

# SPIRIT EXPRESS

Christian Life Community  
Newsletter No 4 May 2009



## SPIRITUAL CORNER by Rachel McLoughlin

It has been difficult to describe the St Ignatius Parish Pilgrimage 2008 *In the Footsteps of Ignatius*. I felt it was important to be able to convey a sense of the depth of the journey. The sense of sacredness of the experience and the journey toward deepening our relationship with God as Ignatius leads us. So I felt it may be helpful to just give an idea of a day and took an excerpt from my journal.

Day 7

From the Autobiography: [19]-[37]

From Scripture: *But who do you say that I am?* Mark 8:27-30

*Inigo planned a brief visit to Manresa, and was waylaid by God. Gerald Coleman SJ*

Laudes at Monserrat this morning. The gentle voices of the Benedictine monks now a familiar song. A peaceful and tranquil place to be. The sun is rising over the mountain. Amazing views from on top of the clouds. Climbing up to the top of St Jerome yesterday I even looked down upon a plane! Monserrat is a sacred place, a safe place. The black Madonna holds Jesus in front of her for us beckoning us to come and see. We seem so high up it seems easier to let go of things we are carrying and burdened with in order to get close.

*Confession, clothing, sword. Under the guidance of a Benedictine priest, and trusting in Our Lady. In this holy place, Inigo confronts his past.*

There is a sense of leaving something behind this morning. The sun is rising over the mountain as we are winding our way down to Manresa. The peaks of Monserrat now become distant. Fr Manuel Casanova welcomes us and shows us around Manresa. Another sacred place. We are filled with beautiful paintings, carvings and mosaics, all original and bringing to life some that were familiar as pictures or prints at home. Many depicting Ignatius's story. We wander around the town led confidently and excitedly by our wise and expert guide Michael Gray. Ignatius spent eleven months in this town. We gaze on some of the things Ignatius would have known.

We have come down from the good place high up on the mountain to the depths of a cave. I have a sense there is work to be done.

*"During this period God was dealing with him in the same way a schoolteacher deals with a child..."*

Autobiography 27

Each evening we have the chance to share our feelings and experiences in small groups. This is a deep and privileged time. We know we are preparing for a special day tomorrow. Our day of silent reflection will begin. We are led by Fr Manuel Casanova who has been resting all day in order to direct us in our retreat and celebrate mass for us in the cave where St Ignatius stayed and wrote the Spiritual Exercises.

## REFLECTION ON ONE OF OUR EVERYDAY SAINTS: PAT AHERN

Pat Ahern was born 6<sup>th</sup> December 1924 and died 29<sup>th</sup> August 2008.

She greatly blessed and enriched the lives of many people from all walks of life. She had an ability to reach out to others and warmly accept them just as they are. Pat was a woman with a deep and strong faith in her God and the Church. Our "Stepping Stones" CLC group was privileged to have Pat as a founding member when it started in 1982. Her ongoing commitment to this Ignatian

Spirituality and way of life was clearly important to her. Pat was an inspiration of faith with a deep dedication to prayer and the Eucharist. She endeavoured to live the ways of Jesus' teachings and this was certainly evident in the way she was in her relationships with others. Pat had an amazing ability to mix with family, people of all ages and races and with people of differing socio-economic backgrounds. She was able to do this without judgment and managed to just enjoy the occasion and opportunity for good company.

Pat was a 'straight shooter' - you knew exactly where she stood on issues of importance. She was not afraid to be angry over matters of social injustice. This is highlighted by the fact that she spent two and a half years travelling to Baxter detention centre once a month to visit detainees. She was aged 80 but this never deterred her from taking a strong stand against the Howard Government's punitive practices. Pat was incredibly committed to her family. She had a very practical application of love, always helping out when there was a need. Each of her grandchildren regularly stayed with Pat (and Bill) at various stages of their lives. Even at 83 she still had teenage grandchildren living with her. Pat wouldn't hold back with them if she thought something needed to be said but she always did it in a way that was clear and respectful. Pat had incredible trust in God's providence. She always had hope. It was like a purity of hope with a deep trust that God would provide in the best possible way. This deep trusting faith helped her to live a fearless and faith-filled life.

