



President's Address – CLC (Australia) Assembly

Mr Chris Hogan

Newman College, Victoria, Sat 19th Jan 08

(Speaking notes)

“CLC 40 years on: Collaborating in Christ's Mission”
“The Apostles gathered around Jesus and told him what they had done
and taught” (Mk 6:30)

Address structure

- A. **Introduction:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am interpreting the President's address as an opportunity to comment on highlights of the various reports of National and State ExcOs accompanied by some general remarks and reflections.
- B. **Highlights of CLC community activities in Australia:** See Nexco and State reports and further general observations and comments.
- C. **Reflections on the future:** Where we are poised at the moment, future directions that this Assembly might keep in mind in its deliberations and commissioning of the next Nexco.
- D. **Reflections on “being called” in CLC and encouragement to respond:** Our response to call, our challenge, our experience, our vocation.
- E. **Community reflection, discussion and questions:** A few moments to ponder, talk and ask any questions. (5 mins)
- F. **On behalf of all CLC members, “Expression of thanks” and concluding comment:** To Nexco, State ExcOs, EAs (and many other Jesuits), the Planning Group for the Gathering, and all CLC Members.

A. Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I am interpreting the President's address as comment on the highlights of the various reports of National and State ExcOs to the Assembly about our stewardship accompanied by some general remarks and reflections.

B. Highlights of CLC community activities in Australia

You will have seen the various Nexco subject reports in various areas and each of the State reports. In terms of meeting the commission of the last Assembly, I think CLC has gone a considerable way towards achieving this. I won't repeat what's in the various reports but note the following:

1. Formation

Much work has been done by the NFWP under the Chairpersonship of Kay Hooper and her team (Marlene Beck, Margaret Armstrong, Ian Cribb, Catherine Everett, Ruth Morgan and Brian Neary – thanks to them all). NFWG priorities were given to New Inquirers, Ongoing Formation of CLC members, Guides, and Induction to Executive Councils. Formation needs were surveyed and, a national program implemented, a resource package produced (on DSSE), a glossary of terms, a training of trainers style of program implemented, a CLC Handbook created. This national (ie all CLC states) exercise, with special focus on guides, is a significant contribution to building community, capability and commitment. There is so much more to be done and can be done based merely on implementing of what formation work has already been designed – the work is so good. At the request of Nexco, Victoria is considering taking this over responsibility now. Special thanks again are due to NSW and all involved.

I should also mention the special specific efforts in Formation made by all individual States that added to this effort.

It is through these efforts (facilitators and participants) that the community is enlivened and renewed (quote examples eg RCIA, service to disadvantaged people and personal renewal outreach programs).

2. Administration

During this term, Jenny Mansell-Black became more established as the Administration Manager. Reporting to Caroline Berger, Jenny, with help from Kay Hooper and Lynne Slocombe made a very substantial contribution to the integrity of our data base, administration processes, to collection of dues, managing distribution of World Office correspondence, distributing Newsletters, website maintenance, good communication and much more. It is now quite a professional operation and has significantly improved our financial position from what it might have been.

Significantly, the high quality of the data base now enables us to analysis it with more benefit. Along these lines and based on CLC demographics, Jenny has made some interesting and valuable observations and suggestions about membership, income and communication – suggestions to which we should all pay attention.

3. Apostolic (collective) works

Third area of Nexco commission from the last Assembly was the engagement in apostolic works. Some comments as follows:

1. At the personal level, almost all CLC people are involved in a significant aspect of mission outside their family, parish, profession. (quote CLC survey data, Aus and O/Seas)
2. CLC collaboration with the Jesuits is high – nearly 100 CLC members involved in a collaborative way in significant Jesuit activities (cf survey)
3. CLC, around the states, have a significant collective involvement in the MAGIS program

4. CLC is supporting engagement, at the UN level, on water and migration matters (Projects 127)
5. CLC involvement in Justice and Peace Network initiatives – something yet to be fully developed, involving advocacy work
6. CLC involvement, individually and in small groups, in local initiatives
7. In a general supporting sense, CLC has also been strong particularly through action in such areas as formation, Asia/Pacific connections, Leadership development and promotion of collaboration
8. Some states have their own special projects as well.

In apostolic works, we continue strongly at the individual level, have made some progress at the collective level but the area remains one for significant focus in the future. It is a special priority for the CLC World Assembly.

4. Communication: Annotations, ExCo Connections

Excellent work has been done here by Caroline Berger, Maureen Burton (especially on the minutes etc), Lynne Slocombe, Margaret Cody, Jenny Mansell-Black and an army of people who help with the production and distribution of Annotations and ExCo Connections. Thanks also to all the various contributors from the States and the special articles from Fr Pat O'Sullivan. Collectively, these efforts have done much to build community.

