all our particular circumstances.*

*Therefore we, members of the Christian Life Community, have composed these General Principles to aid us in making our own the options of Jesus Christ and taking part through Him, with Him and in Him in this loving initiative which expresses God's promise of faithfulness forever."*



[Share on one or other of your reflections to these questions.]

- What especially caught your attention in General Principle 1?
- Does it remind you of anything you have read or heard before?
- What do you see as the greatest challenge?
- Is there anything particularly consoling?

General Principle 1 reminds us that CLC came to birth around the mystery of the Annunciation and Incarnation, the loving initiative of the Trinity who finds a welcome in Mary. From the Incarnation, unfolds the dynamics of walking in the path of Jesus and identifying with his options which are at the root of the CLC vocation.

We begin with the realization that I am loved by God as I am. God's love is unconditional and, therefore, is the most basic and secure fact in my life. I simply let myself be loved by God. This is not so much an activity of mine but a passivity in which I let God's love soak in and permeate my whole being.

*God, show us your everlasting faithfulness in helping us, in CLC, to launch ourselves into the fascinating adventure and continual apprenticeship of loving and serving in all things.*

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLE 2**

*"Because our Community is a way of Christian life, these principles are to be interpreted not so much by the letter of this text but rather by the spirit of the Gospel and the interior law of love. This law, which the Spirit inscribes in our hearts, expresses itself anew in each situation of daily life. It respects the uniqueness of each personal vocation and enables us to be open and free, always at the disposal of God.*

*It challenges us to see our serious responsibilities and to seek constantly the answers to the needs of our times and to work together with the entire People of God and all those of good will for progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all people."*

- How do we find and nourish "the interior law of love"? What would be a simple statement of this law?
- What in this second General Principle reminds you of "The First Principle and Foundation" found in "The Spiritual Exercises"?
- What kind of "progress" is encouraged, and how does this compare with "progress" used commonly in the media?

General Principle 2 is a fundamental text which gives primacy to the Spirit and at the same time recognizes the necessity for intermediate structures, showing that there is no conflict between these two dimensions.

In this sense, it could be said that GP 2 constitutes a key to reading the whole of the General Principles, since it indicates the attitude and tone with which they should be read. Because of this, failing to take in this Principle could lead to understanding the GPs and General Norms too rigidly, and to an incorrect interpretation of the CLC process, outlined in the General Norms.

GP 2 also contains a rich summing up of the CLC vocation and introduces from the start such important themes as discernment, freedom, and being at God's disposal, presenting the CLC style as an active opening to the Spirit of the Lord.

The God presented by Ignatius in the contemplation on the Incarnation is a contemplative and compassionate God, a Trinity who, on the basis of what they want, while contemplating humanity lost and sinful, choose anew, to give themselves totally, in a saving and liberating praxis, to this lost and divided humanity.

*God your love is unconditional and eternal. You are "faithful forever"... and  
Your presence has been with us since the beginning of time.*

### **GENERAL PRINCIPLE 3**

*"The Christian Life Community is a public world association whose executive centre is presently in Rome.*

*It is the continuation of the Marian Congregations, started by Jean Leunis S.J. and first officially approved by Pope Gregory XIII's bull, Omnipotentis Dei, of December 5, 1584.*

*Going back beyond the Marian Congregations we see our origin in those groups of lay people that developed after 1540 in different parts of the world through the initiative of Saint Ignatius Loyola and his companions. We live this way of Christian life in joyful communion with all those who have preceded us, grateful for their efforts and apostolic accomplishments.*

*In love and prayer, we relate to those many men and women of our spiritual tradition who have been proposed to us by the Church as friends and valid intercessors who help us to fulfil our mission."*

- CLC is a "world association." What are some advantages of this fact? Challenges?
- Practically, how can we remain aware of this international dimension of CLC".
- Can you name any other international organization which includes the goals of the last sentence of this General Principle?
- In addition to CLC's "international dimension," can you name other "dimensions"?

General Principle 3 helps us to see the persistence of the action of the Spirit. It invites us to rediscover our Ignatian origins, and to value the many gifts received over the centuries.

It suggests to us an attitude towards our history and towards the present moment: gratitude, humility and faithfulness to this grace, a communion which transcends the limits of space and time, and a capacity for renewal in the Church. The text also has a juridical value, pointing out the fact of Pontifical approval and setting CLC within the visible fabric of the Church.

It also has a practical, pedagogical value in that those groups who have not taken part in the renewal process of the Church may define their vocation and their service in the Church either in the CLC World body as expressions of such, or outside of it, as diocesan or national associations.

God identifies with all humanity in every way, even in the most painful and negative situations, in order to assume and redeem the human condition from inside. Humanity is given the real possibility of beholding God through this gift of Jesus Christ, and so of "taking part through Him, with Him and in Him" in this loving initiative which expresses God's promise of faithfulness for ever.

*God, through your healing and reconciling gaze lets us rebuild broken relationships.*

#### **GENERAL PRINCIPLE 4**

*"Our Community is made up of Christians: men and women, adults and youth, of all social conditions who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with him for the building of the Kingdom, who have recognized Christian Life Community as their particular vocation within the Church.*

*We aim to become committed Christians in bearing witness to those human and Gospel values within the Church and society, which affect the dignity of the person, the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation.*

*We are particularly aware of the pressing need to work for justice through a preferential option for the poor and a simple lifestyle, which expresses our freedom and solidarity with them.*

*To prepare our members more effectively for apostolic witness and service, especially in our daily environment, we assemble people in community who feel a more urgent need to unite their human life in all its dimensions with the fullness of their Christian faith according to our charism.*

*We seek to achieve this unity of life in response to the call of Christ from within the world in which we live."*

- What do you think of when you hear the word "vocation"? Do you consider CLC membership a vocation?
- "Preferential option for the poor." What are one or two examples of either accomplishing or desiring such an option in your life?
- What does "unity of life" mean to you? What would it look like in a person? What is it opposed to? How can you achieve this?

GP 4 is one of the best short presentations of the whole of our identity.

In step with the logic implicit in our name "Christian Life, Community", GP 4 first focuses on the following of Christ, then invites us to be witnesses in our lives, and finally highlights the meaning and importance of community. Work for justice and simple lifestyle are shown as distinguishing marks.

Assuming the narrow limits of the human condition, the infinite God is incarnated and placed at the centre of history, abandoning all the riches of divinity to be placed "among the poor". "His state was divine, yet he did not cling to his equality with God, but emptied himself... and being human, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death".

Among the men and women whom the Incarnate Word calls us to meet, the poor have a privileged position. It is among them that the Word is placed in its Incarnation, "sharing with them their condition". Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity to our human family.

It is out of the weakness and oppression suffered by the poor, out from where life is most threatened, oppressed or crushed, that the power and glory of God, the Lord of Life, can shine and sparkle most brightly. It is in the short and hard lives of the poor of the Earth that the full dimensions of God are shown.

*Creator God, and source of life, make our apostolic service especially in our daily environment our response to Christ's call from within our world.*

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLE 5**

*"The spirituality of our Community is centred on Christ and on participation in the participation in the Paschal Mystery. It draws from the Sacred Scriptures, the liturgy, the doctrinal development of the Church, and the revelation of God's will through the events of our times.*

*Within the context of these universal sources, we hold the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius as the specific source and the characteristic instrument of our spirituality. Our vocation calls us to live this spirituality, which opens and disposes us to whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily life.*

*We recognise particularly the necessity of prayer and discernment, personal and communal, of the daily examination of consciousness and of spiritual guidance as important means for seeking and finding God in all things".*

- **The "Pascal Mystery" can be stated: Christ redeemed humanity and gave perfect glory to God "by the Pascal Mystery of his blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and glorious ascension." (Vatican II) Being born 2000 years after Christ, how can we participate in this Pascal Ministry?**
- **How would you define or describe spirituality? Does everyone have a spirituality? How does the spirituality of CLC differ from that of other Catholics? Other Christians?**
- **What are the important means of growing in this spirituality? What might be especially challenging to you? Why is that aspect so important?**

The basic point of General Principle 5 is the spirituality of CLC. It realises that, as with all Christian spiritualities, CLC spirituality centres on Christ as presented in various bearers of the Christian tradition. It delineates this Christian spirituality, though, in accordance with the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius.

GP 5 reminds us that we are people of process and discernment and, to sustain this vocation, recommends some well-proven means of growth in the Spirit.

The gift of self is the vocation of the CLC member. CLC is a path which enables us to respond to God's gift to us with a gift just as total, fervent and radical, though limited.

This fervour and this radicalism are expressed when we make our own "the options of Jesus Christ", when we take on poverty and humility in our lives, when our lives

are centered on his paschal mystery, when we participate frequently in the Eucharistic celebration and are nourished by his Body and Blood.

*God, you have called to be contemplatives in action help us to be Eucharistic people and finding Your presence in all things.*

### **GENERAL PRINCIPLE 6 (SENSE OF THE CHURCH)**

*"Union with Christ leads to union with the Church where Christ here and now continues his mission of salvation. By making ourselves sensitive to the signs of the times and the movements of the Spirit, we will be better able to encounter Christ in all persons and in all situations. Sharing the riches of membership of the Universal Church, we participate in the liturgy, meditate upon the Scriptures, learn, and promote Christian virtues. We work together with other ecclesial leaders, motivated by a common concern for the problems and progress of all people and open to the situations in which the Church finds itself today. This sense of the Church impels us to creative and concrete collaboration for the work of advancing the reign of God on earth and includes a readiness to go and serve where the needs of the Church so demand."*

- How do you define Church?
- What is your understanding of union with the Church today?
- Has your CLC vocation helped you to be more sensitive to the "signs of the times" and how have you encountered Christ in persons and in situations?
- What are some of the problems that the Church finds itself in today?
- What are some of the needs of the Church and how have you responded to those needs?

All the General Principles and their evolution over the years can only be understood in the context of church. GP 6 is intended to be an ecclesial text, to make clear where it recognizes the Lord in the Church, where Christ has touched our lives and has called us to follow him in ways that we cannot predict, where we have been called together as a community of the faithful, guided by the Spirit of the Lord. GP 6, however, invites us to encounter Christ in all people and all situations, to reach outside the Church, with a concern for the progress of all.

Sense of the Church is, therefore, constant attention to the Christ of the Gospel, to the needs of the Church and of people, and to the movements the Spirit stirs in our hearts to "love and serve in all things". It is a will committed to being faithful to the call to be with Christ and to work with him for the Reign of God. This requires of us constant discernment of the "greater good".

The *Contemplation to Attain the Love of God in the Spiritual Exercises* places us in

front of God our Lord, "the lover" who wants to communicate with us: giving to us and self-giving; coming close to us, to the point of making our heart into holy temples; working in the world and in us through love. For CLC, this contemplation is the normal path towards enrichment and growth in the sense of the Church.

***NB. You may end this meditation on GP 6 by praying the following Scripture reading:***

*Ephesians 1:3-14*

*Many Blessings of Salvation*

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah! He has blessed us in the Messiah with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm, just as he chose us in the Messiah before the creation of the universe to be holy and blameless in his presence. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself through Jesus the Messiah, according to the pleasure of his will, so that we would praise his glorious grace that he gave us in the Beloved One. In union with him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our offenses, according to the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us, along with all wisdom and understanding, when he made known to us the secret of his will. This was according to his plan that he set forth in the Messiah to usher in the fullness of the times and to bring together in the Messiah all things in heaven and on earth.*

*In the Messiah we were also chosen when we were predestined according to the purpose of the one who does everything that he wills to do, so that we who had already fixed our hope on the Messiah might live for his praise and glory. You, too, have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed in the Messiah, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until God redeems his own possession for his praise and glory.*

**GENERAL PRINCIPLE 7**

*"Our gift of self finds its expression in a personal commitment to the World Community, through a freely chosen local community.*

*Such a local community, centred in the Eucharist, is a concrete experience of unity in love and action. In fact, each of our communities is a gathering of people in Christ, a cell of his mystical Body.*

*We are bound together by our common commitment, our common way of life, and our recognition and love of Mary as our mother.*

*Our responsibility to develop the bonds of community does not stop with our local community but extends to the National and World Christian Life Community, to the ecclesial communities of which we are part (parish, diocese), to the whole Church and to all people of good will."*

- **What are examples of other communities to which you belong? What are some of the privileges and obligations implicit in membership?**
- **What are some advantages of belonging to a world Community? Especially today?**
- **Does our commitment in CLC limit our membership or relationship to Catholics? To Christians only? Explain how this might work.**

General Principle 7 explicitly deals with community life. It can be read, lived and understood in different ways by people at various stages of growth and at different times.

The fact that we have chosen to be one World Community, the meaning and implications of this fact, the role of the small local community in relation to the wider community, the elements that bring us together, the way in which we build community and reach out to meet others, are some of the points which GP 7 puts to us for reflection and action.

*GOD of love and mercy, you call us to be your people, you gift us with your abundant grace. Make us a holy people, radiating the fullness of your love.*

*Form us into a community, a people who care, expressing your compassion. Remind us day after day of our baptismal call to serve, with joy and courage.*

*Teach us how to grow in wisdom and grace and joy in your presence. Through Jesus and in your Spirit, we make this prayer. Amen*

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLE 8**

"As members of the pilgrim People of God, we have received from Christ the mission of being his witnesses before all people by our attitudes, words and actions, becoming



identified with his mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, setting the downtrodden free and proclaiming the Lord's year of favour.

Our life is essentially apostolic. The field of CLC mission knows no limits: it extends both to the Church and the world, in order to bring the gospel of salvation to all people and to serve individual persons and society by opening hearts to conversion and struggling to change oppressive structures.

- a) Each of us receives from God a call to make Christ and his saving action present to our surroundings. This personal apostolate is indispensable for extending the Gospel in a lasting and penetrating way among the great diversity of persons, places and situations.
- b) At the same time, we exercise a corporate or group apostolate in a great variety of forms, whether through group action initiated or sustained by the Community through suitable structures, or through involvement of members in existing secular and religious organizations and efforts.
- c) The Community helps us to live this apostolic commitment in its different dimensions, and to be always open to what is more urgent and universal, particularly through the "Review of life" and through personal and communal discernment. We try to give an apostolic sense to even the humblest realities of daily life.
- d) The Community urges us to proclaim the Word of God and to work for the reform of structures of society, participating in efforts to liberate the victims from all sorts of discrimination and especially, to abolish differences between rich and poor. We wish to contribute to the evangelisation of cultures from within. We desire to do all this in an ecumenical spirit, ready to collaborate with those initiatives that bring about unity among Christians. Our life finds its permanent inspiration in the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ.

"I have chosen you, and have commissioned you, to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last". It was under this passage of Scripture that the General Assembly that approved the General Principle was gathered. The common concern was mission, and it was clear for everybody that this was not a problem of adopting a program, but of remaining with Christ to be able to bear fruit."

- **"Our life is essentially apostolic." Explain. Do you have trouble with this statement?**
- **Is there something here that goes beyond just being a Christian? What are some "tools" proposed by CLC that can help you live up to this ideal? In what way can they help?**

- What is the ultimate inspiration for this way of life? What would be an example of a structure in society today that needs changing?
- How could CLC be instrumental in bringing about such a change?

General Principle 8, the longest text in part one of the General Principles of CLC, succeeds in defining our mission as participation in Christ's mission and in challenging us as individuals and communities. It also gives some helpful guidance for evaluating and extending our apostolic involvement.

*Heavenly God, help our weakness and the poverty of our human race that we may stand before your sovereignty. We ask that you open unto us the reassures of your grace. Sprinkle upon our hearts the dew of your abundant mercy for the human community, our common past and future hope, our oneness transcending all separation; for our capacity to work for peace and justice in the midst of hostility and oppression, for human liberty and sacred rites, for opportunities to change and grow, to affirm and choose.*

*Compassionate God, receive the prayers of this gathering offered before the throne of your majesty. Sprinkle the waters of your lasting peace upon the earth, that the poor, needy, hungry, orphaned and widowed may taste of the fruits of your goodness. We pray that we may live not by our fears but by our hopes, not by our words but by our deeds. Amen*

### **GENERAL PRINCIPLE 9**

*"Since the spirituality of our Community is centred on Christ, we see the role of Mary in relation to Christ: she is the model of our own collaboration in Christ's mission. Mary's co-operation with God begins with her "yes" in the mystery of the Annunciation-Incarnation.*

*Her effective service as shown in her visit to Elizabeth and her solidarity with the poor as reflected in the Magnificat, make her an inspiration for our action for justice in the world today. Mary's co-operation in her Son's mission, continued all through her life, inspires us to give ourselves totally to God in union with Mary, who by accepting the designs of God became our mother and the mother of all.*

*Thus, we confirm our own mission of service to the world received in baptism and confirmation. We honour Mary, the Mother of God, in a special way, and we rely on her intercession in fulfilling our vocation."*

- What is it about the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) that is especially appealing to you?
- As a member of CLC today, what is your relationship to Mary?

What good is it to me if Mary gave birth to the Son of God and I don't give birth to the Son of God in my person and in my time and my culture? We learn that one can't manage, maneuver or manipulate spiritual energy. It is a matter of letting go and receiving that energy of love freely that is a free gift from God. Mary for us in CLC is the archetype of liberation, of letting go and surrender, "let it be done unto me".

### MARY, WOMAN FOR TODAY

*Suddenly, I don't want an image of blue veils, lowered eyes and folded hands anymore!*

*I want an image of Mary that is alive and dynamic...*

*I want an image of the woman going to the village well with the other women, a water-jar on her head, attentive to each one who needed someone to talk to.*

*I want an image of the woman who had to go to market to buy food for the family, and who experienced the pinch when Roman taxes got out of hand.*

*I want an image of the woman who struggled so hard to understand her son who seemed bent on getting himself killed by the reckless way he challenged the religious authorities.*

*I want an image of the woman who stood by him to the end not knowing for sure how he would be vindicated but trusting that he would be.*

*I want an image of the woman in intense discussion with the disciples, fearlessly adding her view and opinions how to respond to the Spirit's leading in the new-found Church.*

*I want an image of the woman fully present to the Church today deeply concerned and compassionate about the way her sons and daughters treat each other.*

*I want to know her as my mother making her home in my heart as did the beloved disciple, if only . . . if only I would let go . . . just a little.*

*Poem by Sr. Della Gaudet CSM*

General Principle 9 stresses our union with Mary, and the Marian dimension of our spirituality. Mary is for us a vivid model to follow. She is included in the story of Christ. She leads not to union with Christ, as we are already united with Him in Baptism, but to a deepening and intensification of that union as we contemplate her in the Annunciation and Incarnation, in the Spiritual Exercises.

*We come before you God of ancient times, acknowledging your presence  
with us.*

*We come before you God of the present, believing in your presence with us.*

*We come before you God of the future, hoping for your presence with us.*

*God of all time, we will work to build a better world... may your reign  
come. We ask this in the name of Jesus our brother. AMEN*

**NB:** For those who wish to learn more about the organization of CLC as described in the General Norms, you can go to <http://www.cvx-clc.net> and click on the following in succession: Principles About Life and about CLC – General Organization.

*Authored by the CLC Canada Formation Committee,  
Adapted by Fr. Jack Zuercher SJ, EA CLC USA and further adapted by Gilles Michaud.*

## 8.6 THE CLC CHARISM: EIGHT PRAYER EXERCISES

In "Praying with The CLC Charism", you will find that *The CLC Charism* content has been sub-divided into 8 Prayer Exercises and is intended for CLC members who are journeying in a group and who are in advanced stages of CLC formation.

