



Christian Life Community

Coming events:

Guides training: 22nd May

Formation sub-committee:
TBA

Visit of Fr Koning our Ecclesial Assistant: 13-14th of August.

End of year gathering and dinner:
Saturday 6th of November.

The Christian Life Community



(CLC) in Australia held its national gathering last weekend at the Hermitage in Mittagong, just south of Sydney.

The national gathering occurs every four years, and involves CLC members from around Australia and New Zealand. This year's event drew together 75 adults, along with 15 young children, making it a family affair.

A special guest speaker at this year's event was 32-year-old Mauricio Lopez Oropeza from Ecuador. Mauricio was born in Mexico and educated by the Jesuits. He is married, and has been working in social, spiritual and education ministries for the Jesuits for 12 years. In 2008, he was elected a

member of the CLC World Executive Council.

CLC National President, Kay Hooper, said Mauricio had a number of interesting things to share about involving lay people in Ignatian Spirituality. He spoke about the leadership program for students he developed at the Jesuit University in Mexico City, as well as the formation program developed by CLC for the study of theology among lay people.

'Having Mauricio at the Gathering was a wonderful inspiration. His love of Ignatius, the Exercises, CLC and first and foremost of Jesus was tangible', said Hooper.

Hooper said the Gathering's main purpose was the review aspects of CLC identity, particularly the inspiration drawn from St Ignatius and the calls to witness through the CLC way of life in Australia and the world.

'The days were underpinned by the three interrelated meditations from the Spiritual Exercises - the Principle and Foundation, the Call of Christ and the Contemplation to Attain Love', said Hooper.

Activities were arranged for the children at the Gathering, while the adults participated in input sessions

and had time for prayer and sharing. Among the guests at the Gathering was Australian Provincial Fr Steve Curtin, who celebrated the Eucharist and attended the CLC Dinner in the evening.

'Everyone was touched by the way Fr Steve welcomed the children around the altar. His words at the homily - addressed to the children - spoke powerfully to all who were present', said Hooper.



Mauricio's email: extracts

My dearest beloved brothers and sisters in Australia,

It becomes really hard for me to be able to find words to express what I'm feeling right now ... I find it very hard to think about you and not have all these beautiful memories in my mind, but mostly in my heart that make me want to stop writing and just continue thanking God for HIS/HER love and the amazing gift that was given to me by meeting you all, by getting to know your lives, faces, stories, passions, but mostly your enormous love to God, life, and the great hope you bring and carry around for CLC, and to so many people through CLC.

That beautiful moment that is now a great memory, and a reality in my heart knowing that I carry you all in my life, in my hope for CLC, and the certainty that we've made visible a bonding as brothers and sisters who follow Jesus' steps.

When I remember a week ago when I was among you I understand why God pushed for us to do everything in our hands. I'm so grateful and I can only think on every person, every conversation, your loving presence, your love, the singing of Waltzing Matilda ... I carry that song in my heart and you can be sure somehow it's also become my non official anthem, as it is for yourselves ... but even a stronger one, because it's been chosen for what it means to our hearts, and that song means YOU ALL

I hope my presence was helpful for you, and mainly I expect that many questions were open and hopefully I could share my passion for CLC that wants to move and continue walking towards a better response to the needs of this world ... ours, our family's, and with a special look to the poorest, the different, and all those who call upon us to reach out for them every day, and being with each other as a community to respond to their urgent needs. There's so much light and life in your communities that I'm sure everything will go well, and will continue moving because you have so much to give, and you show the presence of our loving GOD MOTHER/FATHER in your persons, your eyes, and everything you are.

I could continue to tell you how much I admire you and expect from you, but I know life will give us the chance to continue walking together as this CLC family that knows no boundaries and opens and builds

bridges through our hearts, our common spirituality, and now through the memories that keep us together after the gift of meeting with each other.