Suggestions have been made for new arrangements to keep these publications going and will be considered by the Assembly and new Nexco.

5. Financial Administration – the Treasurer's task

We owe considerable thanks to Janine Hellard (with some assistance from Jenny Mansell-Black) for managing the complex and tight financial circumstances in which CLC is moving. Fortunately, because of a bequest from one of our CLC members, Jim Mahoney, we have been able to fund special initiatives of one sort or another. But the challenge remains for us to improve the state of our general administration account funds which come solely from

members' subscription. Suggestions from Jenny, Janine and others will need to be examined and acted upon.

6. *Special Projects Trust Fund (and bequests)*

Once again, we thank Jim Mahoney for his generous donation. Through the Special Trust fund we have been able to fund many initiatives otherwise beyond our means. I gather CLC members' intentions in this matter are generous - I have had a number of calls from legal firms asking for suggested terms for a codicil to a will.

We might all consider such a possibility for ourselves and encourage others to do the same – all to fund formation and good works in times where the laity are increasingly needing to take up responsibilities once undertaken by priests and religious.

7. *CLC/SJ Collaboration*

Recently, there have been a number of discussions about CLC/SJ collaboration. Such collaboration is a priority that we have received directly from Nairobi and is also an independent priority of the Jesuits themselves. During these discussions, it emerged that there was not a great deal of reliable information about the extent of existing collaboration – particularly of the type where CLC members collaborate with Jesuits in their existing works.

To address this, a survey was undertaken in Australia recently from which it was interesting to note CLC involvement in nearly 100 Jesuit related activities with more than 25 different Jesuits. Also interesting was to note some areas where CLC is unexpectedly *not* involved. There is scope for further developments in these areas.

There are many other areas of collaboration, existing and potential to be explored.

8. Leadership course

About a year ago (Dec 06), a CLC IFE Leadership Course development exercise was held in Rome which I attended as representative of the Asia/Pacific region. The outcome of this exercise was the production of a 16 module CLC Leadership Program. This has now been reviewed with input from National and all State Excos and possibilities have been discussed for implementation. It is for discussion at this Assembly about how to proceed.

9. World CLC (Asia Pacific)

Two events were held in the last few years. The first was a Regional Asia/Pacific meeting in Manila based on the three pillars of CLC, ie Formation, community and mission. Out of this, Australia was asked to adopt a coordination role in Formation. This is being managed initially by myself with the possibility of Kay Hooper taking over in due course.

The other event was the CLC IFE Leadership course. At the invitation of the World Exco and on behalf of the Asia/Pacific region, I was asked to participate in a review of a CLC IFE Leadership Course for implementation in the Asia/Pacific region over the coming 3 years. Work is continuing on this project.

10. Magis 08

This program is associated with the World Youth day later this year. The Magis08 team sought CLC assistance in its implementation.

CLC has responded widely in all states taking on a variety of roles including managing some Experiments in at least three states. It is a significant contribution, funded by a \$10,000 allocation from the Special Projects Trust Fund.

11. *Glanmore*

Resolution of the issues surrounding Glanmore are about to be finalised. The property has now been sold and the matter of beneficiaries is being settled.

While CLC will not be a beneficiary in ways that may have been hoped for earlier, final outcomes are still not yet known. The Executor of the will has indicated that a public statement of outcome concerning discharge of the will is to be made by the end of February.

CLC remains in contact with the Executors of Jim Slattery's will on this matter and awaits the final outcome in due course.

Over the years, the Victorian Exco (especially through Janine Hellard) has played a significant role in not only maintaining the Glanmore estate but also assisting with investigation into the feasibility of various possibilities, in accordance with Jim's will, of how Glanmore might be used - "for the greater good" and to realise Jim's intentions.

We thank Vic Exco and many others who have been involved in this exercise over an extended period of time.

12. *CLC Tertian Retreats*

This collaborative work with the Jesuits began in 1994 involving Tertiaries visiting country areas to deliver Retreats in Daily Life – last year 177 retreatants were involved. These experiences are widely appreciated by both Tertiaries and retreatants. Recently, there have been some exciting developments involving extension of the program, via Marty Scroope and the Loyola Institute, into selected schools with a culture of Ignatian spirituality. In the latter case, follow up interest in CLC is growing - all thanks to Felicity Flynn's efforts in this program (and Kay Hooper prior to that).