In the *CLC CANADA FORMATION MANUAL II*, members are invited to study and pray with the General Principles and the characteristics of the Ignatian Charism. Resource 1, in *Manual II*, introduces the six characteristics of the Ignatian Charism that speak to the needs of the present-day culture and to the needs of those called to become leaven from within.

Basically, Ignatian Spirituality:

1. *contains a positive, incarnational worldview.*
2. *calls for a life attitude of reverence*
3. *leads to interior freedom*
4. *is action oriented*
5. *is rooted in reality, i.e., Humility*
6. *is communal.*

Our primary motivation, in offering you these Prayer Exercises, is to help CLC groups have a deeper communal experience of the CLC Charism which encompasses the above six Ignatian Charism characteristics. As is customary, members of a CLC group come together to share their prayer with each other, with the assistance of a Group Guide or an experienced CLC member.

Our hope is that CLC groups entering, into this time of prayer, will be spiritually exercised benefiting the whole person and the community. Just as walking, running, jumping and kicking a ball are physical exercises which benefit the body. Similarly, meditation, contemplation, examination of self, scripture reading, and spiritual conversation helps attain the spiritual freedom needed to follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit in our lives to live the CLC charism, raise awareness of the deep mystery of life, have an experience of the transcendent, and hear our call to a CLC way of life. Ignatius has several forms of prayer for formal prayer exercises. (Annotation #1). In each of the following eight units, the prayer forms all have a Theme, a Grace, Scripture passages and a suggested process followed by a segment extracted from the CLC.

The intent Charism of personal prayer, followed by a process of communal conversation, is to follow the lead of the Spirit on when and how to pray. In these Prayer Exercises, you may pause at any point, lift your heart to God in gratitude, amazement, praise and then move to evaluating your progress. In fact, you may discover that sometimes there is too much material in one unit. When this is the case, focus on what is most deeply affecting you and your group constantly keeping in mind the Grace that is sought; we refer to it as the desire of one's heart. Reflect on your experience and share these reflections with your community to discern your action on how to proceed. This process mirrors the dynamic of conscious knowing, described by the Jesuit philosopher Bernard Lonergan S.J., which is:

- experiencing,
- reflecting so as to understand our experience
- judging
- deciding.

You are encouraged to keep a journal, in which you recall your prayer and summarize what you wish to share at your CLC meeting, so that you share what is most important to you. You will need a Bible and a copy of *The CLC Charism Progressio Supplement # 56* (December 2001). The Supplement can be accessed from the CVX/ CLC World Wide Web site.

*'The Christian Life Community is an international association of Christians: men and women, adults and young people, of all social conditions, who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with Him for the building of the Kingdom.'*

### **PRAYER EXERCISE #1**

**THEME: I declare my dependence on God.**

**GRACE: I ask to share with joy and trust in God the Risen Christ.**

#### **SCRIPTURE:**

Jn. 14: 1-7

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Always trust in God and trust in me.

1Thess. 4: 1-12

We have been called by God to be holy.

Rom. 4: 18-25

The faith of Abraham... The faithfulness of

God

Luke. 12: 22-31

Trust in Abba

Ps. 131

In the arms of God our Mother

Jn. 14: 16 -28

I will not leave you orphans

## PROCESS:

1. Read the notes #1 -31 from the document *The CLC Charism*.
2. Take time to pray and reflect on what I have read.
3. What particularly caught my attention?
4. I ask God for an insight and a strength which will make my reading and reflection of the CLC Charism a work of grace, fruitful beyond my only human capacity ... the grace to see myself, to know myself and to understand myself as the Spirit of God sees me, knows me, and understands me.
5. Aware of the faithful presence of God near me, I finish my reading by praying an Our Father, another prayer that I love, a passage from Sacred Scripture, or a prayer of praise and thanks.
6. **REVIEW OF PRAYER:** After a short break, I become aware of my experience and write in my spiritual journal the ideas and feelings that have arisen during my time of prayer.

*Each individual discovers this call when he/she listens to it and accepts God's wishes. This call of God is a personal vocation, which reveals itself in our deepest inclinations and our most authentic desires. Our free response to God's call is what gives meaning and dignity to our existence.*

## PRAYER EXERCISE #2

**THEME:** To appreciate that Jesus is my personal saviour.

**GRACE:** I ask to know and love Jesus more intimately so that I may follow him in faith and with courage.

## SCRIPTURE

Lk. 5: 1-11 The call of Peter

2 Cor. 12: 1-10 When I am powerless, then I am strong

Jer. 1 4-10 Call of Jeremiah

Gen. 22: 1-19 Abraham and Isaac

Rom. 5: 6 -11 While we were powerless Jesus died for us

Eph. 2: 12 - 22 You were without hope...now you are strangers no longer

**PROCESS:**

1. Read the notes #32 -51 from the document *The CLC Charism*.
2. Take time to pray and reflect on what you have read.
3. What particularly caught my attention?
4. I ask God for an insight and a strength which will make my reading and reflection of the CLC Charism as a work of grace, fruitful beyond my only human capacity ... the grace to see me, to know me and to understand me as the Spirit of God sees me, knows me, and understands me.
5. Aware of the faithful presence of God near me, I finish my reading by praying an Our Father or another prayer that I love, a passage from Sacred Scripture, or a prayer of praise and thanks.
6. **REVIEW OF PRAYER:** After short break I become aware of my experience and write in my spiritual journal the ideas and feelings that have arisen during my time of prayer.

*The Christian Life Community, faithful to the Ignatian spirit which inspires it, wants its members to be agile in spirit, exercising themselves constantly to hear God's calls and responding promptly with their whole being.*

**PRAYER EXERCISE #3**

**THEME:** God calls us in freedom and radically

**GRACE:** To appreciate the freedom necessary to respond to God

**SCRIPTURE:**

Gen 22: 1-19

Abraham and Isaac

Phil 3: 7-16

I count everything as loss except knowing Christ Jesus

Lk 9: 59-62

Call of the first disciples who left all things

Matt 25: 14-29

Parable of the talents

Heb 11: 8-19

Faith of Abraham

**PROCESS:**

1. Read the notes #52 -75 from the document **The CLC Charism**.



2. Take time to pray and reflect on what I have read.
3. What particularly caught my attention?
4. I ask God for an insight and a strength which will make my reading and reflection of the CLC Charism as a work of grace, fruitful beyond my only human capacity ... the grace to see me, to know me and to understand me as the Spirit of God sees me, knows me and understands me.
5. Aware of the faithful presence of God near me, I finish my reading by praying an Our Father, another prayer that I love, a passage from Sacred Scripture, or a prayer of praise and thanks.
6. **REVIEW OF PRAYER:** After short break I become aware of my experience and write in my spiritual journal the ideas and feelings that have arisen during my time of prayer.

*The Principle and Foundation reminds us that we are called to be in dialogue, recognizing the gifts and presence of God in everything – whether in health or sickness, riches or poverty – and to respond, like Jesus, with praise, reverence and service.*

#### **PRAYER EXERCISE #4**

**THEME:** God calls us beyond everything

**GRACE:** To appreciate how Jesus' love sets us free to cooperate in nurturing the divine human community of God's family.

**SCRIPTURE:**

Lk. 1: 26-38	Annunciation...let it be done to me according to your will
Lk. 5:1 -11	Call of Peter and the first disciples
Jn. 3: 22-30	He must increase, I must decrease
Lk. 18: 18-34	Call of the rich man and prediction of the passion
2Cor. 12:1-10	Called in spite of weakness...Christ Jesus is our strength
Eph. 3: 14-21	May Christ's charity be the root and foundation of life

**PROCESS:**

1. Read the notes #76 -103 below taken from the document **The CLC Charism**.
2. Take time to pray and reflect on what I have read.

3. What particularly caught my attention?
4. I ask God for an insight and a strength which will make my reading and reflection of the CLC Charism as a work of grace, fruitful beyond my only human capacity ... the grace to see me, to know me and to understand me as the Spirit of God sees me, knows me and understands me.
5. Aware of the faithful presence of God near me, I finish my reading by praying an Our Father or another prayer that I love, a passage from Sacred Scripture, or a prayer of praise and thanks.
6. **REVIEW OF PRAYER:** After short break I become aware of my experience and write in my spiritual journal the ideas and feelings that have arisen during my time of prayer.

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord".*

### PRAYER EXERCISE #5

**THEME:** I am called to cooperate with Jesus's Spirit in establishing a realm of justice

**GRACE:** I pray to appreciate more deeply how I am being called today to be an instrument for justice in my environment

**SCRIPTURE:**

Lk. 4: 16 -22	Jesus preaches in Nazareth...
Matt. 25: 31 -46	Last judgement...whatever you do to the smallest one you do to me.
Matt. 23: 1 -12	Jesus confronts the unjust structures of his day...
Lk. 16: 19 -31	Parable of Lazarus and the rich person.
Matt. 14 :13 -21	Jesus feeds the five thousand
Acts. 6: 1 -6	Apostles appoint assistants to help in the service of the poor and distressed.

**PROCESS:**

1. Read the notes #104 -124 from the document **The CLC Charism.**
2. Take time to pray and reflect on what you have read.
3. What particularly caught my attention?

4. I ask God for an insight and a strength which will make my reading and reflection of the CLC Charism as a work of grace, fruitful beyond my only human capacity ... the grace to see me, to know me and to understand me as the Spirit of God sees me, knows me and understands me.
5. Aware of the faithful presence of God near me, I finish my reading by praying an Our Father or another prayer that I love, a passage from Sacred Scripture, or a prayer of praise and thanks.
6. **REVIEW OF PRAYER:** After short break I become aware of my experience and write in my spiritual journal the ideas and feelings that have arisen during my time of prayer.

*'Let us remember that "our life is essentially apostolic" and that "the field of CLC mission knows no limits". As members of the pilgrim People of God, we have been sent by Christ to be His witnesses to all people by our attitudes, words and actions'.*

### **PRAYER EXERCISE #6**

**THEME:** The Body of Christ

**GRACE:** A deep appreciation of how we are all integrated into the body of Christ Jesus and depend on each other; a growing desire to serve Jesus in his members by cooperating in the establishment of God's realm.

**SCRIPTURE:**

Rom. 12: 3 -21

Many members one body...

Lk. 22: 24 -32  
greatest.

Dispute among the apostles as to who is the

Jn. 13: 1 – 17

Jesus washes the feet of the disciples.

Jn. 21: 15 – 23

Feed my lambs, my sheep...

Eph. 4: 1 -16

There is one body, one spirit, one God and

Parent over all...

Phil. 2: 1 – 11

Look to others' interest rather than to your

own...

**PROCESS:**

1. Read the notes #125 -163 from the document **The CLC Charism**.
2. Take time to pray and reflect on what you have read.
3. What particularly caught my attention?

2. I ask God for an insight and a strength which will make my reading and reflection of the CLC Charism as a work of grace, fruitful beyond my only human capacity ... the grace to see me, to know me and to understand me as the Spirit of God sees me, knows me and understands me.
  
5. Aware of the faithful presence of God near me, I finish my reading by praying an Our Father or another prayer that I love, a passage from Sacred Scripture, or a prayer of praise and thanks.
  
6. **REVIEW OF PRAYER:** After short break I become aware of my experience and write in my spiritual journal the ideas and feelings that have arisen during my time of prayer.

*'To prepare our members more effectively for apostolic witness and service, especially in our daily environment, we form communities of those who strongly desire to unite their lives completely with their Christian faith according to our charism.'*

### **PRAYER EXERCISE #7**

**THEME:** I am called to exercise responsibility as part of the paschal mystery.

**GRACE:** A growing desire to discover my part in the paschal mystery.

**SCRIPTURE:**

Lk. 22: 14 – 20	The supper of the Lord
Lk. 9: 52 – 62	The cost of following Jesus
Lk. 22: 39 – 46	Agony in the garden
Lk. 23: 32 - 49	Jesus dies on the cross
Lk. 24: 13 – 35	Jesus appears to the disciples on the way to Emmaus
2Cor. 4: 5- 18	Our treasure is in earthen vessels to show the power of God

**PROCESS:**

1. Read the notes #164 -189 from the document **The CLC Charism**.
  
2. Take time to pray and reflect on what I have read.
  
3. What particularly caught my attention?

4. I ask God for an insight and a strength which will make my reading and reflection of the CLC Charism as a work of grace, fruitful beyond my only human capacity ... the grace to see me, to know me and to understand me as the Spirit of God sees me, knows me and understands me.
5. Aware of the faithful presence of God near me, I finish my reading by praying an Our Father or another prayer that I love, a passage from Sacred Scripture, or a prayer of praise and thanks.
6. **REVIEW OF PRAYER:** After short break I become aware of my experience and write in my spiritual journal the ideas and feelings that have arisen during my time of prayer.

*'Membership of the Christian Life Community requires a personal vocation'.*

### PRAYER EXERCISE #8

**THEME:** The Spirit works continually in us and through the events of our life experiences.

**GRACE:** Deeper awareness of the presence and power of the Spirit of Jesus in all the aspects of my life.

**SCRIPTURE:**

Jn. 14: 15-20 & 25-28	I shall ask my Abba who will you another advocate
Matt. 28: 16-20	I am with you all the days
Acts. 2: 1-13	Pentecost
Acts. 4: 5-22	Peter and John speak in the name of Jesus
2 Cor. 5: 13-20	Love of Christ impels us
Eph. 3: 14-21	May Christ Jesus strengthen inwardly through the power of the Holy Spirit.

**PROCESS:**

1. Read the notes #190 - 200 from the document **The CLC Charism**.
2. Take time to pray and reflect on what I have read.
3. What particularly caught my attention?
4. I ask God for an insight and a strength which will make my reading and reflection of the CLC Charism as a work of grace, fruitful beyond my only human

capacity ... the grace to see me, to know me and to understand me as the Spirit of God sees me, knows me and understands me.

5. Aware of the faithful presence of God near me, I finish my reading by praying an Our Father or another prayer that I love, a passage from Sacred Scripture, or a prayer of praise and thanks.
6. **REVIEW OF PRAYER:** After short break I become aware of my experience and write in my spiritual journal the ideas and feelings that have arisen during my time of prayer.

It is in this spirit that St Ignatius prays:

*"Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will - all that I have and possess. You, Lord, have given it all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours. Do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace, for that is enough for me."*

Our freedom comes from God's love and is offered to Him. God loved us first; God committed Himself to us first.

At this stage, formation should be considered as "ongoing formation" so that we are always "in good apostolic shape", and thus able to give at any time the most adequate response to the question: What shall I do for Christ?'

*Compiled by Gilles Michaud  
Excerpts from The CLC Charism*

### FALL IN LOVE

*Nothing is more practical than finding God,  
Than falling in Love  
in a quite absolute, final way.  
What you are in love with,  
what seizes your imagination, will affect everything.  
It will decide  
what will get you out of bed in the morning,  
what you do with your evenings,  
how you spend your weekends,*

what you read, whom you know,  
what breaks your heart,  
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.  
Fall in Love, stay in love,  
and it will decide everything.

*Attributed to Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ (1907-1991)*

## 8.7 SENDING FORTH CELEBRATIONS

### A. FOR A MEMBER WHO HAD DISCERNED A MISSION OR MINISTRY

#### Praying the Space:

*May our hearts ring out with the words of Jesus when, one day, after speaking to the crowds from Simon's boat, he invited the apostles to "put out into the deep" for a catch: "Duc in altum" (Lk. 5:4). Peter and his companions trusted Christ's words and cast the nets. "When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish" (Lk. 5:6).*

#### The New Millennium: Letter of Pope Paul II

**Blessing:** \_\_\_\_\_ this evening we surround you with our love and blessing as we continue our journey together following Christ. We come to celebrate your embracing of your discerned decision to \_\_\_\_\_ and to send you into mission to co-labour with Jesus in building the Kingdom. We accept the shared responsibility for your discerned mission and commit ourselves, with the grace of God, to:

\*support you through intercessory prayer, ongoing interest, and continuing serious conversation as well as \*evaluate, with you, through prayerful reflection processes, your mission and the action taken through this mission.

As an apostolic community, we are ONE BODY in Christ. Your mission is also our common mission.

We surround you with our love and blessing as we pray a blessing for a particular grace/ gift to be with you in a deeper way on this mission.

placing hands on head - *"receive the gift of the mind"*

placing hands on ears - *"receive the gift of listening clearly and with love"*

placing hands on eyes - *"receive the gift of seeing deeply"*

placing hands on mouth - *"receive the gift of speaking kindly and justly"*

placing hands on heart - *"receive the gift of compassion and forgiveness"*



placing hands on feet - *"receive the gift of going to those in need"*

placing hands on hands - *"these hands are made for giving and receiving.*

*The gifts you have received, give as gifts."*

**Let us pray in song:** *Take O take him/her as s/he is.....*  
*Summon out what he shall be .....*  
*Set your seal upon her/his heart ... And live in her/him (3x)*

**Closing:** (All) Blessed are you God, source of all goodness. The boundless beauty and unlimited love of your presence blesses \_\_\_\_\_ every moment of her/his life. May Your goodness radiate from \_\_\_\_\_ and bring the blessing of your loving touch to each person with whom he shares life. And may the gift of her/his living presence bless each person he meets. Amen

## **B. CLC BLESSING FOR ONE WHO HAS DISCERNED TO LEAVE CLC**

(For a very Hospitable person leaving at Christmas)

### **Luke 1 (NRSV)**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, *"Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."* But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, *"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God."* Then Mary said, *"Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."* Then the angel departed from her.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, *"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?"*

*For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy."*

*And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant."*

---

### **Prayer for Hospitality:**

*Mary, the quality of your visit to Elizabeth teaches us so much about welcoming others and of being other-centered. You hurried quickly to where the need was. You thought of Elizabeth. You gave her joy, hope and promise, or rather you allowed God to do all that through you. You touched Elizabeth's spirit, and she felt the goodness of God in her life. Mary, you understood so well God's great love for you and trusted him so totally. Your welcoming presence met Elizabeth and she cried out in recognition of the fullness of God with you.*

*Mary, dear woman of God, pray for us, that we can be spiritual people of quality, of promise, of welcoming presence. Help us to be full of hospitality, welcoming the Christ in all and allowing the Christ within us to be met and visited. Amen*

***Our Prayer For \_\_\_\_\_ A Person of Hospitality, As S/He Continues Her/his Journey in Faith.***

\* Mother of God, you risked saying yes to being pregnant with the seed of the Holy One – may \_\_\_\_\_ also overcome any fears and take the risks that spiritual growth requires of her/him.

\* Mother of God, you offered the hospitality of your womb as a dwelling place for the Holy One – may \_\_\_\_\_ continually open the womb of her/his heart to all who need a welcome there.

\* Mother of God, you awaited the long nine months of the child's gestation may \_\_\_\_\_ wait patiently when spiritual growth seems to come far too slowly.

\* Mother of God, you did not know how the birth of your child would affect your life - may \_\_\_\_\_ trust in God's presence to protect and guide her/him when she faces uncertainty.