May we continue sharing this flame of Ignatius and be sent by each other to go to other places where others won't go, where there is more need, and for the greater glory of **GOD. MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL AND CONTINUE TO LEAD OUR WAYS AND LIVES.**

Hugs and prayers,
Mau

What I got from the Gathering at Mittagong

What do I share about when I tell my friends and family about my attendance at the Gathering ? I talk about the wonderful and powerful presence of this 31 years old from Ecuador, Mauricio Lopez Oropeza, who is a member of International CLC in Rome, who has felt called to work with the poor in Mexico, bringing them Ignatian Spirituality. He is authentic, committed to building the kingdom wherever he is, smiles and laughs a lot and does not take himself too seriously. He is generous with his knowledge and resources and ready to help in any way he can. He talked about Ignatius' broken leg and his life full of failure; things did not happen his way . Every crisis is an opportunity to grow. Ignatius showed us the miracle of God working through us. What a gift to CLC Mauricio is ! He has brought us, so soon after French Marie-Emmanuelle's visit to Australia, a taste for international links.

Next were the testimonies on our relationship to Ignatius and the meaning of vocation : That of our own Helen Cantwell who said that she had discovered her pacifism in Ignatius the soldier, turned peacemaker. I was touched by how she saw Ignatius as a power for reform from within the Catholic church; That of our Chris Hogan who talked about his Quantum leap to a lifelong commitment to CLC at a turning point of life, that of retirement. "It is as if a switch was turned on, as if I entered a world of colour after one in black and white". That of Ron Mullock, an ex-politician who was moved to tears while thanking the Trinity for "loving him into being". That of Janine Hellard, a young woman full of fun and energy , who quoting from the prayer of Pedro Arrupe talked about her preoccupation, her love affair with God, which determined who she associated with, what she read and why she got out of bed for in the morning.

I talk about the sharing in small groups about how to attract young people to CLC. We had in fact many young couples with their children during the week end. They are a growing presence in NSW as some members have made it their special vocation to accompany them. One strong point is that we need to provide the youth with a service and a space to reflect on their lives, organising sometimes with their cooperation, workshops, seminars, fiesta nights (in Latin America!). Are we responding to what is happening in the world or are we keeping safely to what we know ? What a challenge that thought is!



And finally, the people. Some faces I remembered from my first gathering, 2 years ago and I went to them and re-introduced myself, thus starting deep friendships. We use the same language, have the same preoccupations, just different states. There was a lot of love during these 3 days in the beautiful surroundings of the Southern Highlands of NSW. The masses were very genuine and prayerful, yet, full of a sense of community, a national one. The Saturday night concert was a high point as well; Poems read, songs sung, skits, and dances. What a fun night that was ! Even the kids joined in. Overall, a memorable experience of community gathered in the name of Jesus and Ignatius of Loyola.

Jocelyne Randabel-Williamson

Guides training weekend at Middleton (February)



June Duffy and Rob Randabel-Williamson, 12 members of CLC South Australia, including Fr Noel Bradford, gathered at Middleton Beach in the Jesuit beach house. A wonderful setting with rolling waves and howling winds created a sense that God's presence was very near.

The weekend was aimed at connecting us to the CLC process of entering into relationship with God, each other and ourselves.

QUESTIONS POSED OVER THE WEEKEND INCLUDED.

- What we found helpful in our CLC meetings?
- What makes CLC different from a prayer group?
- What is our experience of building community?
- How am I feeling in my relationship with Jesus?
- What am I doing for the Lord?

TIPS FOR PRAYER

God desires to be in relationship with us. When we start our prayer pick a focus of faith and stay with it. Keep coming back to this focus, especially if your mind is wandering and distracted.

E.g. a focus might be "Lord help me to be more aware of you"

"Walking and waiting in the Lord's presence."

When we share our insights it nourishes our understanding of our relationship with God.

Our desire to deepen our connection with God will also nourish us. In your group when sharing your fortnight pick 2 things that have been moving for you in that time (where God has been present). May have been joyful or disturbing. This helps us to come out of the fortnight as people of faith.

A second round of sharing in the group is important. Principle of

Repetition - this takes us more deeply into our sharing and can help us to have clarity.

God finds us in the inner movements of how we feel. It is in these feelings that God is revealing something about ourselves.

GUIDES ROLE

Guide is different from leader/facilitator

Guides' role is to listen to deeper meaning behind what is said.