13. United Nations and CLC

World CLC is represented at the United Nations. The chosen CLC focus is the commercialisation of water and forced migration. Trish Broderick is the Australian contact following a request in 2004 from the World ExCo for each country to have a main contact person. The role of the contact person is to disseminate information to local members and to provide stories, information and reports on these topics to the members involved in the UN working parties. Trish has mainly disseminated information through State ExCos and has sent a report of forced migration authored through the Edmund Rice Foundation. Given the ever increasing global impact on local realities, we can expect our work in this area to increase. Thanks to Trish Broderick for her work in this area.

14. Peace and Justice Network

Chris Gardner recently took over from Lynne Slocombe the coordination of this activity. It is in its early stages but is an important area for future CLC development. With Chris' enthusiasm and commitment to this important apostolic work, it is expected to continue to grow.

15. Constitutional reform

Trish Broderick, Nick Galante, Kay Hooper and Chris Hogan have all contributed to a completed Draft of the Constitution and related documents (ie Statutes and Protocols). However, we are yet to finalise some of the terms to be used to describe a number of areas such as CLC aims, objectives, membership and other matters. Following further work on these matters and on the legal integrity of the document, a proposition will be put to the new Nexco.

16. Temporary and Permanent Commitment

Ruth Morgan researched this area and reported regularly to NExCo regarding progress. Ruth asked members to pray and reflect on this topic in the following terms:

“Temporary and Permanent commitment could be a further sign of CLC’s growth, inspiration, providing another layer of leadership – feeds into what the community looks like, primarily oriented to Mission (not debating whether Australia has T and/or P commitment – it is a part of our General Norms)”

Although the topic has been discussed a number of times on Nexco, a clear way forward is yet to emerge. At the moment, Nexco records in its minutes something along the following lines: “CLC in Australia acknowledges ‘temporary commitment’ e.g. when new enquirers commit to participating in a pre-CLC stage e.g. 6 meetings. After new inquirers complete the initial 6 meetings, they can progress to ‘full commitment’ to the CLC way of life including formal membership”. This position is far from the full spirit and practice of “commitment” as expressed in CLC foundational documents and requires further discussion, adjustment and endorsement. The subject will arise for further reflection at the World Assembly.

17. State Exco reports

Each state was asked to report in the following terms: (1) Using DSSE; (2) Formation; (3) Leadership; (4) SJ/CLC Collaboration; (5) Apostolic initiatives; (6) Membership and Commitment; (7) Finances; (8) Other; and (9) Lessons learned – which all CLC states have now done.

Collectively, the reports reveal CLC to be a very active national organisation – an inspiring picture of CLC people living a CLC life and committed to its active expression in everyday life.

Some of the activities and works reported across the country include the following (discuss some examples):

“Giving and undertaking the Spiritual Exercises, SE workshops, RIDL, formation, spiritual direction, Arrupe program involvement, promoting DSSE, delivery of a variety of retreats, involvement with “Companions”, social justice initiatives, engagement in a large variety of apostolic initiatives (meals, clothing, disadvantaged, refugees, homeless, sick, aged etc), young people involvement eg through the MAGIS 08 program, faith enrichment, guide formation, Jesuit volunteers, missionary work, networking eg with Ignatian Spirituality Centres, Sevenhill involvement, education (teaching, formation), leadership, building communication, parish outreach (eg days of prayer), Paul Vaz retreats, marriage encounter, Jesuit missions, Aboriginal reconciliation, interfaith dialogue, membership drives and education to expand apostolic outreach, social justice initiatives, environment care, apostolic planning exercises, pursuit of active common mission, organising Tertian retreats and more”.

State Excos also reported lessons learned (discuss some examples):

“The importance of the Spiritual Exercises, central place of prayer, good administration and databases, sound planning, having National projects to draw people together and give CLC visibility, sequential formation, good communication, having priorities, aims and themes to unite people, networking with other organisations eg spirituality centres, involving younger members, value of collaboration, meeting the challenge of membership, improving CLC membership subscription responses, and prudent financial management.

Comment: CLC is actively engaged on many fronts, lessons are being learned, and scope for more renewal exists.

C. Reflections on the future

Reflecting on all the above growth and achievements of CLC, we ask where we are poised at the moment and to what or where are we being called now.

As a preliminary to such considerations, we could not do much better than to begin by considering some of the reflections in recent issues of Projects, our World Office Communication bulletin. Collectively, they deepen our sense of the Graced History of CLC, where we have come from, where we are, and to where we feel we are being called.