- \* Mother of God, you cared for and nurtured the divine life within you - May \_\_\_\_\_ daily do the same through faithfulness to prayer and virtuous action.
- \* Mother of God, you experienced the pain of contractions as you birthed the Holy One, may \_\_\_\_\_ have the courage to bear the pains of inner growth.
- \* Mother of God, you found kinship with your pregnant cousin, Elizabeth - May \_\_\_\_\_ recognize the Elizabeth's who sustain and encourage her/him.
- \* Mother of God, you felt the child within you stirring and kicking - may \_\_\_\_\_ deepen her/his awareness of God's stirrings in the midst of her/his life.
- \* Mother of God, when the divine child pushed forth from your womb he uttered his first cry - may \_\_\_\_\_ believe in the goodness within her/him that is yet to resound.
- \* Mother of God, the newly born child in your arms engendered awe, mystery, and wonder, may \_\_\_\_\_ too, reverence and be awed by the way that the Divine One enters her/his life.

*Taken from Out of the Ordinary by Joyce Rupp*

*The CLC together then prayed the following blessing ...*

*"Christmas blessing"*

*May you give and receive love generously.*

*May this love echo in your heart like the joy of church bells on a clear December day.*

*May each person who comes into your life be greeted as another Christ.*

*May the honor given the Babe of Bethlehem be that which you extend to every guest who enters your presence.*

*May the hope of this sacred season settle in your soul.*

*May it be a foundation of courage for you when times of distress occupy your inner land.*

*May the wonder and awe that fills the eyes of children  
be awakened within you.*

*May it lead you to renewed awareness and appreciation  
of whatever you too easily take for granted.*

*May the bonds of love for one another be strengthened  
as you gather around the table of festivity and  
nourishment.*

*May you keep your eye on the Star within you and trust  
this Luminescent Presence to guide and direct you each  
day.*

*May you go often to the Bethlehem of your heart and visit  
the One who offers you peace.*

*May you bring this peace into our world.*

*Joyce by Rupp*

# SECTION NINE

9.1 THE APOSTLE: SHAPED TO GOD’S HAND.....	406
A.    ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR GROUP GUIDES.....	406
B.    REQUIRED FORMATION OF THE GUIDE .....	407
C.    RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT GROUP GUIDE LEADERSHIP.....	409
9.2 FIVE LEVELS OF RESPONSES WHEN COMMUNICATING TO INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS.....	411
9.3 CHARISM AND MISSION OF THE CLC GROUP GUIDE .....	415
A.    UNDERSTANDING CHARISM AND MISSION.....	415
B.    REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ROLE OF THE CLC GROUP GUIDE.....	415
C.    LISTENING, INTERVENTION AND JUSTICE.....	417
9.4 STRUCTURE, PROCESS, INTENT OF AN IGNATIAN LAY COMMUNITY .....	420
A.    DIAGRAM OF AN IGNATION LAY WAY OF STRUCTURE/PROCESS.....	420
B.    WORKING COLLABORATIVELY .....	423
C.    CHURCH MODELS AND APOSTOLIC STYLES .....	426
9.5 GROUP GUIDE FORMATION: THE SPIRITUAL AND COMMUNITY DIMENSION .....	430
9.6 GROUP GUIDE FORMATIONAL PROCESSES .....	435
A.    THE FIRST CLC CANADA GROUP GUIDE 7-DAY COURSE HELD IN GUELPH, ONTARIO ON MARCH 1985 .....	435
B.    BASIC TOPICS IN GROUP GUIDE WORKSHOP IN GUELPH ONT. 1993 ..	436
C.    BASIC OUTLINE of CLC MEXICO GG FORMATION PLAN.....	437
D.    GROUP GUIDE NATIONAL FORMATION 2005.....	441
E.    A REGIONAL GROUP GUIDE FORMATION WORKSHOP .....	445
9.7 CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES OF A CLC GROUP GUIDE.....	446
9.8 CLC AND THE MARIAN DIMENSION.....	452
9.9 ADDITIONAL NOTES .....	456
A.    DISCERNMENT AND CONTEMPLATION .....	456
B.    INTERPRETING AND PRAYING THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES.....	457

## 9.1 THE APOSTLE: SHAPED TO GOD'S HAND

In his book, "Drinking from a Dry Well", (p.91), Thomas Green SJ offers the following reflection on the call of the apostle... *"Ignatius teaches us that – whether in prayer or in our active lives, God is at work transforming us so that we might be CONFORMED to God in Christ... we do not complete this work of transformation in one retreat experience of the **Spiritual Exercises**. It takes a lifetime of cooperation with grace... Ignatius' apostolic ideal was often beautifully expressed in the Latin phrase, "instrumentum conjunctum cum Deo". That is, the true apostle should be an instrument SHAPED TO THE HAND of God."*

In sharing about himself, Fr. Green says: *"I am left-handed and large handed. Some pens are very comfortable for me to use, and some are painfully ill-shaped to my large left hand. As a 'bachelor' I have to do some mending for myself at times. The sewing kit I use contains scissors which must have been made for midget fingers. It is painful to use and difficult to remove once it is wedged onto my fingers. Many, if not all of us, are like the troublesome pen and scissors. God can write and cut with us, yes, but we can make God's intention and action in the world through us more difficult when we are not that "instrumentum conjunctum cum Deo".*

It does indeed take a lifetime of growth and purifying transformation for us to be sent into the world, truly shaped to God's hand, yet in our *willingness* to be shaped, God's grace can do wonderful things through us. *"Instrumentum conjunctum cum Deo"* is a helpful metaphor for the maturing apostle; it is also a helpful image for the ongoing journey of formation for CLC group guiding.

### A. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR GROUP GUIDES

*The key role and responsibility for Group Guides can be found in the General Norms (41 b), "The guide, well formed in the Ignatian process of growth helps the community to discern the movements at work in the individuals and the community and helps them to maintain a clear idea of the CLC goal and process."*

It goes on to state:

- ✓ *"The guide assists the community and its coordinator to find and to use the means needed for the community's formation and its mission.*
- ✓ *The guide's participation in the life of the community is*

*conditioned by the objectivity needed to carry out effectively the role of guide.*

- ✓ *The guide is chosen by the community with the approval of the national or regional community. "*

The Group Guide is essential to shepherd an emerging community through the phases of formation leading to acceptance as members of the Christian Life Community of Canada. The guide continues journeying with the community as it lives, fully, the CLC way of life.

Group Guides are experienced, full members of CLC who have been selected, prepared and have completed the prerequisites for this important role in CLC. They have the training, experience and ability to facilitate learning about the Spiritual Exercises and possess the knowledge and experience with group process and discernment to facilitate quality communal decisions.

To this end, they have completed the Spiritual Exercises with a special interest in living out the exercises in the CLC way of life. They are knowledgeable and experienced about the tools of communal life and leadership skills (History Line, Life Cycle, Power Cycle, Leadership Styles, Leader-Group Relations etc.)

On completing the Group Guide Course, they have guided prospective CLC group(s) through Phase I and II Manuals and have become familiar with the CLC Charism, General Principles, General Norms, Our Common Mission, Recommendations from World General Assemblies, the Constitution of CLC Canada, and the National Common Mission Statement.

Ongoing formation is whatever will keep us in 'good apostolic shape' and so be able to give, at any time, the most adequate response to the question:

*"What shall I/we do for Christ?"*

## **B. REQUIRED FORMATION OF THE GUIDE**

Once we have a clear idea about the role of the guide, it is easier to plan out the formation required. While there are certain universal guidelines/ orientations, we must remember that formation must be linked to the local, national and regional context. There are a variety of practices whereby national communities offer formation to group guides.

A CLC Australia Documents states, 'Well formed Guides are vital for the ongoing growth of the Christian Life Community. To continue to grow and deepen CLC, we know we need to form new groups which means recruiting, accompanying and forming new Guides.

The Guide has a specific service role within CLC. There are certain characteristics of a person/CLC member who is suited for that role. The process of choosing and accompanying a Guide is always a communal process. *The Guide is sent for this task and is supported by the community - especially for the formation task.*

Imagine visioning this ministry as a set of eyeglasses. We are now asked to change our lenses in how we listen and discern. We still have the 3 pillars (Community, Spiritual Exercises and mission) and the norms and General Principals of CLC as our frame.

It is presupposed that to enter into this ministry, a potential Group Guide...

- Has prayed and deepened their knowledge of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.
- Has a felt sense of call to this ministry.
- Holds the realization that the Trinity is the true group guide and will sustain him/her in their ministry.
- Has a knowledge of Christian Life Community.
- Has a willingness to become familiar with the Norms and General Principals of CLC, the three pillars of CLC (Spiritual Exercises, Community, Mission), the CLC Canada Formation Manuals and CLC Leaders' Manual.
- Has skills of listening and discernment that are being heightened and thru self-knowledge can articulate how these skills are being incorporated into their life's journey in various ministries and in their CLC journey.
- There is an openness to participate in collaborative leadership with a distinct role and responsibilities different from a group coordinator (the Group Guide is not a member of the CLC group).
- There is an openness to mentorship for ongoing growth and skill development in this ministry.



## C. RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT GROUP GUIDE LEADERSHIP

### Preamble

Ongoing formation for the role of CLC Group Guide can seem like a daunting journey at times. However, we grow best in community and we grow best when we can take small, incremental steps that build upon one another. Taking such steps invites us towards generosity, openness and humility. These are the most important dispositions of heart for all those who undertake such leadership formation for service within the Christian Life community.

The following excerpts (framed through questions) are mostly taken from World documents, or from the current Atlantic Regional document on the Role of the Guide. These may help us appreciate and understand some of the principles, assumptions and practices needed for our journey of ongoing formation.

The World publication, *Projects 132*, notes the 2003 Nairobi World Assembly recommendations about leadership in CLC. "Our Community continues to need leaders who facilitate communities' processes of discerning, sending, supporting and evaluating (DSSE) our personal and communal missions. Knowledge, skills, and leadership experience will help CLC effectively move towards apostolic community. The CLC Group Guide is one of these leaders.

The Guide is familiar with the communal nature of CLC. He or she understands the dynamics of group processes and encourages deep and respectful listening in the CLC group. The Guide is aware of CLC foundational literature and the outcomes of CLC Assemblies - National and World.

In particular, the CLC Guide:

- At the stage of apostolic discernment, encourages a dynamic apostolic life according to the principles of apostolic discernment, sending (missioning), supporting and evaluating (DSSE).
- Encourages members to continue to discern their vocation in the Church, recognising that CLC is but one way of Christian commitment.
- Encourages members to continue to discern whether they are ready to make a Temporary or Permanent Commitment to CLC.

## Qualities and Experience Desirable in a Guide

The guide is a person who:

- Has a growing relationship with Christ through prayer.
- Values the Ignatian story and The Spiritual Exercises as the source of Ignatian spirituality and has some experience of the Exercises.
- Desires to be a 'contemplative in action'.
- Has discovered the need for and importance of personal spiritual guidance.
- Demonstrates maturity and generosity.
- Has some felt knowledge and understanding of CLC foundational documents, especially the General Principles.
- Is prepared to participate in and promote the activities of CLC at regional, national and world levels.
- Participates in ongoing formation as a Guide.
- Is able to listen.
- Manifests freedom in relation to being a Guide.
- Has some experience of working with groups.
- Shows compassion and solidarity with the poor.
- Recognises their financial responsibility.

## 9.2 FIVE LEVELS OF RESPONSES WHEN COMMUNICATING TO INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS

When guiding groups, it is helpful to remember and practice good communication skills.

Communication theorists inform us that in listening and responding to other people's messages there are two basic things that determine the effectiveness of your help:

**Your intentions and attitudes as you listen and give your response.  
The actual phrasing of your response.**

The appropriate phrasing of your response involves considerable skill, but skill is not enough. It is only when the skills in phrasing responses reflect your underlying attitudes of acceptance, respect, interest, liking and desire to help that your response will be truly helpful.

Your response is helpful when it helps the other person and the group explore an issue, (e.g., What is this group about?), clarify feelings, (how are we doing as a group?) gain insight into a distressing situation or make a difficult decision.

While there are many ways to respond to an individual and a group there are five ways of responding which capture most (80%) of the communication. None of the responses can be labelled good or bad, effective, or ineffective. All have their place in helping other people solve their problems and gain insight into their difficulties. But some of the responses are more helpful in building friendships and helping people explore further their feelings and thoughts.

The five typical ways of responding are:

- **Advising and evaluating**
- **Analyzing and interpreting**
- **Reassuring and supporting**
- **Questioning and probing**
- **Paraphrasing and understanding**

As we look at each of these we can begin to reflect on when each one may be appropriate way of responding.

### **1. Advising and Evaluating**

- Giving advice and making a judgment as to the relative goodness,

appropriateness, effectiveness, and rightness of what the individual or group is thinking and doing.

- These responses communicate an evaluative, corrective, suggestive and moralizing attitude and intent.
- The receiver implies what the sender ought or might do to solve the problem.
- When advice is timely and relevant, it can be helpful to another person.
- Most often, however, when you give advice and evaluation you build barriers that keep you from being helpful and developing a deeper friendship.
- Being evaluative and giving advice can be threatening to other people and make them defensive.
- The receiver is assuming that his/her judgment is superior to that of the sender's.
- Being evaluative is a way of avoiding involvement with another person's concerns and conflicts.
- It is quick and easy and can communicate a lack of desire to take the time to try to understand.

In the early phases of group development, it may be best to **avoid** phrases such as:

*If I were you...*

*Why don't you...*

*Don't you think...*

*You ought to...*

If the guide needs to judge or evaluate it is important to preface the comments with an understanding of the concern or issue. If a group believes and senses that the guide understands, they are more likely to be receptive to constructive feedback.

## **2. Analyzing and Interpreting**

- You are intending to tell the sender what his or her problem means and how they really feel about it.
- You try to impart some deep psychological knowledge.
- You act like an analyst who thinks s/he is the only one who knows what is really going on.
- "I know what your problem is."
- "The reason you are upset is because..."

These suggestions often leave the individual and the group feeling discouraged and defensive so they won't disclose any more information for fear that there will be more analysis.

## **3. Reassuring and Supporting**

- Your intention is to be sympathetic.
- You want to reduce the intensity of the sender's feelings.

- This often results in denying the sender's feelings. "Things will be better tomorrow."
- "Don't be discouraged."

Often the message is that the individual or the group should not feel like this.

#### **4. Questioning and Probing**

- The receiver wants more information.
- You want to guide the discussion along certain lines.
- You ask a lot of questions.
- You can come across as an interrogator.
- There are open questions and closed questions.

Questioning and probing usually makes people feel defensive and encourages them to justify their actions rather than explore them.

#### **5. Paraphrasing and Understanding**

Your intention is to understand the thoughts and feelings of others. There are three situations in which you will want to use this response.

- The first is when you are not sure you have understood the group's thoughts and feelings.
- The second is to ensure that the group hears what it has just said.
- The third is reassuring the group that you are trying to understand their thoughts and feelings.

Your ability to be helpful to another person is directly related to your ability to view the situation from another person's perspective.

The five response styles encompass 80% of all messages sent between individuals. If a guide responds one way 40% of the time, people see you as always responding that way. The categories are neither good nor bad. It is the overuse or under use of the categories that may not be functional or the failure to recognize when each type of response is appropriate that interferes with helping the group and building a better relationship.

Many relationships or conversations are best begun by using the understanding response until a trust is established. Then the other categories of response are to be more freely used. Avoid evaluative comments in the beginning. There will be times when an individual or a group tries to discuss an issue with you that you do not understand. Probing response may be helpful.

Supportive responses are helpful when a person needs to feel accepted or when she needs enough support to try to engage with the group on its CLC journey. Sometimes

an interpretive response can be useful in confronting the group with your interpretation  
what is going on in the group.

*Adapted from "Reaching Out" by David Johnson*

## 9.3 CHARISM AND MISSION OF THE CLC GROUP GUIDE

### A. UNDERSTANDING CHARISM AND MISSION

#### 1. How might we understand the word 'charism'?

*A charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit which gives an energy to love and help others.*

A charism can be given to an individual or a group for the sake of others.

- Our Ignatian charism is essentially apostolic. (CLC Leaders' Manual p. 25)
- Our CLC charism is essentially the CLC way of life (3 pillars: spirituality of the SE, community, mission)

#### 2. What is the charism of a group guide?

The charism of a group guide is spiritual guidance. Spiritual guidance is essentially a *contemplative gift* which gives an energy to accompany others as they awaken to the spiritual in everyday life and directs them towards a deepening relationship with the Spirit.

#### 3. What is the 'mission' for which this charism is given to the CLC Group Guide?

This particular 'energy' of spiritual guidance is given to the CLC Group Guide to accompany those who want to live the Ignatian charism as it is expressed through the CLC charism. It involves a supporting the group through all stages of its group life.

**FOR REFLECTION:** What is helpful for you in the above ... or what needs further conversation?

### B. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ROLE OF THE CLC GROUP GUIDE

#### 1. What do we look for in others who are called to exercise the role of CLC guide?

Whether in 'seed' form or well developed, this role requires of guides...

- a contemplative stance in prayer and in life
- an ability to adapt to the level of maturity of the group
- a passion for being 'keepers of the vision' of CLC

#### 2. What does the contemplative stance mean for CLC Group Guides?

It means the ability to listen, notice and discern the movements and dynamics in oneself and in those they accompany (individuals and the group).

**3. What does it mean to adapt to the level of maturity of the group?**

It means to *help the group* mature in three areas of the human personality:

**a) to grow in intellectual maturity, that is:**

- to learn how to reflect on one's experience as a person *in* the world
- to learn how to think critically and creatively

**b) to grow in affective maturity, that is**

- to learn how to notice spontaneous movements (the thoughts and feelings which are the data for discerning interior and communal movements)
- to learn how to dialogue with others with respect, honesty and responsibility
- to learn how to notice and name resistances and blind spots
- to learn how to manage and integrate tensions so as to make decisions well

**c) to grow in spiritual maturity, that is:**

- to grow in the 3 dimensions (pillars) of the CLC way of life
- to respond to the vocational and apostolic 'situations' of individual members and of the group
- to adapt CLC formation to the group's stage of CLC growth

**4. What does it mean for a CLC Group Guide to be a 'keeper of the vision'?**

It means to maintain a clear idea of the goals of CLC, especially:

- the three **dimensions** (pillars) of its way of life (spirituality, community and mission) and
- the three **dynamics** which allow it to develop as an apostolic community (the process of growth, the stages of growth and DSSE).

**FOR REFLECTION:**

**a) What did I read in Part II that gave me a deeper insight into the role of the CLC Group Guide?**

**b) Where did I feel most encouraged? most challenged? most in need?**

*Taken and adapted from World documents:  
The CLC Charism, 1991; the Progressio Supplement 64*

**5. What areas of KNOWLEDGE are important for the CLC Group Guide?**

Guides must be:

- grounded in the Spiritual Exercises.
- steeped in Ignatian spirituality as a way of life.
- be 'students' and 'teachers' of the basic and evolving documents of CLC formation and growth so as to be able to open these up for the local groups they serve.



**6. What SKILLS of the CLC Group Guide are particularly important?**

Guides:

- co-discern from an objective stance (they sit on the fringe of the group).
- facilitate members growth to embrace/live the vocation and commitment to the CLC way of life.
- help the group discern the personal and communal spiritual movements within their interchanges especially those that are leading them towards the Lord and His call.
- help the group make decisions by naming its vision, setting goals and objectives (realizing them through discernment processes) that lead to greater apostolic decisions.
- ensure that the group continues to grow in its prophetic call and moves beyond itself and not turn inward.

**7. What is an important part of the COMMITMENT CLC Group Guides make when invited to this leadership role?**

Guides:

- regularly reflect on their guiding experiences.
- gather with other groups guides whenever possible for peer support.
- commit to ongoing formation as part of their call to service.