Role is to listen to how someone is affected. May need to ask - How did that touch you?

How did you feel?

What happens when you speak to the Lord?

Guide needs to help the group keep connected to the Ignatian process (silence, sharing on our experience of God's presence in daily life/ evaluation) This process brings together faith and daily living so that we become more aware of the Lord's presence in our lives. By becoming more aware, hopefully, we can better respond to His invitations to live God's love in service for others.

Guide needs to help keep the group connected to the wider scenes of CLC.

Over the formation weekend I personally was touched by the deep connections with people through silence, sharing of experiences and the informal conversations between people. There were many signs of 'life' and the spirit was always calling us to listen more deeply and open

ourselves to where we are being called to build the kingdom right here and now.

Judy Foster (McIntyre) "Stepping Stones" - Clare

Retreat

Sevenhill (April 16-18)



This year, in contrast to 2009, our CLC retreat was silent. It was led by Fr Noel Bradford, with individual direction available from Noel, Fr Justin King (recently appointed to Sevenhill) and Diedre Mc Inerney. The suggested theme was "God my Father loves me and cares for me." We prayed for the grace of deep confidence and trust in God's Fatherly care.

As we were a small group of only 9, we were all able to stay in the old Sevenhill school-house. In that historic and prayer soaked building amidst the tranquil beauty of the grounds and countryside basking in an Indian summer, prayer seemed only a breath away. From the beginning there was a sense of community among us which grew palpably stronger throughout the weekend, fostered by sharing Eucharist, our prayer and our silence. We met for community prayer each morning and evening when Noel would quietly drop some spot-on pearls of wisdom; always adding in his self-deprecating way that he was sure we knew all this. Judging by the warm and happy

atmosphere at Sunday lunch, everyone found it a most valuable weekend.

What I shall remember is the way the theme and scripture seemed tailored to my needs, the peace, the sense of a warm loving community and the seeming contradictions of the profound mysteries of love and spiritual growth. That love is both a gift and a choice and that for spiritual growth, we must do the work, but if anything is accomplished it is God who does it.

Louise Howell

Profile of a group

The Beachcombers

I am **Rhonda Seymour** and I have been in CLC since 1989. Maxine Hogan started us and so The Beachcombers was born. I then was in a Group called the Dreamers for six years. This Group folded and I am now back with the Beachcombers. I am committed to the Ignatian way of life and have found much growth and formation in following that path with CLC.

Joan. I have been in CLC for 14 or 15 years. It has been rewarding in many ways. I am a better LISTENER and the "Examen" is such a wonderful "TOOL" at the end of each day.

Jasmine. I have been in the CLC group since 1989 with Rhonda. We have gone on retreats as a group and as a group we have diverse gifts and are involved with different other groups. So it was decided as a united mission we as a group, would give \$2.50 each every meeting and then when it gets to \$50 we donate to various charities e.g. last year we gave 2 X \$50 to Nigerian Women's Issue appeal. I have found love and support in the group and feel energised, encouraged and challenged after meetings.

Ambrose. I joined group 8 years ago after doing a silent directed retreat at

Sevenhill. I am involved in the local Ecumenical group and I am involved in organising the Walk of Witness on Good Friday and this is attended by 600 people. I am also Secretary to the local school chaplains in the State Schools. I love sharing and reflecting on the scriptures and I value my time with the group.

Hilda I started with Maxine. I found it a great privilege to share the meaning of scripture with other members of group and through sharing I increased my confidence and understanding of God's love for me. At present I am a carer for my husband, who has Alzheimer's, and sadly I am unable to attend meetings. I feel that God's Spirit is guiding me.



(back) Rhonda Seymour, Jasmine Linke, Ambrose Linke
(front) Joan Still and Hilde Bulley.

Clustering

Emmaus and Beachcombers met on Wednesday 28th April for their **first cluster meeting**. The meeting had a wonderful and deep presence of the Spirit being with us. The sharing was open, deep and enriching as we learnt a bit about each other. All felt that it was a positive meeting with respect, gratitude and thanksgiving being key words that came up from the sharing. We look forward to meeting again later in the year.