First we will look at a number of important themes coming from recent issues of projects, then look at a few practical suggestions for future possibilities.

From Projects No. 137, some significant points:

Theme: “CLC is one World Community – an apostolic body with a common mission”. It elaborates on such matters as

1. listening to our critics;
2. reminding us of our limitations (sinfulness) but also the promise of the ongoing baptism of the Holy Spirit;
3. explaining how each of us will experience call (our Vocation) in different ways, some more visible than others;
4. talking about the provocative and amazing qualities of the Holy Spirit, of talking in tongues, of the “Theology of conversation” and our special role as laity in this dialogue;
5. it mentions Peter’s question “What are we to do?” and the call to collaboration and discernment and a certain assertiveness, clarity and challenge to each other and to others;
6. it encourages us to give fully of ourselves – “I have no silver or gold, but what I do have I give you – in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, stand up and walk” (Act 3:6) – ie we give ourselves and of our faith;
7. it invites us to carefully consider the ways in which we put to use our time, knowledge, talents and material resources.

... all this in the cause of “CLC is one World Community – an apostolic body with a common mission”, in Christ’s mission, in the world.

[If time permits, include reference to any of the following quotations out of Projects No 136 and 135 – then go to P 13].

From Projects No. 136, some significant points:

1. Theme: The importance of “The three kinds of persons” in not only making, but maintaining fidelity to an election;
2. It talks about removing obstacles, disordered affections, or other situations which confuse us, or get us lost;
3. It talks about examining our own responses: are we tempted to postpone the election, or to accommodate it to our own interests, or do we welcome it fully for its own sake;
4. This issue of Projects then seeks our views, in terms of global CLC objectives, about how we, as a community in Australia, have lived out our election in CLC in an institutional way.

From Projects No. 135, some significant points:

1. Theme for next Assembly: “Journeying as an Apostolic Body – Our response to this grace from God”
2. This “Projects” begins with reference to the three pillars of CLC: Ignatian Spirituality, Community and Mission and traces CLC growth and movement since its inception in its current form forty years ago.
3. Traces CLC movements that include emphasis on “Ignatian Spirituality”, the communitarian dimension of our vocation, a “One world community”, to “Common Mission”, to being an apostolic body living Christ in culture, Christ in social reality, Christ in daily life (Itaici).
4. With Nairobi came the deepening of this identity as an apostolic body in our daily lives – DSSE means that individual service becomes a common mission. Priority was also given to Formation and Leadership.
5. The forthcoming Assembly is being described here as “a deepening of the election to be an apostolic body” – understanding more our strengths, opportunities, shortcomings and disordered affections,

listening more to the concerns of the community and world, and examining specific steps to keep us progressing as an apostolic body.

Similarly, we have thoughts from Projects No 134 (a global overview of CLC) and No 133 (Reflections over 40 years) – all very helpful in gaining a fuller perspective on the life of CLC.

Within the context of these deeper CLC movements, there are many ways we could respond concerning directions for the future. I'll mention a few matters that occur to me where I think we could make further progress:

- a. ***Extension of CLC presence into the wider Ignatian family in Australia:*** There are large numbers of people in Australia of like mind to whom CLC belongs, eg among those working throughout various Jesuit parishes, schools and other works (beyond our existing connections) and even with other religious orders of like (Ignatian) charism. I believe such awareness and movement by CLC will have implications not just for CLC membership but for its community character and outreach.
- b. ***Apostolic work:*** Collective apostolic work has begun – it's linked to CLC identity, image and maturation. As we know, personal commitment in CLC is very strong at individual level – see the extraordinary story in State Exco reports. In what ways can we extend this collectively? As the latest Projects No 137 reminds us, “contemplation is not a mere intellectual activity. It is about involving oneself in the scene [and] accepting its incitement towards apostolic action”. Through DSSE, personal service becomes communal. Can we do more collectively?
- c. ***Image, identity, young people and how others see us:*** Are we prepared to hear how others view us and act on that? Projects No 137 again: “Jesus sends us modern angels to provoke us: sceptical or at least suspicious children, co-workers that find us very far removed or too spiritual, youth who accuse us of looking excessively at

heaven, society that doesn't understand and asks us, "What are you doing there?" We would gain much by recognizing the type of angels, not demons, who question and challenge us. As faithful individuals, ecclesial community, or apostles we should not feel that we own the Gospel [nor, for that matter, CLC]". Let us be open to suggestions for change and imaginative in our response.