**FOR REFLECTION:**

a.) How do I understand my own guiding experience in light of these Regional Document excerpts? Where do I feel encouraged? challenged?

OR

b.) If I am not currently guiding a group, how do the above excerpts shed light on my understanding of the role of the guide to which I am invited?

*From the Atlantic Regional document:  
Role of the CLC Group Guide - adapted slightly in sentence structure*

## **C. LISTENING, INTERVENTION AND JUSTICE**

### **Listening**

The guide should develop during the process of formation a good sensitivity to the ways that people communicate. The basic ability here is to be able to listen. Listening also means to read body language, to help people express what they want to but

cannot, to remember, to recognize feelings such as psychological hurts, to know how to use silence, to let people speak without judging them. It is only in listening that self-expression and intervention of the guide may become helpful for the group. To develop this listening ability', sharing with other guides is basic.

A simple model for a one-day meeting of guides in this area maybe as follows:

**Morning:** Guided reflection on one group experience:

1. Working pairs: Each guide chooses one group that he or she is still guiding and shares experiences with one other guide (there is no discussion during this stage - only mutual reporting and listening).
2. Personal Reflection: how would I have acted or responded as a guide in the situation just reported? Why?
3. Sharing: the results are shared with the same guide~
4. Time for further reflection: how did I feel while listening to the other's suggestions? How did I feel while looking for a solution?
5. Listening in the plenary group:
  - o What insights, experiences, questions came up during the different steps of the exercise?
  - o OR Role play and thorough evaluation of what happened during the play.
  - o How did those involved act and respond?
  - o After these observations what reflections came to mind?

**Intervention skills**

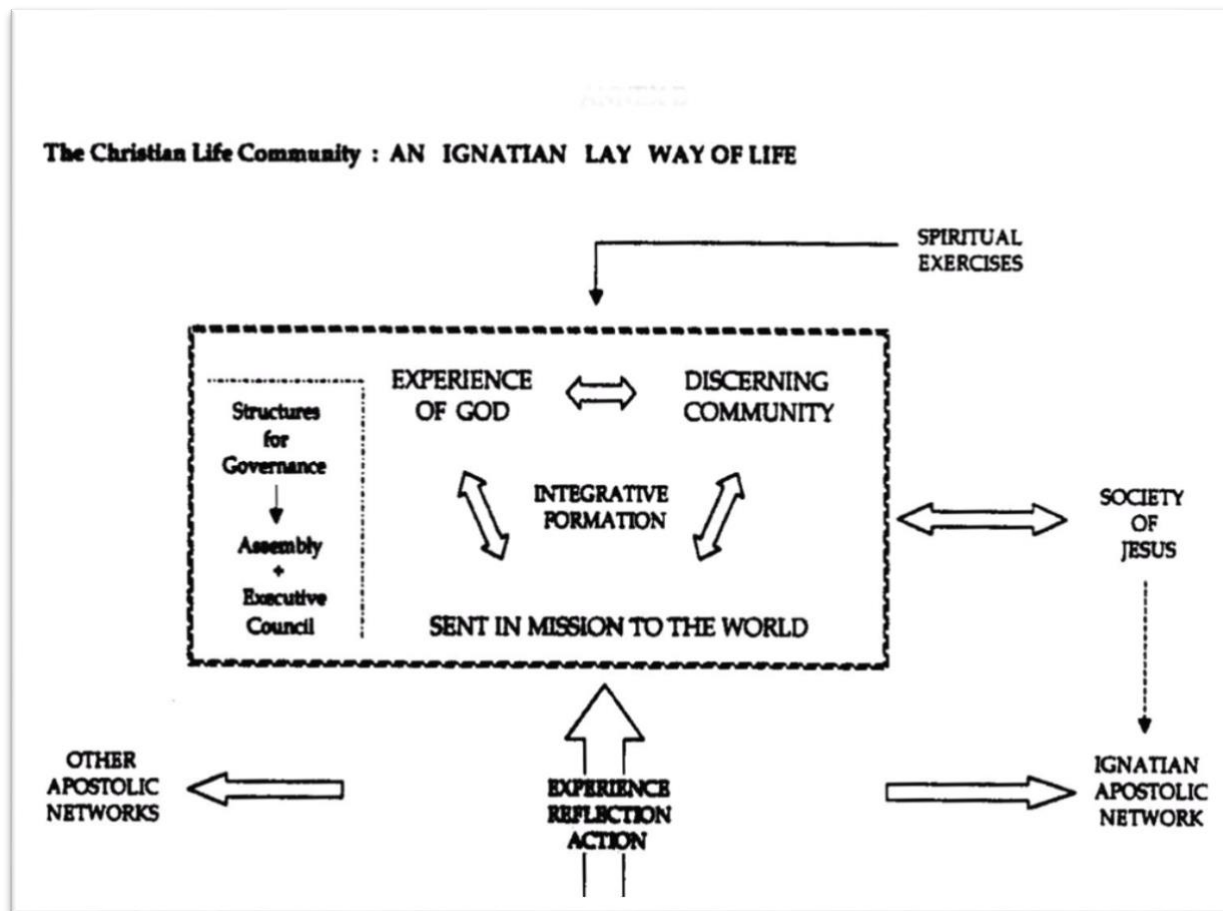
The guide is supposed to give some input to the group or to intervene - in its process from time to time. These inputs and interventions usually aim at reflecting back to the group what -they are living and to show some possible ways of going ahead. They are, therefore, very - much linked to the actual experience of the group, and are not confined to the psychological dimensions, for the CLC group is not just an encounter-group or a human development group. So, it is very desirable that the guide integrate within his message to the group the dimensions of human relationships, group process and the spiritual process. In other words, the guide must be able to teach listening skills, help members to tell their own story from a faith perspective, and guide their praying with scripture and from within their own graced history. It is in this way that the guide should intervene in the process of the group.

## Justice

The orientations of the World Community of CLC, mainly expressed in the final documents of the World Assemblies, are clear in recognizing that we cannot live our vocation if we are not making efforts to "follow Christ poor and humble". Through the Spiritual Exercises and the CLC process, we grow in intimacy with Jesus Christ and His Gospel, to the point where we understand that we are invited to follow Him in his mission as Mary did - in freedom, poverty and solidarity.... And to do so with a listening heart and a determination to work for justice and the defence of life" (Loyola 86, Synthesis of the recommendations). We recognize that this is a way of conversion, "which expresses itself in a simple lifestyle and an option in favour of the poor" (ibid). The guide should help the group to assimilate these orientations and to deepen their evangelical roots. It is important that CLC members be helped to understand that here we are not just touching "one aspect" of our Christian faith, but that we are entering into the deepest meaning of our call to sanctity: We are all called to be holy, as is our Father in Heaven, according to our particular vocation. In our times, the thirst for holiness grows more and more in the hearts of the faithful, when they accept the call of God inviting them to live with Christ and to change the world. The Holy Spirit leads us to understand more clearly that holiness today cannot be attained without a commitment to justice, without a human solidarity that includes the poor and the oppressed. The ideal holiness of the lay faithful must integrate the social dimension of transforming the world according to the plan of God". (*In the Path of the Council. Message to the People of God from the Synod of Bishops 1987*). The guide should therefore help the group to read the Gospel and to get to know Jesus and His option, and to realize that this is the starting point of our concern for justice and peace, progress and charity' (G.P. N.2).

## 9.4 STRUCTURE, PROCESS, INTENT OF AN IGNATIAN LAY COMMUNITY

### A. DIAGRAM OF AN IGNATIAN LAY WAY OF STRUCTURE/PROCESS



This diagram is intended to facilitate the dialogue about the Christian Life Community for a better understanding of its purposes. The elements that are shown in this diagram typify the way of life of our lay community in the Church, whose members wish to live the spirituality of Saint Ignatius of Loyola.

The following is an explanation of this diagram.

## 1. Experience of God

It is a way of life rooted in the constantly renewed experience of God calling each one of us (vocation) as members of his People. In this way we live a personal dialogue with the God of Jesus Christ within the believing community.

## 2. Discerning Community

The members of CLC assemble in community so as to give a better response to the call of God, integrating all the dimensions of their life with the fullness of their Christian faith (GP 4). It is through personal prayer and an ordered life that makes the communal discernment possible. Each group discerns and accepts the action of the Spirit of Jesus rooted in an Ignatian pedagogy (cf CLC Charism pages 9-15) and action.

## 3. Sent in mission to the world

This Spirit of Jesus moves the community to remain available for God, and to share the mission of Jesus Christ. This availability is expressed in the acceptance of mission, which in turn requires disponability (readiness) to be sent and openness to the most urgent needs of the world where God is addressing us. **The community that has discerned sends its members in mission, supports them and later evaluates the mission entrusted.**

## 4. Integrative Formation

A continuous and qualitative formation is necessary to advance our personal integration of the experience of God, the discerning community and the mission received. CLC considers this integrative formation as one of its distinctive characteristics (CLC Charism pages 55-63). It enriches our experience of God, provides instruments for discernment and prepares us for an enhanced appraisal of the needs found in this world where the Son of God is incarnated. This formation prepares the members of CLC to give a better response to mission and so to render a higher quality service in the church.

## 5. Spiritual Exercises

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius are the specific source and the characteristic instrument of our life in CLC. Young people orient them to the election of state of life and adults to the ongoing reform of life. The frequent repetition of the Exercises by annual retreats, as experience has proven, is a unique support to individuals and communities. They foster growth in the love of Jesus Christ and of the church. They also prolong the internal dynamics of discernment and availability generated in each individual and in the community.

## **6. Experience - Reflection - Action**

In the regular (weekly or bi-weekly) community meetings of groups or teams of persons (normally 8 to 10), with the grace of God, will have greater apostolic efficiency when using the *experience - reflection - action* method in the group (CLC Charism page 7). We tell our stories to share the gifts and to grow in awareness that God is calling us through others. When we keep applying this method, we show a desire to persevere and remain faithful to our mission. (the grace of the third week of Ex.)

## **7. Structures for Governance**

The Structures for governance of the Community are proposed in the General Principals of CLC (GPs 1-17) These structures apply to all aspects of CLC, - local, national or world. They prepare us to live in mission and support us as we do it; they promote the necessary integration. This is why each Community adjusts its structures for governance so that they really meet the requirements of mission and formation.

## **8. Assembly + Executive Council**

The CLC is governed by a General Assembly who gathers delegates from all National CLCs every 5 years. Such an Assembly represents the whole Community. It watches over the observance of the General Principles and discerns the Community's mission. Because the Assembly does not convene frequently and we live in mission throughout the years, the Assembly elects an Executive Council and mandates the implementation of what has been decided by the delegates at the General Assembly. The members of the Executive Council commit themselves to foster the life and the mission of the Community. They do this by meeting at least once per year in making decisions in a spirit of communal discernment

## **9. Relation with the Society of Jesus**

CLC is a lay community with its own lay mission and ministry in the Church. Following Ignatian spirituality, we are always looking for the greater good (*magis*), meaning a better response to the calling of God in the concrete signs of the times in our daily life. Because of our special bond to the Ignatian spirituality and its historical development, CLC and the Society of Jesus (other members of the Ignatian family) find themselves facing opportunities for ministry and mission in common. Both CLC and the Society accept these opportunities, wishing to collaborate closely while retaining their distinctive vocations and identities as lay and Jesuit. Most of the time CLC will receive from the Society of Jesus a special support by means of the Jesuit ecclesiastical assistants. (cf GP 14)

## 10. Ignatian Apostolic Network

CLC is aware of the synergy involved in the cooperation with the Ignatian Apostolic Network promoted and developed by the Society of Jesus. While collaborating in it or contributing to its formation, CLC expresses the desire of giving a better response to the sign of the times and of doing this in collaboration with the Society.

## 11. Other Apostolic Networks

As members and communities of CLC we often find ourselves collaborating and even belonging to other apostolic or service networks, or special diocesan groups. All these have their own identities, and CLC wishes to retain its identity, so that members are known as members when we collaborate with other groups and ministries.

## 12. Networking

Lay persons and also Jesuits are expected to invite others to participate in CLC. Since our way of life is centered in the relation with God calling to service, it is desirable that we invite those young persons and adults who are interested and/or are involved in serving others.

# B. WORKING COLLABORATIVELY

## 1. Power

**Traditional Leaders:** The traditional corporate approach to power is one of singular authority. Traditional leaders in the corporate world believe that their power derives from their position of authority. Old school corporate hierarchy often bestows power based on longevity with a secondary look at prior results. The longer you stay with your firm, the farther up the ladder you progress, the greater your power.

**Collaborative Leaders:** The new approach of collaborative leadership recognizes that power is greatest in a collective team. By encouraging equal participation across all levels, collaborative leaders allow solutions to develop from the best ideas of the group and take a team approach to problem solving.

## 2. Information

**Traditional:** Maintaining ownership of information is the hallmark of traditional leaders. From a power perspective, information is power. Releasing information on a "need to know" basis allows traditional leaders to maintain authority and control.

**Collaborative:** Open information sharing is the cornerstone of collaborative leadership. Getting everyone on the same page in a project requires information sharing. Education also plays a role. The more cross training available, the more creative approaches to problem solving can develop and be implemented.

### **3. Idea Generation**

**Traditional:** Traditional managers will occasionally entertain suggestions or be open to ideas from their team. In a top-down hierarchy, the decisions generally come from the executives at the top of the food chain. Because information is closely held, management may know of circumstances that drive the decision-making process that may be withheld from team members.

**Collaborative:** The art of collaboration gives everyone on the team a voice. Leaders are generally open to suggestions and ideas from their team and recognize that brainstorming and different perspectives can bring unique insights.

### **4. Problem Solving**

**Traditional:** In a traditional corporate culture, solutions are generally delivered to team members. These decisions are made in the boardroom or the executive suite, approved and passed on.

**Collaborative:** In a collaborative environment, solutions are brainstormed among team members and facilitated by management. Collaborative leaders recognize the power of a group approach to problem solving.

### **5. Resource Allocation**

**Traditional:** The traditional approach to resource allocation is generally reactive. Resources are provided only when deemed necessary by upper management and often brought to a committee for approval prior to deployment. This process takes time and focus away from a project and can result in stress being placed on the team by forcing them to deal with issues or challenges without the necessary resources.

**Collaborative:** A collaborative environment is based on trust and resources may be delivered proactively. Team leaders will enable their teams to flourish by providing resources and allocating time, quickly. This allows projects to develop more rapidly, as employees have access to the corporate resources (time, money, materials) necessary to do their jobs efficiently.



## **6. Rules and Responsibilities**

**Traditional:** Traditional corporate culture relies on a series of rules, regulations and a hierarchy that force managers and team leaders to adhere to specific roles and responsibilities for both them and their teams. This can stifle the creative process and result in team members working in relative isolation as information and resources are shared and provided on a “needs” basis.

**Collaborative:** In a collaborative environment, teams are encouraged to work together. Information, resources, knowledge, time, and effort are shared. This allows roles and responsibilities to evolve and fluctuate based on the greater good.

## **7. Resolving Issues**

**Traditional:** In a traditional culture, issues are often dealt with on an individual basis with no regard to the root cause of the problem. This keeps managers fighting fires instead of instituting beneficial change that could prevent issues from arising.

**Collaborative:** The basis of collaborative leadership is trust. Because team members are given more responsibility for their work, leaders are often more involved in the process. This means that as issues arise, they are often dealt with swiftly. Collaborative leaders look for the root cause of conflict as it arises, and address solutions promptly to keep work moving forward.

## **8. Performance and Feedback**

**Traditional:** Most traditional corporations practice a semi-annual or annual review process based on corporate policy. This can be detrimental to employee morale. If an employee has had a banner year, but in the last month missed a deadline or a project they were managing ran over budget, together on a daily basis. This gives the opportunity for immediate feedback, praise it can result in a negative performance review. This can damage morale and increase turnover as employees who feel they were unfairly judged may seek greener pastures elsewhere.

**Collaborative:** The nature of a collaborative environment means that leaders and team members are equally valued and work closely and constructive criticism. A collaborative environment is nurturing and offers the opportunity to share knowledge and educate members on an ongoing basis. Collaborative leaders often share their knowledge and team members.

## C. CHURCH MODELS AND APOSTOLIC STYLES

*The lifestyle of any faith community cannot be confined to a clearly defined pattern or model. When we define some Church models, we wish to point out some tendencies or central points / characteristics of some communities. We are aware that these models do not apply exactly to any given community or person, yet they can help us understand the differences within the Church in lifestyle, speech and opinion. Consequently, they can help us overcome some of the difficulties we encounter in our apostolic activities.*

### A) THE CHURCH AS A PERFECT SOCIETY (TRADITIONAL)

#### 1. Structures

The pyramid: on top is the hierarchy, at the bottom the laity. This is a Church for the poor.

#### 2. Organization

Subordination according to rank and ministries. Administration is very centralized. Geographical boundaries are privileged. The universal Church prevails over the local Church.

#### 3. Objectives

Quantitative extension of the Church is the main objective. Catechesis aims at teaching what is needed for salvation. Sacramental life stresses the frequent reception of the sacraments. Liturgy is identified with the celebration of rites. Morality aims at maintaining the faith and good behaviour. Obedience means "doing what the pastor says".

#### 4. Roles

The hierarchy thinks, decides, judges, plans, teaches. The laity are governed, taught, sanctified.

#### 5. For whom

For the faithful who come to the churches and the catholic organizations and associations.

#### 6. Contents

Faith is seen as a doctrine, special importance is given to Tradition, to official orthodox pronouncements and to uniformity in Liturgy.

**7. Methods used**

Preaching, catechesis, ceremonies, financial infrastructure, Catholic charity organizations.

**8. Placed in**

The Church is placed away from the world and social problems. It is a state within a state; relationships are sanctioned by mutual agreements. For all intents and purposes the Church backs up and legitimizes the political class in power.

**9. Values**

Authority, obedience, discipline, fidelity, tradition, uniformity.

**10. Ministries**

Episcopal, priestly, religious.

**B) THE CHURCH AS GOD'S PEOPLE (COMMUNITARIAN)**

**1. Structures**

A circle of communion and participation; this is a Church with the poor.

**2. Organization**

The hierarchy is at the service of the community. The priest inspires, preaches and coordinates the community. There is solidarity among local Churches.

**3. Objectives**

Love and service to the world and to the human family; the whole person is promoted and saved. Forming Christian communities; educating in the faith with a catechesis that fosters [brotherhood].

**4. Roles**

Priests are educators of the faith and promoters of Christian communities. Apostolic teams are diversified. There is co-responsibility with the laity.

**5. For whom**

The Christian members of the communities; the poor and the marginalized.

**6. Contents**

The Christian community of faith, hope, and love, the sign and instrument of communion with God and friendship among humans. The celebration and the proclamation of God's saving action in the history of humankind.

**7. Methods used**

Insertion into human realities, group dynamics, promoting communities, shared liturgical celebrations.

**8. Placed in**

In the world, away from civil powers, open to all people of good will.

**9. Values**

Incarnation, fraternity, service, charity, witnessing.

**10. Ministries**

Diversified according to needs of each community.

**C. THE CHURCH OF THE POOR (PROPHETICAL)**

**1. Structures**

A circle of communion and participation: this is a Church from the poor and like the poor in its lifestyle and mission.

**2. Organization**

Apostolic communities of service and co-responsibility: diaspora in communion with the universal Church.

**3. Objectives**

The liberation of the whole person and of all persons: education to live as brethren: awareness of injustice and protection of the oppressed: visible expressions of liberation: catechesis as the education to know faith by experience with an emphasis on solidarity.

