



**Letter of communication between the Executive Council and the
world Christian Life Community**

World CLC ExCo Meeting, 2010

Dear Friends in Christ and CLC,

Greetings and peace to you all and also your families and communities! We write bringing you news following the latest meeting of the CLC World Executive Council. As last year, this one was held in the picturesque surroundings of the Monte Cucco Retreat House just out of central Rome from Thursday 4th to Sunday 14th February. Each day began with morning prayer and concluded with an evaluation of the day's proceedings and celebration of the Eucharist.

This meeting was mainly marked by three focuses: the transitions in our team, the evaluation of our work as a team during the first (full) year of our mandate and the development of a "vision" of our priorities for the coming three years. Looking back at these ten intensive days, we all experienced a deep gratitude and joy for the way how we could live and interact during our meeting. We are grateful for the fruits of the Spirit and the great support through your prayers, allowing us to discern and respond as one body to the needs we are perceiving in our communities and around us. Accordingly, we were able to look at even difficult challenges (as e.g. our financial situation) honestly but with a lot of hope and trust - in our Lord and in our community.

CLC Executive Council - Transition arrangements

The year saw considerable staffing changes in the CLC Secretariat. These moves, initiated at the last Exco meeting took place over the year as, in November, Franklin Ibañez (from Peru) and Sophia Montañez (from Colombia) replaced Guy and Marilyn Maginzi at the Secretariat. On 2nd February, Fr Luke Rodrigues SJ (from India) replaced Fr Alberto Brito SJ as our Vice-Ecclesial Assistant. Jean-Paul Biruru from the Democratic Republic of Congo joined the Exco to boost representation from French speaking Africa.

From November 1, 2009, Guy Maginzi agreed to serve our community as world coordinator for apostolic networking and advocacy for one year. He joined us on Exco for a few days only, as he represented CLC in the second world forum of Catholic-inspired NGOs, held in Rome between February 10 and 14.

We thank each of those people moving on for their special service to CLC and, to those arriving, for their generosity in accepting future appointments to the Exco/Secretariat.

The CLC global picture

As usual, we started our meeting with an overview from the various CLC regions. A few special highlights are as follows:

- ***Africa:*** Two leadership courses were conducted for each of the main African language groups, French and English. Reports on both courses will be communicated to national communities over the coming year.
- ***Asia/Pacific:*** Jeraldine Ching has been appointed as Regional Coordinator for the Asia/Pacific Region. During coming weeks the Asia/Pacific National Communities are deciding together on a date, location and agenda for a next Regional Assembly proposed for November 2010. We are grateful for new contacts with CLC Vietnam who are preparing for joining the CLC World Community.
- ***Europe:*** A Regional Assembly was held in May 2009, Alicante, Spain. We had a chance to meet the newly elected Euroteam that is planning a Euro Link meeting this year. Together, we hope to initiate leadership workshops in the different regions of Europe. On the basis of the recommendation of France (as a God-parenting community), Exco approved an application by Lithuania to become a full member of the CLC World Community.
- ***Middle East:*** Egypt has conducted a Leadership Course. Most of the material has now been translated into Arabic. Middle East communities continue to grow.
- ***North America:*** National Assemblies were held in 2009 in Guelph, Ontario and Washington DC, USA. Preparations are continuing for a CLC Congress in Quebec in 2010. Further leadership and Guides courses are planned for 2010.
- ***Latin America:*** The successful Magis program (Theology for the Laity) is about to commence its fourth intake (2011-2013). A virtual network of CLC national councils has been established to deal with Regional issues.

Before our meeting, we had sent a letter to national ExCos, asking for feedback on two topics: the situation of group guides with their crucial role for the growth of CLC, and on communal and individual apostolic initiatives. We are grateful for the responses received so far, and would like to strongly encourage those communities who didn't send us their feedback to do so as soon as possible. Your responses will still be of great help for us. The

responses received so far proved to be of great importance for our discussions on Guides and on Advocacy.