d. **Accountability:** I believe this is important, not in any controlling or demanding way, but in the softer, more effective way that ensures CLC hopes and directions are understood, shared and acted upon. The World Office is encouraging an enhanced sense of accountability through regional and national levels of CLC (see Projects No 136 and the State Exco Assembly reporting format from which it came). In the spirit of "The Apostles gathered around Jesus and told him what they had done and taught (Mk 6:30)", it (Wexco) asks us to examine what we have done and to report on this in certain terms. Might we not extend this more formally through our own structures to State ExcOs? We may benefit from a closer and more formalised relationship between Nexco and the State Exco Chairpersons. Nexco is foremost a discerning community – but it also has the executive functions of management and administration which include accountability.

e. **Other areas:** These might include

- *Guide Formation* – always needed;
- *Regional Engagement* - increasing but more to be done;
- *Financial Management* – enabling our work in a world where the laity is expected to shoulder a greater level of involvement which means money for formation (comment on investment in religious formation v lay formation) and good works;
- *Leadership* – as service and bringing forth the gifts of others;
- *Social justice* – direct apostolic engagement.

It is for this Assembly and the future Nexco to pray and discern these priorities and how they might be realised.

D. Reflections on “being called” in CLC and encouragement to respond

Before concluding, I would like make a few comments on being called in CLC and encourage people to continue to respond to such a call. The experience of call is surely as diverse in character as there are people (cf the Projects reference to the call of Matthias v Joseph). A call to a specific role in CLC life may be experienced through one’s personal prayer life or through invitation (or nomination) by another experienced CLC person. In both cases, such a call is normally mediated by a discernment process, both personal and communal, to establish the authenticity in Christ of such a call. The person being called may experience emotions ranging from self doubt about one’s worthiness, ability or availability through to joy at the prospect of deeper engagement in and service to CLC, the Church and Christ’s mission and the living out of one’s personal vocation in life.

I ask people to consider carefully and with a generous heart any such experience of call in CLC.

In doing so, we remind ourselves that:

- Firstly, none of us are essentially worthy of the task. But we all have received gifts and God works with us lovingly through people and circumstances, shaping us all with divine intention as we participate in Christ’s mission.
- At times, we might feel personally tested on a number of fronts. In this respect, our Charism talks of a “Baptism of Reality”. But with this also come hope, renewal and new life. A past CLC World President summarised all this with the concise remark that “Service is a Paschal experience”.
- On the journey, we are also rewarded with fulfilment in using our gifts, with satisfaction in seeing collective achievements, with the enjoyment

of the companionship of community life and with the wonder of God's ways in drawing us deeper into the mystery of our personal vocations.

- As we all know, God will not be outdone in generosity in all these matters.

This concluding quote from Projects No 137 (the latest issue) summarises many of these points as follows:

“We may sometimes experience the sense of power that comes from a God who calls us, from the human gifts granted us, from the community support we receive, from the maturity that we acquire throughout our lives. But we may also experience our modesty, frailty or confusion, which many times stops or derails us. In the Church, we ought to help each other purify these tensions, discard false modesty, be available to be chosen foremost as Matthias was, or to remain in another role as Joseph did. The Church is in need of individuals who are available, some more visible than others, but all apostles. Let us do our utmost for the Church so that it can be said of us: “Here we have men and women that have walked with us... that know Jesus... that are available”. We consider this with a “generous heart” and, in response to our personal call, offer ourselves as fully as we can to CLC, to the Church, to Christ and to the world.

Thank you.

E. Community reflection, discussion and questions

Allow a few moments to ponder, talk and ask any questions. Invite questions.

F. On behalf of all CLC members, “Expression of thanks” and concluding comment

On behalf of all CLC members:

- a. *For the Gathering and Assembly:* Thanks to the Planning Team, Nexco, State Exco Chairs, and Fr Pat O'Sullivan SJ and other CLC members, and especially the host Team, the Vic Exco;
- b. *To National and State ExcOs* – for their sustained commitment to CLC interests;
- c. To all CLC Members – for their support, response and involvement in CLC life
- d. To our Ecclesial Assistants – A special thanks to our very active Jesuit partners, Frs Bill Uren and Gerald Coleman, Bro Ian Cribb, Fr Pat O'Sullivan - and many other Jesuits in all states (Frs Michael Stoney and Brendan Kelly are also here at our Gathering and Assembly).

And finally, we reflect briefly on and give thanks for the gift of CLC, the privilege of belonging to CLC, of being a part of its presence in the Church and the World engaged in Christ's Mission.

We ask God for every grace for the outcome of this Assembly and for those who carry the agenda forward from here.

Thanks again.

Chris Hogan
(President)
CLC Australia

19th January 2008