**4. Roles**

Priests, advisers, coordinators; lay people are committed in tasks of service.

**5. For whom**

The oppressed, the poor, the weak, the socio-economic and cultural structures

**6. Contents**

The proclamation of Christ's liberation; The Kingdom of God; personal, community and structural conversion; denouncing unjust systems; human rights.

**7. Methods used**

Social analysis, liberation pedagogy, basic Church communities.

**8. Placed in**

Incarnated in history as leaven and soul of society; a society which needs to be renewed in Christ and transformed into God's family.

**9. Values**

Love, poverty, freedom, solidarity, commitment, availability, sacrifice, hope, creativity.

**10. Ministries**

The whole Church is ministerial. Special place is given to women and the youth.

*By Carlos Rubiano SJ (Colombia)*

## 9.5 GROUP GUIDE FORMATION: THE SPIRITUAL AND COMMUNITY DIMENSION

### SPIRITUALITY DIMENSION

All of us are called to “poverty of spirit,” or **spiritual poverty**, which describes a stance of utter dependence before God, not in any demeaning, servile sense, but in the sense of the Principle and Foundation: God is God, and we are creatures created to praise, love, and serve God. Before all else, we depend on God for our happiness and fulfillment. While we are grateful for our talents, abilities, wealth, and achievements, we are free enough to offer them to the service of God and others and to let go of them when they get in the way of that self-giving.

In short, poverty of spirit is an emptying of self so that God can fill us with life and love. Our prayer helps us grow in spiritual poverty and freedom. Christ is the model of spiritual poverty par excellence.

Christ also lived in actual or **material poverty**, with a lack of material goods. Some people may be called to this way of living. Priests, brothers, and sisters in religious orders profess a vow of poverty, renouncing personal possessions and wealth and depending on their religious community for their material needs. God may call others to a life of material poverty without professing vows. Material poverty is not an end in itself, for abject poverty is degrading to the human person (as a survey of our world so tragically reveals). Instead, for those called to this state of life, material poverty is a means to deepen one’s commitment to the poor whom Christ held so dear.

Although not everyone is called to live a life of actual poverty, we are all called to live simply and in freedom with respect to the riches we have—whether they are in the form of material possessions, talents, reputation, or influence. All are called to labor with Christ to help the poor and powerless in some way. All are called to give countercultural witness to the rampant competition and materialism around us.

*Excerpt from The Ignatian Adventure by Kevin O’Brien, SJ.*

## **Review: Second Week: The Two Standards**

### **Stand with Jesus or with the Way of the World**

All disciples have to choose where we are going to stand—with Jesus or with the world. No matter what life the Spirit has drawn us to, once we are baptized and confirmed we are called to stand in Jesus' company under his flag.

We begin to move under Jesus' standard when we join him in the living conviction that everything we have, and are, is God's gift. However much or little we have, we say gratefully, "Look at all God has given me." Then the way opens through the smoke of self-satisfaction and approval of others. "How can I help?" becomes a daily preoccupation. And through a life of love and service, the Spirit leads us to live as meekly and humbly as the Lord lived—whether we are a famous ballerina or an anonymous computer programmer.

The way of the world differs entirely. The starting point is getting as much wealth as you can. You say, "Look at all this stuff I have." When the world's way opens before you, you shift your focus, saying, "Look at me with all this stuff." As those around you grow more deferential, you start saying, "Look at *me*." You become convinced that you are the center of your world. You may not have sinned yet, but it is only a matter of time.

### **Three Forms of Collusion with the World's Standard**

Even without subscribing to theories of the subconscious, we can see that the world's standard is as inviting to Christ's disciples as it is to anyone else. In a way, even after we have made a solemn, lifelong choice to follow Christ's standard, we have to purify our daily life of collusion with the world's standard. The collusion comes in three forms.

First, there is benign secularism. Certainly, there are people, who do not know Jesus Christ, who lead deeply good lives. But even the baptized can live in a benignly secular way. We join civic movements and help the needy because that's what our neighbors do. We are good to our families and honest in the workplace. There is no immediate harm in this way, but neither is there anything more than a secular spirit, even though people today call it spirituality.

The second form of collusion, seen particularly in the affluent first world, is the search for pleasure. We are surrounded by people who live what St. Paul describes as the way of the flesh. Those who follow this way are the target of advertising; they need to have whatever everyone else has right now. Their less lovely side manifests self-indulgence, lust, envy—all seen as acceptable social mores. The flesh has its own laws, and those who follow this way will readily obey those laws into sin.

Finally, there is the collusion of succumbing to darkness. Think of the report of an adult who forced a twelve-year-old to kill another and then drink some of his blood. It is evil manifest. But most of the works of the dark are not manifest. Hatred, vengeance, violence, self-destructive habits—these flourish in the dark corners of the sinful human self.

In your heart of hearts, you may loathe the dark and leap to the light. But in everyday life, you will find yourself in the twilight of benign secularism or the flesh over and over again. You will find safety in Christ's standard only if you resolutely begin everything with thanks to God and keep watching what you are doing and why you are doing it.

*Excerpt from Making Choices in Christ by Joseph A. Tetlow, SJ.*

### **Contemplating the Third Week Exercises**

From CLC Formation Phase III

The third degree of humility (see Sp. Ex. # 165 to 168) in the Second Week is most fully understood while contemplating the Passion of Jesus in the Third Week. The grace of the Third Week requires a change in our whole attitude to life. It calls us to share in the sufferings of Jesus. In a paradoxical way we pray to see the cross as glory and sweetness. The grace calls us to move beyond our self-centred fears. We pray for the grace to be fully free.

This calls us to learn to contemplate in a new and humbler way. We seek something we cannot snatch by our own doing. All we can do is wait and be attentive. We can enter the Passion of Jesus only as we would keep a vigil at the bedside of a dying friend. Mary, as she stood by the cross is our great model of the compassionate one. She was there, living in her son, yet helpless, incapable of relieving Jesus' pain. She was experiencing his pain in herself, not by substitution but by extension from him. We too wish to experience what it was like for him, not for us, sharing in friendship.

In this sense, compassion is more than sympathy. The hymn expresses it well: "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" It was not "they" who crucified Jesus - it was I. Yet, there is a danger that if we concentrate on the sufferings, we miss or lay less emphasis on the love with which he bore them.

Freely, Jesus has to will his Passion. Until Christ says 'yes' with his human will, the Passion cannot begin, and God cannot compel him. Unless Jesus says 'yes', the Passion will have no meaning.

Grace is not an anaesthetic. Jesus had no personal love for, nor any desire to suffer. He accepted sufferings because they were the will of the Trinity, and the strength to



accept them came to him from the Trinity (Heb. 5: 8-9). I reflect on myself, and I learn from Christ how to give meaning to my sufferings and how to help others to give meaning to theirs.

Jesus suffers alone. Healthy compassion requires that we should not imagine we are alleviating or reducing what he then suffered. All is owed to Christ. Contemplation of the Passion demands self-abasement.

## **COMMUNITY DIMENTION**

Some publications of the World Secretariat which talk about the role of the guide are:

- "Towards Christian Life Community Beginnings and Growth" *Progressio Supplement 9, 1977*
- *Survey of the Formation Process in the Christian Life Communities. 1981*
- *Clarifying Different Roles .... A Supplement to the Survey. 1981*

The thoughts and insights expressed in the above works have been implemented in CLC life over these years. Reflecting on these experiences, the Secretariat in 2009 published *Progressio Supplement n. 64* "The Process of Growth in CLC: Guidelines for Formation." This is available on the website, under the heading Resources – CLC Documents. This document outlines the four stages of CLC formation Stage One: First Contact and Reception/Welcome Stage Two: Laying the Foundations for Vocation Stage Three: Discernment of Vocation Stage Four: Apostolic Discernment The guide's role - in general and for each stage – is described in numbers 193 – 204. As well, CLC Formators in Canada had earlier written a document titled The Fundamental Stages of Formation (5 phases) which aligns the process of CLC development with the Spiritual Exercises (see Leaders' Manual pgs. 109-118)

There are a variety of practices whereby national communities offer formation to group guides. The formation programs may comprise a series of weekends or a series of evening sessions. Alternatively, it could take on the form of an intensive course of several days together.

It is also recommended to provide peer group support through occasional meetings among the guides themselves. At these meetings, guides can enrich and support each other through sharing their experiences and helpful practices.

You are urged to read *Progressio Supplement n. 33* "Formation of Group Guides: Methodological Orientations". This document includes:

- A. Principles for formation: communicating a spirit – developing some attitudes – transmitting some techniques – integration

B. Types of formation for Guides: basic formation before becoming a guide – ongoing formation while functioning as a guide – specialized training to deepen some aspect

C. Areas/Topics for Formation of Group Guides

1. Familiarity with Scripture and Tradition: A good comprehension of Scripture, Christian tradition, Christology, Ecclesiology, Vatican II, etc.
2. The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: An experience of the Exercises – Reflection on this experience
3. Christian Life Community: The General Principles – History of CLC – application of the Spiritual Exercises to CLC life and formation
4. Human Skills: Human growth – Group dynamics - Listening skills – Intervention skills
5. Awareness of Social Dimension: Gospel values and social reality – social analysis – social teachings of the Church – challenges for the local church

## 9.6 GROUP GUIDE FORMATIONAL PROCESSES

The following pages of information are intended to add to the Group Guides knowledge of CLC history, structure, and process. Although the GG Courses have been expanded in length and content the core values, skills and importance of GG role remains.

### A. THE FIRST CLC CANADA GROUP GUIDE 7-DAY COURSE HELD IN GUELPH, ONTARIO ON MARCH 1985

It was titled "The Roles and Characteristics of the Group Guide".

1. Is the spiritual director of the community; possesses a discerning spirit.
2. Has a regular prayer life and intimate knowledge of the Exercises.
3. Helps the community be faithful to the grace of the moment whether the group is in consolation or desolation.
4. Helps members assimilate and appropriate God's love in their lives even in the smallest areas of one's life.
5. Retains the vision; has clear idea of group goal and appropriate means.
6. Records group's progress and recognizes each stage as it is reached.
7. Takes interest in each members' life and efforts and gifts.
8. Knows the personal relationships and how to manage them.
9. Fosters group growth (personal development, service).
10. Sets the moral standard.

#### Guiding Skills

- Active listening-attending to verbal and non-verbal communication
- Restating-to understand
- Clarifying-getting the core of the message
- Summarizing-pulling everything together
- Questioning-open-ended to learn more
- Interpreting-offering explanations for certain feelings, thought and behaviors
- Challenging-seeing discrepancies, bringing greater awareness
- Reflecting feelings
- Supporting-encouraging words
- Empathizing-understanding
- Facilitating- help group assume greater responsibility for group direction
- Evaluating-the process and group dynamic
- Giving feedback
- Suggesting

- Disclosing
- Modeling
- Dealing with silence
- Blocking-counterproductive behavior
- Terminating-finalizing the group's history

*From SURVEY CLC publication 1980, and CLC St. Louis course notes  
and Canadian CLC Group Guide course 1985*

## **B. BASIC TOPICS IN GROUP GUIDE WORKSHOP IN GUELPH ONT. 1993**

1. Role of Group Guide in CLC Process.
2. Life Cycle & General Principles 1-9.
3. CLC Spirituality - (Finding God in all things in a communal setting - for service in the world).
4. What is CLC? - (discerning communities of apostolic service):
  - Local
  - Regional
  - National
  - World
5. Canadian CLC Formation Program - Phase I, II, III, IV.
6. Discernment of Spirits - individual and communal discernment.
7. Role of the Group Guide:
  - Discerning communal movement
  - Relatedness and task
  - What Blocks a group
8. Stages of Community Growth - (with cases).
9. Power Cycle.
10. Decision Making - individual and communal.

11. Leadership skills.
12. The Charism of CLC - vocation.

## C. BASIC OUTLINE of CLC MEXICO GG FORMATION PLAN

1. **Guides Mission:** Objective: The guide understands the importance of its role, and its labour in the group... Vocation and service: The person feels called to become a guide and lives out this service as a mission of the Church.
2. **Being CLC:** Objective: The person learns and gets deep in the essence of CLC lifestyle... General Principles, our Charism, General Norms, CLC History.
3. **Ignatian Spirituality:** Objective: Knowing or getting deeper in the elements of Ignatian Spirituality... Basis of Ignatian Spirituality, it may help to learn about St. Ignatius' life story.
4. **CLC Dimensions of vocation:** Objective: Deepening on the four essential dimensions of the CLC lifestyle... The four dimensions: Spirituality, Personal, Community, Apostolic.
5. **CLC Engagement:** Objective: Meaning of CLC membership, the compromise of CLC Vocation. ...Sense of commitment, Membership, Temporal Commitment, Permanent Commitment.
6. **CLC Growth process:** Objective: Aspect of the CLC growth process and the fundamental means of the vocation foundation stage...Stages of CLC Formation: Welcome Stage in CLC, Laying the Foundations for Vocation, Discernment of Vocation Stage, Apostolic Discernment Stage.
7. **Topics for formation:** Objective: Knowing some of the minimum elements of formation for the CLC lifestyle... Theological topics as Christology, Bible, Ecclesiology... Human topics as Family, Human development.
8. **Leadership and group management:** Objective: The Guide may foster a sense of Ignatian leadership in the members; tools for a group management... Ignatian leadership. Management of different personalities, group management, crisis, conflicts.

9. **Apostolic body and CLC Mission: Objective:** Knowing the process and meaning of the apostolic lay body... Apostolic Body, Analysis of reality, Individual Mission, Group Mission, Apostolate.
10. **DSSE Method: Objective:** The Guide has the basic elements of a group discernment of vocation... Discernment, Sent, Accompaniment, Evaluation.
11. **Management of a group discernment. (Weekend Retreat)**

### **SOME SUGGESTED FORMATION MODALITIES**

- ❖ Retreat immediately followed by reflection: Invite a group of guides to go through the experience of an 8-10 day personally guided retreat. Immediately after, offer them three or four days of reflection on the experience. This modality serves as a 11 to a 14-day course for guides, which can be proposed to them at any time during their formation process. It is, however, recommended as part of what we have called the "Basic formation", i. e., at the very beginning of the formation of a guide.
- ❖ Retreat followed by a series of meetings with other guides: An 8-day personally guided retreat can be followed by several meetings, once or twice a month over a period of 6 to 12 months, to deepen certain aspects of the Exercises: prayer, discernment, the role of the director, the dynamics of the Exercises. This modality can be considered as a variation of or as a complement to the above modality. In other words, it can be part of the Basic Formation or of the program of on-going formation for guides.
- ❖ Workshop on the Exercises and the CLC process: Supposing that there is a group of guides who are already working as such and who have made an initial reflection on the Exercises (e.g., a, above), a permanent group for reflection can be established as part of their on-going formation.

### **Three proposals for such groups:**

1. Regular meetings aimed at reflecting on their actual experience in guiding a group, with the experience of the Sp. Ex. as a common background:
  - Starting from the problems or experiences of the group, try to discover at what stage of the process of the Exercises the group has reached, and the elements of Ignatian spirituality which apply.
  - Following systematically the dynamics of the Exercises, see how that applies to what we are living in our communities or to what we are called to live.

2. To choose a theme and form various working groups on it, in as many places as there are interested people. Each one of these working groups then chooses its own manner of studying and deepening the theme, with a view to a general meeting of all the working groups to be held the following year. For example, one year the theme chosen may be "Spiritual direction", and one group may decide to study it using Alex Lefrank's book. This group meets once a month to discuss:
  - starting from each one's own experience
  - what has been read and reflected on since the last meeting.

At the end of the year, a meeting of all the various groups takes place. In this meeting, people have the chance to hear the outcome of, the other groups and to listen to a new synthesis on the theme prepared by some well-formed person. At the end of this meeting, they all decide the theme for next year, which could be, for example, "The Second Week and the Election". This modality can be adapted and used for permanent formation of guides at the national level.

3. A course for group guides over five days: The goal of this course is to gain an understanding of the essential elements of the CLC dynamic and confidence in using the necessary skills to assist groups in their initial growth in the CLC way of life. Through a process of conferences, private reflection, small group sharing and periods of interchange (questions and answers), the course focusses on the theology, spirituality and the growth of individuals and groups into the CLC way of life. The process highlights the necessary skills in guiding groups.

This reflection on the Spiritual Exercises, along with the actual experience of them, should ensure the other two specifications made in the Supplement to the Survey:

- Clarifying different roles, namely:
  - familiarity with the general process of the Sp. Ex., and
  - an understanding of the social dimension of the Sp. Ex.

This last dimension, however, should be further developed through particular study and reflection, as is suggested below.

### **Knowledge of how the process of the Spiritual Exercises applies to CLC formation**

What is at stake here is a capacity of synthesis that every guide should keep developing as he or she goes through the Process of formation. Guides must be helped to see an interrelationship between the dynamics of 'Growth to freedom for service' in the Sp. Ex. and the dynamics of a group growing into a discerning community for

service. The more clarity the guide has about this interrelationship between the Exercises and CLC formation, the better he/she will be able to help the group to work its way through a discerned decision-making process.

There are two kinds of such communal decision-making: one in which the community helps an individual to discern his or her own issues and come to decision and action: The other, in which the community as a whole goes through a discerned decision process and comes to a communal decision and action.

So the group will move ahead within the context of a discerning atmosphere. The knowledge of different methods of communal discernment and the ability to assist the community to do this is a very desirable skill in a guide, which will come only as a result of bringing together the Sp. Ex. and the CLC process. Good syntheses usually come from a good level of knowledge, a great deal of experience and much reflection. Therefore, we must accept that time has to be given to guides to move ahead in this sense. We should not ask from the beginning what will only come progressively through the process. The ongoing formation of guides will provide the fact, the group guide is not necessarily the Spiritual director of all the group members, and his or her main concern is to ensure that the process of the group integrates all the dimensions of spiritual life and orients them towards mission.

### **Knowledge of CLC history**

A knowledge of the history of CLC is important for an understanding of the CLC identity and thrust. Since CLC is one apostolic community, it is important that the guide become aware of how God has guided the process through the centuries. It is particularly important that the guide become aware once again through a knowledge of history, that he/she is not guiding "his/her group". Rather, he/she is helping people to choose and to participate in a charism which is prior to them and wider than them'. To live the CLC way is a choice that, among other things, commits us to know and to accept our history and tradition as a gift from God, and to insert our present efforts within the growth of the one apostolic community of CLC. Some short texts regarding our history should be included.



## D. GROUP GUIDE NATIONAL FORMATION 2005

### Early Stages of Guide Development

The Role of the Group Guide  
The Guide in the Early Stages of Group Formation:  
Attitudes, Skills, and Knowledge  
Phase I CLC Manual Comments  
What Guides can look for in a Group  
How to Communicate with Groups  
The grace to recognize the gifts of those who are called to guide a CLC group

### WORKSHOP I

#### First workshop- focus on weeks 1 to 12 of Phase I Manual

- Parts I, II and III of a regular meeting and how to conduct a meeting including composition of place, second round and appropriation and evaluation
- Focus on skill building and confidence building
- Clarification of CLC Process

#### OBJECTIVES for WORKSHOP I

1. Will know what to observe in a group and know how to respond to a group.
2. Will know how to prepare for and lead an initial meeting.
3. Will have practiced appropriation and evaluation rounds helpful for this stage of group development.
4. Will have understood the distinction between the first 2 rounds of sharing and facilitated them.
5. Will have read specific articles relating to the CLC charism, spirituality, vision and will have processed these through *guided* reflections and adult learning models.
6. Will have identified the attitudes, knowledge and skills needed by the guide/facilitator in the early stages. (Week 1-12, especially 1-6)
7. Will have experienced a ritual of blessing as they are sent and supported on the /journey of continuing formation.