CLC as a Lay Apostolic Body

One of the core elements of our Fatima world assembly was definitely the confirmation both of God's call and of our desire to become a lay apostolic body. Our discussions continued around this challenging topic, to deepen its understanding – marking our identity – and to develop the necessary structures and processes so that we can act accordingly. We confirmed again the central place of the Spiritual Exercises, the importance of living the process of Discerning, Sending, Supporting and Evaluating and being bound together by our common commitment. We also discussed the importance of sharing Common Mission (ie the way we are involved with each other) and identification with Christ's universal mission and that of the Church. We recognize with a lot of joy that national communities are doing good things together, accompanying each other in both apostolic works and formation. This is an encouraging sign of CLC growth as a lay apostolic body and needs to be further encouraged and made more visible.

During our meeting, we considered the different dimensions of our being a lay apostolic body. We will continue to work on these aspects aiming at presenting a clearer exposition of "What is a Lay Apostolic Body" to the World Assembly in 2013.

Advocacy and Networking

Survey findings: Preliminary results of the survey undertaken by Guy Maginzi (Coordinator for CLC Advocacy) to ascertain CLC national community engagement in apostolic networking and advocacy and collaboration with the Society of Jesus reveal an encouraging commitment by CLC members to apostolic works in many ways, both individually and communally. The information gathered will help us to develop a kind of "mapping" of apostolic initiatives in order to encourage and support networking among those involved in similar issues. Additionally, we hope to concretize our possibilities for advocacy both at national and international level. Further responses are being sought from national communities and the matter will be the subject of further communication in the near future.

CLC UN working Groups: A particular area of focus for CLC remains the New York based UN working group on Water and the Rome based group (originally Geneva based) on Migration. Efforts are now being made to integrate the CLC advocacy work with these two working groups and the respective teams of the Ignatian Advocacy Network

on Ecology and Migration. We also hope to enhance the effectiveness and communication of these groups with the national community link persons.

World Social Forum

In October 2010 , there will be a special thematic World Social Forum on Migration in Quito, Ecuador. A group from Latin America, linking up with CLCers from other regions involved in migration, has started to prepare CLC participation and a possible specific input during the forum.

In January 2011, the next World Social Forum is to be held in Dakar, Senegal. The Forum is usually preceded by a number of pre-forums including one for Ignatian inspired organisations. If attendance is planned from your CLC community, please advise the Secretariat so as to better coordinate our CLC presence there.

Support for Haiti after the earthquake: Many CLC members are helping in different ways especially through Jesuit works initiated out of Canada and the Dominican Republic. We are studying ways to support projects for longer term assistance in the rehabilitation of Haiti.

Temporary and Permanent Commitment

While noting variable practices among CLC national communities, Exco shared the view of the Fatima Assembly that the time is right for a fuller appreciation of the relevance of CLC Commitment for our identity as lay apostolic body. Foundational documents and a number of papers and articles on the subject were reviewed and a series of questions carried us more deeply into the matter. Especially noted was the recent clearer articulation of the benefits of Temporary and Permanent Commitment. Commitment gives fuller expression to personal vocation, to strengthening CLC apostolic capability, to building CLC identity and visibility in the world and more.

Exco asked a small advisory group to design a process to enable the national communities and the world community to identify where it is at the present time and how it might move forward from this point.

Leadership

Although Leadership courses were running in many Regions, further work was needed especially in the European and the Asia/Pacific Region. Discussion continued about the

nature of the leadership course material with suggestions that some of the content needed stronger links to CLC Formation processes in the light of the document “The Process of Growth in CLC – Guidelines for Formation (Progressio Supplement No 64)”. The team continues to use feedback from those who have experienced the course to improve it.

It was resolved to review the material to ensure its wider appreciation and usability and to concentrate in the immediate future on the Asian/Pacific and European Regions.

CLC Guides

Recently, a survey of national communities was undertaken about CLC Group Guides. Responses have been slow to date but some noteworthy observations can be made. These relate, firstly, to the diversity of practices in relation to Group Guide roles, selection, formation and terminology. However, also noted in some countries was the very good quality of some Guide materials and the sound understanding and functioning of Guides. There was also a growing availability of lay guides, allowing CLC groups to function more independently of Jesuits if this was possible and/or needed.