Pat's life choices were quite simple. She was able to live life like she was living in luxury yet her ways and choices were not extravagant but were rather humble. Pat knew what was important. Pat's relationships with others was caring and generous. Her relationship with Bill, her husband, was always deeply loyal and respectful and she enjoyed his wonderful humour. Pat loved to laugh and this laugh was uniquely infectious. Pat loved, supported and befriended our Jesuit and Josephite companions. Both Bill and her had many different ways they enjoyed and supported these special friends. It would be easy to go on and still not complete the picture of this wonderful woman. Pat lived life well. She had the ability not to take sides in conflict, isolate or judge others. She had complete trust in God and her unwavering faith and aliveness made her a remarkable woman. She blessed and touched the lives of many and we give thanks to God for Pat Ahern's life of love and goodness.

*Judy McIntyre and members of 'Stepping Stones' CLC - Clare SA*

## Group profile: the STEPPING STONES

Judy Mc Intyre: I have been involved in CLC for 26 years. Being part of CLC is just part of who I am and what helps me live my life in a better way-it has become a way of life. I cherish sharing with others the opportunity to listen to where God is calling each one of us and how each of us can better live God's presence in our daily experiences. I am constantly energized by experiences shared on how God moves and calls us into action. Time for prayer both at meeting and in my own time help me to engage the spirit to better direct my life. CLC gives me a place to deepen my understanding of who I am and what it means to listen to God in my daily life. I am challenged to better live God's love and to reflect on the quality of my presence to others.

Anne Maloney: I am married to Chris and have five children: Moira, Kieran, Deirdre, Brendan and Eamonn (of Irish descent a long way back!) Our fifth grandchild is due next month. Initial membership of CLC began for me 26 years ago, continuing on for a few years, and then we moved away from the district for work. During those first years of CLC I experienced great friendship and some spiritual growth which attracted me to rejoin on moving back here. The sharing of others is such a privilege and has helped me enormously to become a more reflective person. I am





## News from CLC international

I have been asked by the SA State Exco for some thoughts on working for CLC over the last 6 months including in the Rome CLC Office (for 3 of those months). I have reported briefly on the recent CLC World Exco meeting and offered some more personal reflections.

World Exco meeting, 12-22 February 2009: The World ExCo meeting was held at a retreat house (Montecucco) just out of central Rome and was conducted within a framework of daily prayer, reflection and Eucharist. We spent our initial time getting to know each other and then considering the needs of national communities and regions (especially the Asia/Pacific region) and how World Exco might cooperate with their specific needs.

As you would expect, we gave considerable time to attending to matters received from the Fatima Assembly including leadership, finances (especially fund-raising), communications, community building, making CLC available to more people of whatever socio-economic level and of making CLC more "family friendly" for members. We also addressed the matter of "apostolic networking and advocacy" (CLC has representational status in a number of UN forums eg in New York and Geneva) and how to integrate our efforts in this matter at a world level and with our developing apostolic action agenda. Of special significance for us were meetings with a number of guest speakers. These included Fr Nicolas SJ (General of the Society of Jesus), Cardinal Rylko, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity and Fr Claudio Barriga SJ, Director of the Apostleship of Prayer. All affirmed and challenged (in different ways) the role and place of CLC in the Church and the world today.

The evaluation of our meeting confirmed the value of the process and conclusions. It was so encouraging that it still lives on in my mind. Collectively, we felt that, with God's grace and a global CLC commitment, the next 5 years holds out much hope for CLC growth and a more visible presence in the world. The next issue of Projects - coming soon - will deal more fully with all these matters. Finally, I mention that a new Executive Secretary has been appointed to succeed Guy Maginzi, our current Secretary. His name is Franklin Ibanez from Lima, Peru. Franklin and his wife, Sophia, join CLC in Rome in July. We welcome Franklin and thank Guy for his dedication over the last 5 years.

### More personal reflections

I am grateful for the many enriching experiences of being in CLC and especially, recently, being in Rome for 3 months. It gave me a chance to see CLC at an international level, to experience something of our Church at closer quarters and to form new friendships. But it was also good to come home to family, friends and local CLC realities and seek to live everyday life here to the fullest. Another part of the richness of service in CLC is that this service also brings its personal challenges. We reflect and pray over these matters, reconciling ourselves with things that might have been done otherwise, and then concentrating more on seeking to respond fully to the call at hand. And through all of this comes the joy and fulfilment of service.

In these ways, we experience affirmation of our CLC way of life as a vocation and a mission - lived through our relationships and sustained by daily prayer and commitment to our call.

*Chris Hogan  
12<sup>th</sup> May 09*