8. Will have some basic understanding of movements of spirits in groups at this stage of development and how to deal with common ones which emerge in Weeks 1 to 12
9. Will have been exposed to an overview of the 3 manuals of formation and the goals and content of Weeks 1 to 12 of Phase 1 Manual.
10. Will have established concrete steps and reflection tools for mutual accountability, through mentoring/supervision.

## WORKSHOP II

### Second workshop-focus on weeks 18 to 24

- Process experiences of leading and guiding to date
- Fundamental Rules of Discernment #314-315
- Discernment of spirits in groups
- Group dynamics
- Question/answer period around issues and concerns in guiding/leading (What if....)

### **OBJECTIVES For WORKSHOP II**

1. Will have processed their experience of leading groups since the first workshop.
2. Will have processed their experience of the role of the guide during this same period.
3. Will have processed their experience of being mentored/supervised.
4. Will have revisited/clarified the role of the guide.
5. Will have revisited the facilitation of Round 2 in Part 1 (from Session 7 on...little by little. The Guide-Coordinator might model it when they are ready and then help them grow in 'noticing' what is emerging/converging in their Round 2.
6. Will have explored Ignatius understanding of discernment of spirits as a prerequisite to discerning God's will in a particular choice.
7. Will have basic understanding of #314-318 of the First Week Rules.
8. Will have watched a video segment of the life of Ignatius as a means to understanding the genesis of his rules.

9. Will have applied Rules 314-318 to their personal experience.
10. Will have shared their insight with others.
11. Will have used this knowledge as a springboard for understanding the movement of spirits in groups.
12. Will have considered practical tools needed by group guides to respond to the movement of spirits on beginning groups.
13. Will have examined the significance of the developmental thrust of the Awareness Exercise in Weeks 18 to 24.
14. Will have experienced a Communal Awareness Exercise as in Week 23.
15. Will have examined the General Principles and considered ways to begin to imbue them in the meeting process.

### **WORKSHOP III**

#### **Third workshop**

- Focus on awareness of how guides help individuals and groups become aware of movement of spirits
- How to listen and voice clearly and simply what is happening in the group

#### **Objectives for Workshop III**

1. Will have processed their experience of leading groups since the second workshop.
2. Will have reflected on their learnings from Workshop II in terms of group spiritual movements.
3. Will have applied their understanding of spiritual movements in groups in relation to the CLC way of life and the First Week Rules.
4. Will have discussed ways of helping groups/group members reflect on their continuing journey in CLC.
5. Will have considered CLC's understanding of temporary and permanent commitment.

6. Will have identified their primary areas of personal and group conflict in guiding their groups since Workshop II.
7. Will have worked with Workshop II's resource material on *Working with Group Conflict* as a springboard for learning how to deal with these areas of struggle.
8. As part of their Group Guide Practicum, will have designed for implementation a Day Assembly for all their CLC groups with the goal of networking and deepening their understanding and experience of the CLC way of life.
9. Will have reflected on their needs for on-going formation and set dates as a first step towards their commitment.

### Process

Scripture John 10:7-10

The focus of the day will be sharing experiences about guiding and addressing specific questions and concerns from each of the guides in training. To prepare for the day a few questions are offered for consideration:

1. Where did I notice energy and life in the group? What words describe this consolation? How did I help the group reflect on and become more aware of the life and energy?
2. Where have I sensed the presence of the Trinity in the group or a group member in a special way? How did I help the group, or the person, become aware of this?
3. Where have I noticed the group being drawn away from the Trinity? What was happening in the group at the time; for example, how were relationships going, what topics were being discussed at the time? How did I help the group become aware of the dynamic?
4. With the three dimensions of CLC, namely communal, spiritual, and apostolic how am I helping the group develop in each of these areas? What else do I need to follow through on?

*Taken from the 2005 Group Guide Manual*

## E. A REGIONAL GROUP GUIDE FORMATION WORKSHOP

The goal of the GG Formation Workshop is to provide on-going training for the CLC Group Guides.

- Two objectives for the workshop have been identified: first to provide a model of Peer Support for all those active in guiding local groups and second to identify and share one's own experiences of the group's present "Stage of Formation" and provide scenarios that would help GGs in transitioning to further stages of growth.
- The GG workshop will be for those actively involved in guiding and those that have a formal training not presently active but expect to be guiding in the coming year.
- We will consider inviting Observers to the workshop and if so, we will create clear guidelines on their participation.
- A survey questionnaire will be sent to those that have been selected to attend the workshop.
- An attempt should be made to meet with the identified Group Guides prior to the workshop.
- A Peer Support session will take place in (place)... on... (date)...

## 9.7 CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES OF A CLC GROUP GUIDE

### THE ROLE OF THE GROUP GUIDE

*It is our understanding that the role of the Group Guide is the contemplative practice of accompanying a group as they awaken to the spiritual in everyday life, and it is the shared intentions and supports for the persons being guided or directed to have a deeper relationship with the Spirit through all phases of life.*

#### A. COMMITMENT of the GROUP GUIDE:

*.... Groups Guides are encouraged to regularly reflect on their guiding experiences.*

*... Gathering with other groups guides whenever possible for peer support and ongoing formation is part of their commitment... (and) to seek out other guides for consultation when needed.*

#### B. WISDOM- KNOWLEDGE of the GROUP GUIDE:

*... the guide must be grounded in the Spiritual Exercises...steeped in Ignatian spirituality as a way of life, a keeper of the vision ... (and be) a 'student AND TEACHER' of the basic and evolving documents of CLC formation and growth (so as to) be able to open these up for the local groups they serve...*

#### C. SKILLS of the GROUP GUIDE:

*.. the Guide's responsibility is to facilitate members (growth) to embrace and live out the vocation and commitment to live the CLC way of life.*

*...the Guide is a co-discerner ... sits on the fringe discerning the movement of spirits of the group. (The) Guide helps a group discern what personal and*

*communal spiritual movements within their interchanges are leading them towards the Lord and to decide what to do about that discernment.*

*... The guide must always ensure that the group continues to move beyond itself and does not turn inward. This is done by assisting the group to name its vision, set goals and realize them through communal discernment processes that (eventually) lead to good & prophetic apostolic decisions.*

*Excerpts from the Atlantic Regional document which describes the Role of the CLC guide.*

## **A DISCERNING COMMUNITY**

Pope Francis continues to remind us how, in good times and in bad, the Christian life is a source of joy. A deep and interior joy which in Ignatian language is called consolation. A joy which comes from having recovered the freedom to put oneself in the service of others. Discernment is the key to staying in touch with the source of joy of living as disciples of Christ. That is why Pope Francis invites us to make discernment a normal part of our personal lives as Christians, in the life of the community and of the Church.

In his recent Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exultate*, he returns to this theme: The gift of discernment has become all the more necessary today, since contemporary life offers immense possibilities for action and distraction, and the world presents all of them as being valid and good.

All of us, but especially the young, are immersed in a culture of zapping. We can navigate simultaneously on two or more screens and interact at the same time with two or three virtual scenarios. Without the wisdom of discernment, we can easily become prey to every passing trend.

Among the few loaves and fishes that CLC has to share with the Church and the world, there is the experience of personal and communal spiritual discernment. Ignatian spirituality introduces us to discernment and trains us to develop it as a habit in our Christian life. Pope Francis has asked the Society of Jesus for specific help in spreading discernment within the life of the Church.

This call extends to all who share Ignatian spirituality. CLC, as a lay movement of Ignatian inspiration, is best placed to help and develop a lay Church which is capable of discerning personally and as a community.

Discernment is necessary not only at extraordinary times, when we need to resolve grave problems and make crucial decisions. It is a means of spiritual combat to help us to follow the Lord more faithfully. We need it at all times, to help us recognize God's times and those of His grace, lest we fail to heed the promptings of Lord and

ignore his invitation to grow. Often discernment is exercised in small and apparently irrelevant things, since greatness of spirit is manifested in simple everyday realities. Discernment is complex and demanding. It involves acquiring and maintaining that Ignatian indifference that derives from that inner freedom by which we overcome any attachment to our own interests, possessions, or the use of instruments. It also involves developing a sensitivity to the signs of the times, learning to perceive where and how the Spirit is acting in today's world, in the social context in which the life of each one of us, of our society and our environment unfolds.

Discernment demands that sort of silence that sets itself apart from the noise that hampers the opportunity of listening to the Spirit.

The CLC General Principles indicate the regular practice of the Spiritual Exercises, the school of discernment, as the specific source and characteristic instrument of our spirituality (GP5). This is how the lived experience of personal and communal discernment can become a truly shared gift in the Church, and a tool of wisdom for all activity in the world, at the service of the joy of the Gospel, which is the main nucleus of the Christian lifestyle (PG 2) that is CLC.

Consolation is a gift of the Spirit that we need to ask for insistently. Practicing and teaching this prayer of asking for consolation is a way that helps us to share with others the joy of the Gospel.

This deep experience is born of deep union with Jesus in constant prayer and generous service. Taking care of these fundamentals is a priority, both in the formation of new members of CLC and in the constant spiritual growth of those already committed. It is in sharing those few loaves and fishes with others that the Lord multiplies them so that there is enough for all, even for the late comers.

Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

This is the way the CLC charism is realized: helping many, both within the Community and it, to experience the joy of the encounter with the Spirit and to commit themselves to participate in the liberation of human beings and the transformation of society.

Discernment is always an exercise that consists in looking at the world, in all its reality, while letting oneself be moved internally and dedicating oneself to the greater service. Discernment leads to an action that prolongs that which Jesus started for the redemption of human life. We know this well from the contemplation of the Incarnation in the Spiritual Exercises, which inspires CLC's General Principle 1.

CLC has long practiced spiritual conversation, especially in the regular meetings of small groups. The experience of the community dimension of discernment is a



richness that can be shared with others in the Ignatian family. The efforts of constant integration, in all dimensions of life, of the three pillars of the CLC charism - spirituality, community and mission - and the tool of the four verbs -discerning, sending, supporting, and evaluating- have already borne many fruits in the life of the community. They are part of the gift received in these fifty years.

In order to enrich CLC's service to the Church and the world, the top priority should be to sustain and develop this gift in the personal life of each member and in the communal life of each local group, of the national communities, and of the one Christian Life Community.

### **Companions in a mission...**

The Society of Jesus has a very special spiritual and formal bond with CLC. Our spiritual and historical closeness commits us to a shared responsibility in the mission of proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel from the Ignatian perspective as each one lives out the charism received according to one's religious or lay vocation.

This responsibility in mission does not belong exclusively to us, because it is the mission of Jesus Christ, in which we are invited to participate. It impels us to look for new ways of deeper collaboration between CLC and the Society of Jesus. Collaboration in the best interest of the mission of Christ, according to one's own vocation, without seeking to protect one's own personal or corporate interests.

What is pointed out by the 36th General Congregation for the Society of Jesus, is equally valid for CLC and for the whole Church: The magnitude and the interconnectedness of the problems that affect humanity, presenting great and diverse challenges to the mission of the Church, are so great that only by working in collaboration with others, cooperating with each other - hand in hand - can we, in fact, contribute effectively to their solution.

In the last fifty years, the Society of Jesus has been learning to be a collaborator with others in mission. Here, too, there is a rich experience in the relationship with CLC. The starting point for a fruitful collaboration in the service of Christ's mission, greater and more complex than the apostolic activities of the Society of Jesus and of CLC, is the recognition of each one's vocation and the charism of each institution. This recognition means respect for one's own institutional characteristics, as well as the legitimate and necessary autonomy of each entity. By recognizing the other, we recognize the richness of the Lord's gifts to his followers, in the effort of building a new humanity reconciled in Christ.

We know of many examples of joint work between Jesuits and members of CLC, with their bright and their dark points. There has been much fruit, as well as misunderstandings and even conflicts.

There is much scope for growth in the collaboration between the Society of Jesus and CLC, to contribute together to the service of the mission of Christ. I would say that it is a challenge of hope that opens new apostolic horizons for each one of us.

## **MISSION OF RECONCILIATION AND JUSTICE**

The 36th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus once again made the exercise of contemplating the world with the eyes of the Trinity and, at the same time, inspired by the Contemplation to Obtain Love, looked for the traces of God's work in the world. GC36 heard the clamor of the millions of forced migrants, of the victims of violence and of the growing economic and social inequality. GC36 understood the challenge of announcing the Good News in the new digital ecosystem, in secularized societies and those dominated by religious or ideological fundamentalism.

GC36 confirmed the need to build bridges, to promote citizen commitment in democratic political regimes that have the common good as the basis of their action. GC36 noted the negligence in failing to reach agreements to stop the deterioration of the environment and to care responsibly for our Common Home. Consequently, the way in which the 35th General Congregation (2008) had formulated the mission of the Society of Jesus-- companions in a mission of reconciliation and justice-- was reaffirmed. We feel the call to participate in the work of reconciliation that God is carrying out in our wounded world, a work in at least three intimately related dimensions: reconciliation with God, with one another and of human beings with creation.

CLC General Principle 1 also includes this contemplation: The Three Divine Persons, contemplating the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions, decide to give themselves completely to all men and women and liberate them from all their chains.

It also recognizes a call: Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continually to God and to bring about unity within our human family ... in all our particular circumstances. CLC, in the document that formulates its charism, proposes to work for unity against all the divisions that affect humanity. These divisions simultaneously affect social, economic and political relationships, interpersonal relationships, and relationships with the environment, a whole that Pope Francis, in his encyclical *Laudato Sí*, defined as a single and complex socio-environmental crisis. It is the whole human person, in all its dimensions, that experiences disunity, disintegration, in relationship to God, to others and to creation. Thus, the three dimensions of reconciliation must always be present, together.

Reconciliation with God is not possible if, at the same time, reconciliation with other human beings and with the natural environment are not realized. It is necessary to work holistically against these divisions, in favor of this multiple reconciliation that includes, of course, the struggle for justice and the social transformation that leads to creating the conditions for a decent life for all peoples and for each human being.

The spiritual experience of CLC has as its starting point the reconciliation of each person with him/herself, an experience of integration that is the response to the desire of people... who feel a more urgent need to unite their human life in all its dimensions with the fullness of their Christian faith.

#### **CLC GP 4**

The unification of one's life is a challenge that is particularly felt in the lay life, which develops in cultural contexts that favor the dispersion and disintegration of people. Ignatian spirituality has always proposed to seek and find God in the midst of the world, without fleeing from it; on the contrary, it promotes learning to find God in all things in order to love and serve in all things.

Working for reconciliation, or the unity of the human family, is a necessity and a task to which we, Jesuits and CLC, feel called. From our particular experiences we feel the call to contribute to that mission. We are encouraged by the same spirituality and by having traveled a long way together ... let's not hesitate to explore new forms of collaboration and deepen our joint service to the mission of Christ in the midst of this wounded world.

*Father Arturo Sosa Abascal, SJ, of Venezuela, the 31st Superior General of the Society of Jesus*

## 9.8 CLC AND THE MARIAN DIMENSION

### 1. CLC WORLD DAY OF PRAYER MARCH 25TH

Christian Life Community has a long tradition of journeying with Mary, the mother of Jesus. The identity of Mary is present from the very beginning of our General Principles and helps to clarify our identity with her and leads us to a renewed understanding of our true relationship with Mary.

The early Jesuits had a particular connection to Mary: Ignatius, himself loved Our Lady of the Way and Our Lady of Sorrows but in the Spiritual Exercises it is to Mary of the Annunciation and the Visitation that Ignatius draws our attention. For Ignatius, it is Mary's *Fiat* and *Magnificat* that frames her mission of mediating life (apostolic action, her solidarity with the poor, and her cooperation in her Son's mission) which "flows from her fullness of Grace".

When Jean Leunis SJ gathered a group of students attending the Roman College (founded by Ignatius) to prepare them for apostolic service in the city of Rome, he shared his own intense love for the Mother of God. The group became known as the Marian Congregation (MC) due in large part to the inspiration fostered by the fresco of the Annunciation that was above the main altar of the Church of the Roman College. In the Preamble of the very first Marian Congregation Rules of 1574, we read, "*Since it is a custom that such Congregations recommend themselves to a patron in heaven for protection and guidance, from whom they take the name, and since we have a particular devotion to the most Holy Virgin of the Annunciation, Mother of God, we, in all humility dedicate ourselves to her, praying that she may help us in all our actions, especially in the ordination and observation of the rules of our group, which are the following...*"

The decision by Pope Clement XIV to suppress the Society of Jesus contributed to the decline of the essential character of the MC movement and gave rise to a distorted understanding of the role of Mary. In the MC Rules of 1910, the mystery of the Annunciation was not mentioned.

As Louis Paulussen S.J. wrote in his book *God Works Like That*, "A Pope caused the decline of the spirit; another Pope initiated its revival." Following the orientations of Pope Pius XII, a complete revival of the MC movement began.

In spite of a name change - MC to CLC - Mary is present in the whole framework of the CLC GP's much more than in any of the MC Common Rules, inseparably united with Christ who is the center of CLC.

This Mary, who began her mission by being available and then responded with her "yes", is the reason that CLC groups around the world gather together every March 25<sup>th</sup> to remember, to pray, to reflect, to share, and to, "*Do whatever He tells you*" (Jn. 2:5).

*Leah Michaud*

## 2. Our Lady of the Way

The road gradually opened out . . . The road taken by the Savior of the world; the road taken by the Word of God. The road of his humanity; a humanity made possible by love and lived on the one soil capable of making it fertile: in poverty and self donation. You saw him take that road, Mary, and you took it with Him. Each of its stages became a stage of your own road, to the point of blending yours completely with his. You were the first to walk after him, first to understand the way of God, first to utter the yes of a Saved humanity.

You, Our Lady of all times and all moments, make it your task to prepare and guide, to alert and strengthen, so that all will hear the call, will advance toward your Son and work for the coming of his Kingdom. But above all to the extent any person desires it, he or she will find in you the example of a genuine participation in the liberation of humanity.

Doesn't our desire to be faithful to the CLC way of life bring us, in a privileged way, toward Mary? 'We venerate the Mother of God in a special way, and we trust in her intercession to fulfill our vocation' (GP 8).

All along the route, at each crossroad, you meet Mary. She knows all those highways, because she trudged them herself. She preceded you and waits for you at the end of the road. She offers to accompany you. She invites you to travel the road together. So that your journey will resemble, be identified more and more with that of her Son. Whatever your way of addressing her, whatever the form of your prayer, it will open up a space for the Spirit to act. Your prayer will commit you. Venerating her is to commit yourself to move, to be dispossessed, to give yourself away. "*He has shown the power of his arm, he has routed the proud of heart.* "

To go with Mary is to follow the direction of her life: a simple lifestyle lived in solidarity with the poor and oppressed; a life docile to the Spirit, who molds it till it becomes like her Son's. Service, availability for others, the sharing of efforts that become open channels for the gospel message. That message can answer the hopes of every person for true dignity. Then the announcement of the gospel can reach the hearts of men and women, and through those hearts can free from sin whatever human beings have corrupted whether it is our relationships, our systems, our institutions, or our structures.