In the light of the CLC publication “The Process of Growth in CLC – Guidelines for formation” (Progressio Supplement No 64), Exco proposed a series of actions. These include encouraging Regional networking for guides’ formation, exploring a possible International Formation Encounter with this specific focus, developing some simplified guidelines and engaging community in discussion through Projects and website display of essential material.

Finances

Within the ExCo, there is no doubt that sharing responsibility in mission expresses itself essentially in our co-responsibility for the financial situation of our community – at all levels!

Financial statements and budgets: Exco noted the financial situation of CLC at its global level – particularly its seriously accumulating deficit. Strategies to remedy this include clearly presenting our financial reality to the wider CLC community and discussing remedial action. Though difficult to deal with initially, it was a source of some consolation to arrive at an agreed strategy that would work, was fair and consistent with Fatima discussions. This will be the subject of further communications and we invite the World CLC community to join us, with resolve and hope, in this challenge. The financial

statements for 2009 and the budget for 2010 were approved. Respective details will be sent to national ExCos in the near future.

Guidelines for the Use of Funds: Apart from its operational budget for the ExCo and our world secretariat, we have some dedicated funds for special purposes including formation, NGO activities and apostolic initiatives (the latter was started only last year). The ExCo approved Guidelines (with some minor amendments) as a sound basis for the assessment of future projects and the approval of respective subsidies. The Guidelines were considered a sound application of the CLC principles of “common mission”, “co-responsibility” and the “Magis”.

Fundraising: It was agreed that CLC has not yet to tackle this issue in a systematic way and that a change of culture is needed. Linkages with apostolic works, building relationships between donors and beneficiaries, and understanding “giving” as “common mission” all need to be developed. Further research will be undertaken and wider discussion will take place culminating in a future issue of Projects on financial co-responsibility for mission.

CLC and the Poor

In keeping with the Fatima recommendation, our World CLC Day 2010 has focused on this issue. You are invited to send in your stories and experiences which will be posted on the CLC website. Later, these stories will be used as the basis for a future issue of a Progressio Supplement.

Communications

Exco considered many suggestions for improvements in our communication including a review of Progressio style, content, themes, delivery, editorial support, index of articles, recruitment of translators and the cost/benefits of virtualization. Website improvements such as quality of display, discussion forums, display of UN related material, and access to essential documents etc were also considered.

The website also lives essentially from the contributions of national communities. Please send your information and reports (ideally with an illustrating photograph) to the world secretariat. Please note that we cannot offer translation services for these news items. Thus, please provide your articles in at least one of our three official languages. Many thanks!

Secretariat - Volunteer plan

Arrangements are being made to provide opportunities for interested persons to work with the CLC Secretariat (Rome) on selected projects. Such opportunities will initially be by “virtual” internet based connection. If any person is able to assist with such tasks as editing or translating in any of the CLC official languages, please contact the Secretariat. In the near future, opportunities will also be provided for interested people to undertake project work in Rome on a cost sharing arrangement.

Visit to the Pontifical Council for the Laity

It is a good tradition that we meet with representatives of the Pontifical Council for the Laity when gathering in Rome. This year, we had the opportunity to meet with Cardinal Rylko, President of that Pontifical Council, giving us the opportunity to share about recent developments in CLC and to get first hand information about the Council’s ongoing reflection on the role of the laity in the world today. The Cardinal expressed the view that CLC and its charism were well placed to engage in Christ’s universal mission in the world. He emphasized that to announce Jesus Christ to the world is our primary role and in this context he mentioned the forthcoming Congress of the Pontifical Council in Seoul “Proclaiming Jesus Christ in Asia today”. CLC members from the Asia/Pacific Region will be attending this Congress.

Let us continue to pray and work together as we seek to live our personal vocations in and through our Common Mission in CLC.

United in prayers and service,

Daniela Frank
President

Chris Hogan
Consultor