Following Mary's example, the response of all persons can become a participation in human liberation. God took the initiative. He does not cease making his call heard in the circumstances of today. But when he gave us Mary as our Mother, he was good enough to leave us, in her, the perfect model to imitate with our human response. "We trust in her intercession to fulfill our vocation." (GP. 8)

Doesn't that suggest simultaneously a plural and a singular? A plural: the CLC members scattered in the various countries of the world. A singular: the one, identical vocation that they share that binds their community together.

Together, we have been called. Together, we must respond. And we entrust the togetherness of our worldwide community to her intercession. For our community too is on the road. Called to keep moving on, with our ears attentive to catch the voice of Him who calls, our eyes scrutinizing the signs through which He speaks. Like each of us, our community is called to a transformation, a conversion, an encounter with Jesus Christ, to witness to him along the roads and pathways of history. May the response of all of us who are 'Companions on the Road with Mary' in today's world become more and more like hers: "*I am the handmaid of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me*". Luke 1

### **3. MARY IN THE CLC WAY OF LIFE:**

The Second Vatican Council called for an appreciation of Mary's role in our spiritual life to be specifically in service to the central role that Jesus is to play in our faith. For many that was a great disappointment, because many Catholics had an imagination of Mary as virtually equal with Jesus, sort of a replacement of the Holy Spirit, at that time in the Church. The Council Fathers were criticized for downplaying Mary's role because instead of writing a whole document on the role of Mary, they placed her in a culminating Chapter in the document on the Church.

This says something very specific about the Church's THEOLOGICAL understanding of Mary's importance in the Christian Faith. She is a member, the supreme member, but still a member of the Church that is the Body of the Risen Christ. Mary is fully human. She is a daughter of Eve as truly as you and I are sons and daughters of Eve. She was preserved from sin by God's Grace, more than her own doing, in order to be a spotless vessel for Jesus Christ – her preservation from sin is considered a fruit of Jesus' death on the Cross and consequent resurrection, so in effect she is the first among the Baptized (who are preserved from sin by Jesus' death and Resurrection). There has been a temptation in the Church either to place her on too high a pedestal (make her semi-divine) or to ignore her role (something some Protestants do in reaction to placing her too high).

Either mistake twists the genuine teaching of the Church about her role. This genuine teaching is carefully drawn in the Constitution on the Church, and by placing the teaching in the context of the rest of the Church, we better understand our own role

vis-à-vis Jesus and Mary. So, as you pray about her patronage of CLC consider how you seek to make the Divine Will operative in your life, even as Mary did. As you think of her position as an undocumented alien in Egypt, or as a poor person of the land in the downtrodden land of Judea, consider how she calls us to take up our mission among the poor and those least able to defend themselves. How does she call us to respond to our world?

*Mary and CLC Texts from the writings of Josée Gsell, World Executive Secretary for CLC 1972 - 1991: from a small collection of meditations on key Ignatian Exercises through the lens of Marian love and appreciation. (Supplement to Progressio, Number 11, April 1978)*

*This text was a rough draft of a much longer text translated from French by Eileen Burke-Sullivan, STD in preparation for inclusion (after editing) in The Ignatian Tradition, Liturgical Press, 2009*

## 9.9 ADDITIONAL NOTES

### A. DISCERNMENT AND CONTEMPLATION

*The effectiveness of action depends on the source from which it springs. If it is coming out of the false self with its shadow side, it is severely limited. If it is coming out of a person who is immersed in God, it is extremely effective. The contemplative state, like the vocation of Our Lady, brings Christ into the world. —Thomas Keating [1]*

Over the years, I met many social activists who were doing excellent social analysis and advocating for crucial justice issues, but they were not working from an energy of love. They were still living out of their false self with the need to win, the need to look good attached to a superior, politically correct self-image.

They might *have* the answer, but they are not *themselves* the answer. In fact, they are often part of the problem. That's one reason that most revolutions fail and too many reformers self-destruct from within. For that very reason, I believe, Jesus and great spiritual teachers first emphasize transformation of consciousness and soul. Without inner transformation, there is no grounded or lasting reform or revolution. When subjugated people rise to power, they often become as dominating as their oppressors because the same demon of power hasn't been exorcised in them.

We are easily allured by the next new thing, a new agenda that looks like enlightenment. And then we discover it's run by unenlightened people who, in fact, love themselves first of all but do not love God or others. They do not really love the Big Truth, but they often love control. Too often, they do not love freedom for everybody but just freedom for their own ideas.

Untransformed liberals often lack the ability to sacrifice the self or create foundations that last. They can't let go of their own need for change and cannot stand still in a patient, compassionate, and humble way. It is no surprise that Jesus prayed not just for fruit, but "fruit that will last" (John 15:16). Untransformed conservatives, on the other hand, tend to idolize anything that lasts, but then avoid the question, "Is it actually bearing any fruit?" This is the perennial battle between idealism and pragmatism, or romanticism and rationalism.



If we are going to have truly prophetic people who go beyond the categories of liberal and conservative, we have to teach them some way to integrate their needed activism with a truly contemplative mind and heart. I'm convinced that once you learn how to look out at life from the contemplative eyes of the True Self, your politics and economics are going to change on their own. I don't need to teach you what your politics should or shouldn't be. Once you see things contemplatively, you'll begin to seek the bias from the bottom instead of the top, you'll be free to embrace your shadow, and you can live at peace with those who are different. From a contemplative stance, you'll know what action is yours to do—and what is *not* yours to do—almost naturally.

## B. INTERPRETING AND PRAYING THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES

**CLC General Principle 2** *"Because our Community is a way of Christian life, these principles are to be interpreted not so much by the letter of this text but rather by the spirit of the Gospel and the interior law of love. This law, which the Spirit inscribes in our hearts, expresses itself anew in each situation of daily life. It respects the uniqueness of each personal vocation and enables us to be open and free, always at the disposal of God. It challenges us to see our serious responsibilities and to seek constantly the answers to the needs of our times and to work together with the entire People of God and all those of good will for progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all people.*

From the grand vision of Principle 1, with its references to God's contemplation of the world's need, his sending of his Son in our flesh, and Christ's desire for us to join him in his mission, we now turn to the practicalities of CLC life. Principle 2 talks about the criteria for interpreting all the Principles, and names a number of such criteria.

Firstly, this Principle speaks of CLC as "a way of Christian life". It is a way of following Jesus, of discipleship. As such, members are not part of a military unit pledged to iron discipline. Nor are we cogs in a machine, with a set of instructions to be mechanically followed if it is to function well. We are part of a body, a living organism, an organism whose life is the Spirit. For this reason, "these principles are to be interpreted not so much by the letter of this text [i.e., the text of the Principles themselves] but rather by the spirit of the Gospel and the interior law of love ... which the Spirit inscribes in our hearts".

The idea of 'not letter but spirit' comes to us from St Paul when he says that the new covenant, the covenant initiated by Christ's life, death and resurrection, is a covenant "not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit give life" (2 Cor 3:6). In

this CLC Principle, 'spirit' is spelt out in two ways. Firstly, it is "the spirit of the Gospel". This is the spirit of Christ, the spirit of his call to discipleship, the spirit which moved him in his own ministry, in his teaching, healing, dining with the poor, and in his suffering, dying and rising.

The Principle then speaks of "the interior law of love". This is not a separate criterion, but another way of speaking the spirit of the Gospel. He taught us this law of love explicitly as a command: we are to love God with our whole being, and our neighbour as ourselves; we are to love one another as Christ has loved us; we are to love even our enemies. He taught it also in stories – think, for example, of the parable of the Good Samaritan. He taught it in how he dealt with people – the woman caught in adultery; the leper to whom he said, "Of course I want to – be healed"; the outcast ones with whom he mixed. And supremely, he taught it by embodying it, by loving us to the end (Jn 13), by his readiness to die for us while "we were still enemies" of God (Rom 5:10).

Principle 2 next looks at ways in which this interior law moves us beyond a blind application of regulations. It "expresses itself anew in each situation of daily life." This new expression in every situation is the reason that CLC encourages the Examen prayer for each member, and why our small group meetings end with a review. These practices are precisely about discerning where we have been led "by the spirit of the Gospel" and in harmony with "the interior law of love", and where we have been led in other directions. This reflective, discerning way of proceeding enables us to respect "the uniqueness of each personal vocation" and "to be open and free, always at the disposal of God".

In the final sentence of this Principle, we are reminded once more that mission is the focus of our CLC vocation. Here we are connected again with the opening scene of Principle 1 – the Divine Trinity gazing upon the world in all its needs and choosing to send the Son to enter fully into human life and to bring liberation. The spirit of the Gospel and the interior law of love challenge us, we read, to be part of this ongoing mission of Christ in the Church.

The challenge is phrased in this way:

*"to see our serious responsibilities and to seek constantly the answers to the needs of our times and to work together with the entire People of God and all those of good will".*

This mission is, of course, not ours alone. It is the mission of the whole Church. This Principle situates CLC within the life of the Church. At the start of the Principle, we read that CLC is "a way of Christian life". Not the way, but a way. It is one path amongst many that have arisen in the Church under the guidance of the Spirit.

Likewise, at the end, we are told that our challenge is “to work together with the entire People of God” – i.e., the whole Church, with whom we have a common mission. And what is that mission? To work “for progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all people”.

Let's do it!

*Fr Robin Koning SJ National Ecclesial Assistant*

# SECTION TEN

10.1 SUPPORTING GROUP GUIDES IN MISSION .....	461
A. DSSE .....	461
B. PEER MENTORING AS A DSSE APPROACH .....	461
10.2 SEVEN FACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE PEER GROUP MENTORING .....	463
WHAT MAKES A GOOD PEER MENTORING GROUP?.....	463
10.3 PEER GROUP MENTORING: TWO DISTINCT PROCESSES.....	466
A. CLARIFICATION OF TERMS FOR GROUP GUIDING.....	466
B. BASIC FACILITATION GUIDELINES FOR THE TWO DISTINCT PROCESSES....	467
10.4 A PEER GROUP SUPERVISION SESSION: ONE WAY OF PROCEEDING .....	469
10.5 A PEER GROUP CONSULTATION PROCESS: ONE WAY of PROCEEDING .....	472
10.6 ADDENDUM: ONE GUIDED PROCESS for SUPERVISION OR CONSULTATION .....	475

## 10.1 SUPPORTING GROUP GUIDES IN MISSION

### A. DSSE

#### PREAMBLE

CLC leadership is an important area of mission. *Our CLC charism shapes how we 'do' leadership* (CLC Leaders' Manual, p. 32). The *ministry* of Group Guiding is one expression of this mission, one which is critical to the development of a CLC National Community. Our DSSE way of life prompts us to consider ways to support group guides, not only during initial training, but also ongoingly as they accompany new and more developed CLC groups. This section focuses on one approach to such support: peer mentoring.

### B. PEER MENTORING AS A DSSE APPROACH

#### WHAT IS MENTORING?

*"Mentoring is coming along side an individual or a group of individuals to learn a skill, develop an ability or deepen some experience of life."*

*Tom Schwanda, associate professor of Christian Formation and Ministry, Wheaton College*

In recent years, mentoring has increasingly become a component of ministry formation programs. Some programs provide *personal* mentors for those in initial training. Some also offer *peer* mentoring as additional support. It is in the context of this latter form of support, **peer mentoring** that the following explanations and practices are presented in this section.

#### WHAT MAKES A GOOD MENTOR?

Mentors have been around since the days of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. The Risen Jesus, on the Road to Emmaus, offers us a classic image of two important roles of accompaniment...that of the spiritual director and that of the CLC group guide.

**Luke 24:13-35**

And Jesus said, "What are you discussing as you walk along... ?"

When people are asked to describe their most unforgettable mentors, here are some characteristics most often mentioned...

**1. They are "present".**

Good mentors are focused in the moment. They take a sincere interest in the one(s) they are accompanying, giving undivided attention.

**2. They listen.**

Good mentors are active listeners. They make eye contact, are attentive to body language, paraphrase what they hear, give encouragement, and sometimes, explain things. Just being heard can often be all that is needed for another to think things through.

**3. They ask good questions.**

Good mentors ask helpful and appropriate questions which evoke inner experiences, helping to bring them into the light for greater understanding. The art of asking good questions assists others come to " see for themselves" and to find their own way to respond or move forward.

**4. They give feedback.**

Good mentors offer specific, sincere, and timely feedback. They do this with sensitivity and patience, remembering what it's like to be new or inexperienced. They allow others to make mistakes, learn, and develop at their own pace.

**5. They respect and honor confidentiality**

Good mentors expect that what "is said in the sacred space, stays in that sacred space."

## 10.2 SEVEN FACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE PEER GROUP MENTORING

### WHAT MAKES A GOOD PEER MENTORING GROUP?

In addition to the characteristics of good mentor above, the following seven factors describe effective PEER mentoring GROUPS. These have been adapted for our purposes of CLC group guiding from an article by *Aly McNicoll, Director of the New Zealand Coaching and Mentoring Centre.*



#### **Number One: Equality**

The term 'peer' refers to persons of equal status. In a peer mentoring group, no one has more or less 'status' than any other, though some may have more guiding experience. Participants need to be free to speak about their accompaniment of CLC groups without concern for consequences. Therefore, if peer group mentoring is a component of an initial Group Guide training program, the 'formators' of the guide(s)-in-training would ideally not be part of the peer group process.

#### **Number Two: Supportive Environment**

There needs to be a supportive environment within the group for peer mentoring to work well. The underlying assumption is that 'people do the best they can with who they are and with the resources they have'. This means that 'it's OK to make mistakes'. The degree of effectiveness of peer mentoring is directly related to the degree to which those being mentored feel safe in front of their peers to expose themselves and their growing edges in both skills and knowledge, free from judgement.

### **Number Three: Structure**

Peer mentoring needs to be structured. A 'structure' is a bridge to 'get from here to there'. Structure creates ways of proceeding that help maintain appropriate boundaries and provide the use of CLC tools to assist understanding of guiding principles and development of skills. This may include working with real guiding situations or case studies where structured questions and ways of reflection assist in sharing, practice and feedback.

### **Number Four: Place a high value on commitment**

Peer group members need to place a high value on making peer mentoring a priority when organising their time. Attention to many competing priorities (even those directly related to their guiding ministry) needs to be considered.

### **Number Five: Quality Experience**

The key to maintaining the momentum of peer group mentoring for CLC group guides is to ensure that the experience is of a consistently high quality and people consider it time well spent. Guides are encouraged to stick to the group process, be bold and intuitive in their responses, ensure there is a balance of positive and challenging feedback, and avoid giving advice unless specifically requested as 'friends in the Lord'. They need to remember that their purpose is to promote helpful self reflection and to generate greater insights than as individuals, they could possibly generate on their own.

### **Number Six: Self Directed**

CLC group guides need to be self directed learners, determining their own needs, choosing those processes and tools that will meet them and *using the peer group for and as a resource for this way of growth in ministry*. In any one moment, the group focus needs to be on the one being 'heard', to take care not to stray into meeting their own needs in one another's mentoring time. The varied perspectives present in a group of peers can allow insights and ideas to emerge, enabling not just the individual guide but the whole group to tap into hidden wisdom and resources available to them. In this way, innovative and insightful solutions to current guiding needs or dilemmas are discovered - together. This model of peer mentoring works best in groups of 4 to 8 people.

### **Number Seven: No 'post-mortems'**

This is an essential ground rule for successful peer mentoring groups. It means that when the full stop comes at the end of an individual's mentoring time, there is no further discussion of the issue or practice - either in the group or beyond. This creates a boundary for the group and ensures there is no leakage into other places or processes. This is essential to fully engage in this ministry support process.



**CONCLUSION:**

Accounts of effective peer group mentoring from the literature emphasize both structure and defined process. Many groups devise their own unique process; however, all meet regularly, have a clear agenda, assign a facilitator and stick to an agreed structure. If this happens, both individuals and the organizations which they serve will benefit through the increased sharing of practice, support, and consistency in standards of practice.

## 10.3 PEER GROUP MENTORING: TWO DISTINCT PROCESSES

### A. CLARIFICATION OF TERMS FOR GROUP GUIDING

#### SUPERVISION

Supervision is related to the inner experience of the CLC guide. It focuses on HOW guides need to be with/stay 'interiorly' WITH a group so as to exercise their role more freely and effectively. This often means the need for freedom from preferences, biases, fears, blind spots, and personal vulnerabilities. **Supervision, then, is at the service of a group guide's spiritual freedom.** (*Spiritual freedom is a 'goal' in the Spiritual Exercises, the source of our CLC spirituality*).

A good peer group supervision process, then, will help guides identify, describe and explore their interior experiences while guiding, with particular attention to movements of consolation and desolation and what triggers them. This is the primary 'data' brought to supervision. Supervision basically asks the question: ***Can you help me uncover or explore more fully what is going on inside me when I am guiding \_\_\_\_\_ (or when I was in this guiding situation?)***

With the help of a peer mentoring group, this approach to supervision can lead to greater freedom, joy, and confidence in CLC group guiding

#### CONSULTATION

Consultation is related to the GROUP and what the guide needs (knowledge or skills) to assist the group or its members make progress or move forward in the CLC way of life. Consultation issues may be related to the inner life of the group, to ways of proceeding with formation content, or to tools for assisting groups with discernment or apostolic decisions. Peer group consultation is focused on helping group guides clarify the "issue/struggle" of the group or (some of) its members and their own struggle in guiding them in their stage of development.

Consultation basically asks the question: ***Can you help me figure out what's going on with my group and how to deal with the question or struggle I'm having to help them move forward?***

## B. BASIC FACILITATION GUIDELINES FOR THE TWO DISTINCT PROCESSES

The following excerpts have been taken and adapted for our purposes of CLC Group Guiding from an article by *Karen Ehrlichman, A Contemporary Approach to Spiritual Direction Supervision: The MESH Model.*

**“Peer Supervision - No-One Knows as Much as All of Us”**

**A peer group supervision session requires a good process facilitator.**

### THE FACILITATOR’S ROLE

In a structured peer group supervision process, one person, either a member of the peer group, or a CLC leader outside the group, assumes the role of process facilitator. A typical peer supervision session begins with a ‘check in’ round where group members signal their supervision issues, the time is divided, and an agenda set. Each group member then takes a turn as the one being supervised and the ‘group’ becomes the “supervisor”.

Alternatively, a group may decide, after each one briefly shares what they are bringing for supervision, to choose only one or two members for the exploratory phase **of the guide’s** inner experience. The group then uses a structured **exploratory** process and the session ends with a final evaluation or review of the supervision experience.

**First of all, the process facilitator:**

- ensures that the peer group of CLC guides stay on task;
- designates roles and tasks for group members as needed;
- helps individual guides clearly identify their specific need for supervision or consultation;
- makes sure everyone is heard;
- sets up the way of proceeding within the time available; and
- creates space for feedback or group discussion on insights gained from the experience of supervision - greater freedom for ministry or deeper understanding of the issues related to this need.

**Secondly, the facilitator is an observer of group dynamics:**

- noticing patterns of peer interaction which may be interfering with the expressed goal of supervision or consultation, affecting its benefits.
- attends with sensitivity to the members' reactions to group feedback and other group dynamics
- helps the peer group grow in its ways of mutual giving and receiving help and support.

Note: The facilitator of a peer group supervision or consultation session is more directive in a “novice” group of guides, typically taking responsibility for assigning tasks to members, orchestrating feedback, and summarizing discussion. Being a skilled CLC leader is more critical with such groups of beginning guides. In more developmentally advanced guide mentoring groups, the guides, themselves, assume more responsibility for their own sessions and processes.

### **PEER FEEDBACK**

Critical to the success of any structured peer supervision or consultation mentoring groups are the developmental needs of the CLC guides participating in the process. The session format needs to ensure that each member is able to give and receive feedback that will not only support these needs (both their need for affirmation, encouragement and their need to accept their growing edges.) Addressing both of these needs helps group guides become more effective for this important ministry.

## 10.4 A PEER GROUP SUPERVISION SESSION: ONE WAY OF PROCEEDING

*Preparing well for a Peer Group Supervision Session is important. The following has been used by one Group Guide Community for this preparation.*

### **PREPARATION for PEER GROUP SUPERVISION:**

The following self-directed reflection exercise may be used (ideally regularly) following a CLC meeting. Having a Group Guide 'LOG' to record reflection on these three questions is helpful.

CLC GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_

MEETING DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **I NOTE WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE MEETING:** the communal grace sought and whether/how it was received. I note the communal interchanges, the group dynamics, the main C&D communal movements. I note the content and formation focus, any DSSE processes entered or continued. I name the key forward movement of the group.
2. **I NOTE MY INNER EXPERIENCES** relating to this particular meeting and what happened – the spiritual movements triggered within me (the spontaneous feelings and thoughts) and their direction or effect on me as a guide: I pay attention to those which were experienced:
  - prior to the meeting or preparing for it
  - during any part of the meeting
  - following the meeting in my reflection
  - as a pattern in working with a particular group
3. I decide what I will bring to my peer group for supervision – what I want to explore so as to become freer to 'be fully present to' my group or to better exercise my role as group guide.

## THE PEER SUPERVISION PROCESS: (1 hour)

*What follows is **ONE** process 'template' for a peer group of 4 'experienced' CLC guides. It has been adapted from a supervision model for spiritual directors, developed by Maureen Conroy RSM. If it is used for a larger group of CLC guides, small groups of 4 are preferred for this process. Ideally a process facilitator is assigned or invited prior to the supervision session.*

### **Step I: Gathering/Welcome (5 min.)**

- How we come to the supervision session
- Brief Disposing Prayer and Communal Grace
- Focus question: What is the guiding experience or issue that triggered **an interior reaction** in me that I want to bring to supervision? (Briefly share experience the with an emphasis on the interior movements triggered.)
- Invitation to a brief contemplative silence to prepare for sharing.

### **Step 2: Sharing round: (10 min.)**

Each guide shares (2 min.) on the focus question.

### **Step 3: Choosing one guide's experience for peer supervision. (5 min.)**

From listening in the sharing round, the group is invited to a contemplative pause, then a sharing round on WHO they sense most needs 'supervision' at this time. (*If it is the process facilitator, another member picks up the facilitation of the rest of the process.*)

### **Step 4: The Supervision Process: (20-30 min.)**

- Reminders: confidentiality ... the focus is on the guide (not the group)... respectful listening
- the presenting guide is invited to share 'more fully' and to name the help/support they are seeking (*perhaps to savor a graced experience of God's presence in guiding ... or help in exploring deeper feelings in an area of struggle or vulnerability*).
  - the facilitator invites clarification of what was just expressed (if needed)
  - contemplative silence, seeking the help of the Holy Spirit

- the facilitator invites the group to pose any questions that have surfaced in the silence. Using the skills of reverent and evocative listening, the group helps the guide discover, savor, explore, unpack interior experiences – to create space for any grace or freedom needed in relation to the issue presented.

Note: (More than one guide may be supervised if time allows.)

**Step 5: Group Feedback (3-4 min.)**

Each guide 'may' offer an observation, or a suggestion for the presenting Guide.

**Step 6: Evaluating the Peer Supervision Process (1-3 min.)**

The group members ponder the supervision process and comment (if needed on any lack of moving away from the purpose of supervision)

- Did our focus stay on the guide?
- Did we get caught in problem solving or advice giving?
- Did we lead the guide to understand his/her own experience/

**Step 7: Appropriation of Insights/Learning: (5 min.)**

Each guide is invited to briefly share what he/she is taking away for their own guiding experience from this process of peer supervision.

The group may also identify a need for further conversation or needed formation related to what emerged in the session

**Closing prayer** of gratitude

## 10.5 A PEER GROUP CONSULTATION PROCESS: ONE WAY of PROCEEDING

*Preparing well for a Peer Group Consultation Session is important. The following has been used by one Group Guide Community for this preparation.*

### PREPARATION for PEER GROUP CONSULTATION

The following self-directed reflection exercise may be used (ideally regularly) following a CLC meeting. Having a Group Guide 'LOG' to record reflection on these four questions is helpful.

CLC GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_

MEETING DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. I NOTE WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE MEETING:** (*same as for reflection exercise to prepare for supervision*)
- 2. I PONDER OUR CLC WAY OF LIFE:** what distinguishes us as CLC: our charism (GPs), 3 pillars (Spirituality, Community, Mission), DSSE, the 3 rounds of spiritual conversation, fidelity to the 3 Parts of a CLC meeting, Stages of CLC Formation, openness to Canada's Formation Manuals, the unfolding direction of our Regional, National and World Community. Is there anything in this meeting that stands out as encouraging? Is there anything that may need development or refocusing?
- 3. I PONDER MY ROLE AS GUIDE IN THIS MEETING** (*which may also include a Coordinator's role for a period with new groups*)  
How prepared was I for this meeting? What can I do differently?  
How would I describe my leadership style during this meeting (see CLC Leaders' Manual)  
How did my listening/ words/ body language affect what unfolded?  
How did I help the group make a connection with where they were to where they are?  
How did I affirm, give clarity, offer feedback? What questions helped, could have helped?  
How did I assist the group to balance the 3 parts of the meeting if needed?  
How did I confront if needed?  
How did I use CLC tools (ex. LDR, Power Cycle, DSSE processes), or not?  
How would I name my strengths/growing edges in *this* meeting? Do I see a pattern?



4. I decide what I will bring to my peer group for consultation– where I need support or help to assist my group to make progress in the CLC way of life.

### THE PEER CONSULTATION PROCESS (1 hour)

*The following is ONE model for peer group consultation for 4-8 CLC guides.*

**Step I: Gathering/Welcome (10 – 15 min.)**

- How we come to the consultation session
- Brief Disposing Prayer and Communal Grace
- **Focus question:** What is the guiding experience or issue that I want to bring for consultation? (Briefly share the issue and the help you are seeking)
- Invitation to a brief contemplative silence to prepare for sharing.
- I decide what I want to bring to my peer group for discussion or for help.

**Note:** *Instead of a brief 'disposing prayer', the facilitator may prefer, at times, to lead a guided imagery to help surface a consultation issue. This would add an extra 5 minutes to Step 1. For example...*

*I allow my spirit to rest awhile... I consider where I am going and for what purpose... I take a moment to look at God looking at me... and looking at us, aware of God's loving attention towards us...*

*I now bring to mind one CLC meeting I guided since we last met... using my imagination, I see the room... I see each person gathered in the circle ... I note their facial expressions, their body language... I notice the mood... I hear the voices and the sounds.*

*I now bring to mind what happened during the CLC meeting... I see again how things unfolded... the members' preparation... the ways of proceeding through each part of the meeting... the quality of listening and communal exchanges... the focus of formation... the tools or processes used... the individual and communal movements which occurred... the graces received... the decisions taken...*

*I become aware of what was said or done that helped the group move forward... or anything that may have blocked it... any confusion or struggle in the group... I stay with whatever presents itself to my mind and heart...*

*I ask now for the grace to see what Christ sees in the group or in my efforts to assist them. I ask to become aware of what I most need to bring for consultation at this time' for the sake of my own guiding ministry... or for the sake of the groups we guide.*

**Step 2: Sharing round: (10 min.)**

- Each guide shares (2 min.) on the focus question.

**Step 3: Choosing one guide's experience for peer supervision. (5 min.)**

- From listening in the sharing round, the group is invited to a contemplative pause, then a sharing round on WHO they sense most needs 'consultation help' at this time. (*If it is the process facilitator, another member picks up the facilitation of the rest of the process.*)
- **Alternatively**, it may be more helpful at times for the group to prioritize not WHO needs consultation help - but to prioritize the questions or issues brought to the sharing round because of their value for ALL the guides to discuss. After prioritizing by consensus, the group moves through a conversation about each in turn (or as many as can be dealt with in the time allotted for the process.)

**Step 4: Open discussion/exchange (20-30 min.)**

- Peer interaction with the presenting guide "in immediate need", or the whole group on the consultation issues identified of benefit for all.

**Step 5: Gathering Exercise: (10 min)**

1. Gather the group wisdom and insights
2. Identify areas for ongoing guide formation

**Step 6: Appropriating the graces of the peer consultation (10 min.)**

Focus Question (ex.): *What am I taking with me from this consultation experience that will most help me work with my group of exercise my role as CLC guide?*

**Closing Prayer**

## 10.6 ADDENDUM: ONE GUIDED PROCESS for SUPERVISION OR CONSULTATION

While the above offers two separate processes for two distinct Group Guide mentoring needs, it is possible to 'adapt the one hour process' for EITHER form of mentoring - help for supervision OR for consultation. This 'third' type process would need to be **intentional**. That is the group knows they are free to come to the one-hour peer mentoring session with **either** a desire for supervision or for consultation. The facilitator would simply clarify that option in Step 1.

In this case, this guide clearly expresses which need they have in Step 2.

The group then decides in Step 3 WHO *most* seems to need the 'peer mentoring' at this time and whether this help/support is related to supervision or consultation.

Once determined, the facilitator simply moves the peer group forward in the remaining steps of the '*appropriate*' process.

### ONE GUIDED PROCESS FOR SUPERVISION OR CONSULTATION

Group Guiding invites us to two types of support processes: supervision and consultation. BOTH are crucial forms of mentoring for this ministry of accompaniment.

#### Clarification of Terms:

1. **Supervision** is related to **MY** need for growth in **spiritual freedom** - HOW TO BE WITH a group in the way the group most needs at this time ... freedom from our preferences, our biases, blind spots, and especially from our personal vulnerabilities. **Supervision asks the question: *Can you help me uncover or explore more fully what is going on inside when I ...?***
2. **Consultation** is related to the **GROUP'S** need in order to move forward, either in their group life or in their communal calls/actions. Consultation is focused on helping one another understand the group's "issue/struggle" so as to know **WHAT TO DO** which will be more effective or fruitful 'for their stage of development'. **Consultation asks the question: *Can you help me figure out***

*what's going on with my group and how I can help them move forward at this time...?* In consultation, we listen for the wisdom in the group to help us with basic practical advice or how to use CLC tools where needed.

## A SIMPLE 45-60 MIN. PROCESS FOR EITHER PEER SUPPORT PURPOSE

### Remote Preparation:

Prayerful reflection with a Focus Question - or time with our Group Guide Log  
(before arriving)

### Step 1 – Orientation to the Process:

The facilitator of the process:

- Clarifies the **purpose**:(supervision, to become more free/consultation, to become more equipped).
- Explains the **way of proceeding** (size of groups, break out spaces, and process timelines).
- Names the **communal** grace: *"We ask for the grace to be prayerfully attentive to the guiding experience of one another...with reverence, with evocative listening, and with confidentiality."*

### Step 2 – Disposing Prayer

The facilitator of the process prays...

*A. If the purpose is **supervision**...*

*"Most Holy Trinity, be with us now as we ponder our varied experiences of group guiding... Thank you for Your desire to be with us and help us grow. We ask for the grace to be attentive to our own spiritual movements (before, during or after our guiding experiences.) Help us recognize how we have moved in tune with Your Spirit. Help us also recognize where we have moved away from You or away from the group we guide... Shed light on those areas of vulnerability or confusion in us that may be blocking our freedom to accompany our communities in the CLC way of life..."*

*B. If for **consultation**...*

*"Most Holy Trinity, be with us now as we ponder our varied experiences of group guiding... Thank you for Your desire to be with us and help us grow. We ask for the grace of insight and practical wisdom. Help us learn from one another's gifts and experiences. Help us grow in the knowledge, skills, and confidence we need at this time to accompany our communities in the CLC way of life."*

### Step 3 – Immediate Preparation for Sharing

The leader then invites a contemplative pause...

*"I enter into the silence now and allow the Spirit to surface in me **ONE CLC meeting or guiding moment** to bring to **supervision/consultation** at this time..." **5 min.***

The leader signals the end of the time. (Suggestion by speaking Wis. 6:11)

*"Set your heart, therefore, on what I have to say; listen with a will and you will be instructed".*

**Step 4 – Spiritual Conversation: Round 1**

Each shares (**3 min.** each about what they want 'help with').

**Step 5 – Spiritual Conversation: Round 2**

A 'response' round – after briefly sharing (1 min.) about stirred an inner response or 'resonated' with them, each one expresses his/her sense of WHO needs the 'fuller' **support** conversation (first). With consensus, they then have an exchange to open up the request for help for the one chosen. [**20-30 minutes** may be enough for this – if time, another member's 'issue' may be explored]

**Step 6 – Spiritual Conversation: Round 3:**

Brief sharing on the **key grace/learning** received or deepened through this peer support process... and the significance of this for my/our ministry of group guiding. (**5 min.**)

**Step 7 – Plenary** if more than one group... to gather the graces of Round 3.

# SECTION ELEVEN

11.1 REFERENCES AND RESOURCES FOR GROUP GUIDE RESOURCE MANUAL.....	479
A.    ON CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY CANADA WEBSITE .....	479
B.    WORLD CLC DOCUMENTS .....	479
C.    REFERENCES FOR ARTICLES .....	480
D.    ADDITIONAL RESOURCES .....	482

## 11.1 REFERENCES AND RESOURCES FOR GROUP GUIDE RESOURCE MANUAL

This is a Catalogue of Documentation of Resources as well as a collection of resources for more in-depth study. Please note that documentation is not complete as many articles collected did not have their source included. If you recognize an article and source, please contact the National Formation Group so the data can be added.

### A. ON CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY CANADA WEBSITE

- CLC Formation Manual
- CLC Formation Manual 2
- CLC Formation Manual 3
- CLC Canada Leader's Manual 2020
- Communal Apostolic Discernment: A Tool Kit by Jesuits of Canada
- The Process of CLC in Growth, from "Progressio #64 pg. 193-204"

### B. WORLD CLC DOCUMENTS

Progressio Supplement 9, 1977, "Towards Christian Life Community, Beginnings and Growth."

Progressio 1997: 1 and 2: "The Cycle of Growth Through the Dynamica and The Graces of the Spiritual Exercises."

Progressio Supplement #33: Formation of Group Guides.

Progressio #9: Survey of the Formation Process in the Christian Life Community: Growing in Christ Together the Better to Give Life to Others, June 1981.

Progression Supplement #36: General Principles of the Christian Life Community and General Norms (1991) and in a small Progressio Supplement #63 (2008).

Progressio Supplement #38-3, Sept 1992: Deepening Our Understanding of The General Principles.

Progressio Supplement #62: The History of the GP's and the Spiritual Exercises.

Progressio Supplement #62 also includes the foundation of Discern, Send, Support, and Evaluate (DSSE).

Progressio Supplement #56: The CLC Charism revised.

Progressio: Our Common Mission, 1998.

Progressio: 1976: Putting Gospel Values to Work.

Projects 174: June 2020: Personal and Communal Discernment.

Progressio Supplement #57: The 24 Spiritual Exercises for the New Story of Universal Communion.

Progressio Supplement #65: The relationship between the Christian Life Community and the Society of Jesus in the Church.

Projects 132: notes from the 2003 Nairobi World Assembly.

## **C. REFERENCES FOR ARTICLES**

Arrupe, Pedro, SJ. "Fall in Love".

Barry, William, SJ, Excerpts from "A Friendship like No Other".

Barry, William, SJ, Excerpts from "Experiencing God's Amazing Embrace".

Barry, William, SJ, from an article "An Ignation Spirituality Reader": Discernment of Spirits as an Act of Faith.

Barry, William, SJ, "Spiritual Direction and the Encounter with God: A Theological Inquiry".



Chittister, Joan and William, Rowan, "Uncommon Gratitude".

Daigle, Pamela, CLC Formator, Atlantic Region CLC Canada.

Dinn, Jim, Pax Christie, "Justice and Charity".

English, John, SJ, "Spiritual Freedom" 1995.

English, John, SJ, "Spiritual Intimacy and Community" 1992.

Errozarez, Josefina, Progressio #4, 1990.

Fleming, David, SJ, "What is Ignatian Spirituality?".

Gallagher, Timothy, OMV, "Discerning the Will of God".

Green, Thomas, SJ, "Drinking from a Dry Well".

Grogan, Brian, SJ, "God is Right in Front of You".

Gsell, Josie, Progressio Supplement #11, April 1978, "Mary and CLC Texts".

Jereel, Jack – founder of Just Faith Ministries.

Johnson, David, "Reaching Out".

Koning, Robin, SJ, National Ecclesial Assistant.

Liebert, Elizabeth, "The Way of Discernment".

Liebert, Elizabeth, "The Soul of Discernment".

Mercierca, Eddie, SJ, Progressio Supplement #63: XV. CLC General Assembly Fatima 2008.

Merrill, Nan, "Psalms for Praying".

Michaud, Gilles, CLC Formator, Atlantic Canada.

Michaud, Leah, CLC Formator, Atlantic Canada.

O'Brien, Kevin, SJ "Ignatian Adventure".

Oland, Eric, SJ, article in "Our Spirituality".

Plotkin, Bill, PhD, depth psychologist, agent of cultural transformation, founder of Western Colorado's Animas Valley Institute.

Pope Francis, Interview, "Let us Dream"" 2020.

Pope Francis, "Call to Holiness", excerpt of interview in Today's World 2018.

Reyes, Jose, Progressio Supplement #59, pg. 64-65.

Rubiiano, Carlos, SJ (Columbia) "Church Models and Apostolic Style".

Rohr, Richard, Franciscan Friar, Daily Meditations, Founder of Center for Contemplation and Actions.

Romero, Oscar (1907-1991), Archbishop of El Salvador, "Fall in Love".

Rupp, Joyce, "Out of the Ordinary" – A Christmas Blessing.

Schemel, George J, SJ, "The Seven Essential Elements of Communal Discernment" 1974 and 1989.

Telhard de Chardin, Pierre, SJ, "Patient Trust".

Tetlow, Joseph, SJ, "Making Choices in Christ: The Foundations of Ignatian Spirituality".

Tetlow, Joseph, SJ, "The Four Seasons of the Spiritual Exercises".

Veltri, John, SJ, "Orientations: Three Perspectives Influencing Decision Making".

Wickham, SJ, "How Can We Respond Today?" Ch. 5.

## **D. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- CLC – Atlantic 2004-2005 Group Guide Formation Manual
- CLC Canada GG SOP 018
- Canadian CLC Group Guide Course 1985 and Group Guide Course Guelph 1993
- Canadian Group Guide Manual 2005
- Central Canada, Eileen Burke Sullivan
- Atlantic Regional documents which describe the Role of the CLC Group Guide

- CLC Australian Documents
- Education for Jesuit Schools in Ireland
- CLC St. Louis Course notes on Group Guides Formation
- CLC Mexico Group Guide Formation Plan – basic outline
- CLC USA website
- US Bishops Communities of Salt and Light 1993
- Office for Social Justice Catholic Charities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
- Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Jesuit Sources website
- New Zealand Coaching and Mentoring Centre, Aly McNicoll, Director
- Reflection on the "Signs of the Times" and the Drama of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the Spiritual Exercises, Dec 2012