



ANNOTATIONS

March 2025

AUSTRALIA



ASIA PACIFIC ASSEMBLY REPORT

The campus we stayed at was the National Olympic Student Centre. It was a hive of activity with young people coming and going with their suitcases, morning, noon and night. These were not only Japanese (in smart school uniforms) but also from overseas countries (including Africa). We had single rooms (mostly with ensuites) in multistorey buildings. The cafeteria was very large (hundreds of places) and airy. Buffet style we picked up our food and drink in a queue. The menu was the same for all meals (rice and salads) with the addition of one extra meat/fish dish for dinner.

While it was late winter in Japan the weather was kind to us in Tokyo. Elsewhere it was snowing; in the city we experienced blue skies and only cool temperatures (0-10). Some of the trees on the campus were without leaves, but other species were still green.

One night, when the whole Japanese CLC community was invited to meet us all, we travelled to St Ignatius church. Tables were set up in the hall with plenty of delicious food and drink. There each visiting group of delegates put on some kind of performance, mostly songs. We in the Australian delegation presented a dramatised Dreamtime story (with humour) which went over well.



In the same church, at the final mass, four of the Japanese CLC members took their temporary and final commitments before the Blessed Sacrament held up by the world vice EA, Jose de Pablo. It was a moving occasion with music provided by CLC musicians.

After the Assembly was over, almost everyone, including some non-delegate Japanese members, celebrated at a small Japanese restaurant (Izika) with good cheer and good beer!

Iain Radvan



The World Common Mission of CLC

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.



The CLC Asia-Pacific Assembly is held every five years in the wake of a world assembly. The theme of this year's Tokyo Assembly was Walking Together as Companions of Hope, with a goal of building a shared vision and collaboration for the next five year period. Our assembly journey began with two preparatory Zoom meetings. These virtual sessions allowed delegates to connect, reflect, and

consider what each national community would contribute to the assembly. Our delegation was Michael Walker (National President), Fr Iain Radvan SJ (EA), Teresa O'Brien (delegate). I was very grateful to NEXCO for the opportunity to attend this assembly.

Representatives from 11 national communities attended: Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Philippines, and two observing communities, Singapore and Macau. India and Sri Lanka, unfortunately, could not attend. Each community included its Jesuit Ecclesiastical Assistant, a National EXCO representative, and a delegate. Observing communities, like Singapore and Macau, do not nominate or elect members to the Asia Pacific team. Taiwan and Hong Kong act as godparenting communities to Macau and Singapore, respectively, highlighting the importance of collaboration in the region.

The assembly officially began on Thursday, 20th February, with an opening Mass led by Fr Iain Radvan SJ. Following this, each country shared its national symbol, with Australia presenting a loaf of bread to reflect the priorities identified during the 2024 National Assembly.

Friday was dedicated to small group spiritual conversations, exploring the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of each national community. The sharings revealed how one community's strength could be another's weakness, highlighting the richness of our diversity. A profound realization for us was that no matter the challenges faced, a flame of hope endures as we lean on the Lord and each other in those storms.

On Saturday, we participated in an empathy walk, starting in pairs and gradually expanding to groups of four and then eight. We shared meaningful discussions on priorities for the Asia Pacific region over the next five years. Together, we identified three key focus areas: youth, formation, and collaboration. The experience mirrored the journey from Emmaus, as we shared fears and aspirations in the presence of the humble Jesus, feeling our hearts burning, and sent forth on a mission.

Sunday began with a beautiful morning prayer: "Nothing is more practical than finding God and falling in love in an absolute and final way...". For me, it set the tone for the day, culminating in the election process. I felt a deep sense of finding God and falling in love with our community.

Six nominees were presented from nine participating communities, and five were elected as the Animating Team for 2025-2029: Agnes Shin (Korea), Clang Matute (Philippines), Teresa O'Brien (Australia), Valeria Santi (Indonesia), and Virginia Law (Hong Kong).

This assembly was an extraordinary experience of connection and collaboration. I also cherish the joy of communal meals with CLC members from the different national communities. I extend heartfelt gratitude to the previous Animating Team (2019-2025): Agnes Shin (Korea), Cosmas Tsao (Taiwan), Greg Tjaidjadi (Indonesia), James O'Brien (Australia), Jeraldine Ching (Philippines) and with Daphne Ho (World EXCO link), as well as to CLC Japan for their incredible efforts in hosting this assembly. I look forward to serving our beautiful community over the next few years.

Teresa O'Brien

The blessing of the CLC Asia-Pacific Animating Team By James O'Brien

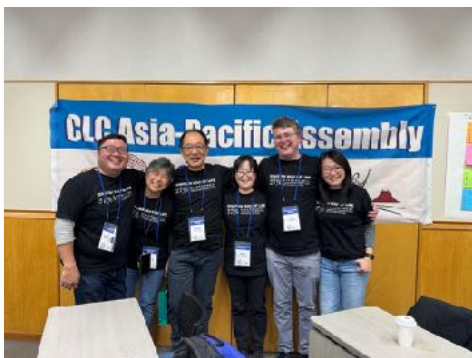


Belonging to the CLC Asia-Pacific Animating Team 2019-2025 was a profound experience of becoming a community, growing in friendship, and building family-like bonds.

The Animating Team, elected at the Korea Asia-Pacific Assembly in October 2019, started off with strong desires to build collaboration for CLC across Asia-Pacific. We received a vision of what was possible at the AP Assembly in Seoul, the meeting at which we were elected. At the time our current National President Michael Walker had been on the team since the 2015 Taiwan AP assembly, and he suggested to me during the days together in Seoul that I may consider nomination for the team. After brief deliberation and discernment, I accepted nomination. On being elected, we each received a beautiful lamp from the Korea national community as a sign of our commitment to the AP community. I later mused to myself that I was not committed to anything as long lasting as this five-year team!

In CLC we value the local community as the close-quartered relationships that most clearly commend the finding of God's presence in our lives. Our state communities and national community are wider dimensions where we grow, collaborate, and support each other in living out the CLC way of life. The Asia-Pacific Animating Team then is an important link between the 13 Asia-Pacific national communities and the World level. I note that Australia's own Chris Hogan served as the World EXCO Link for the animating team until 2018, and I thank Chris for being an insightful and supportive companion regarding my own involvement.

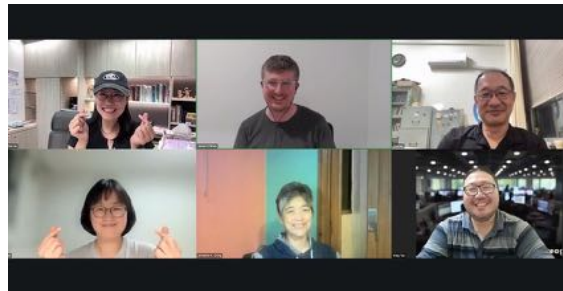
In Australia we may wonder why we need to be involved, being distant from other places and national expressions of CLC? Speaking personally, I have witnessed the promise of CLC Asia-Pacific community, and I commend Australia's involvement as building shared understanding across national communities, bringing formation opportunities for spiritual growth and leadership, and impacting local, state, and national levels in planting seeds of understanding CLC as a **worldwide** Ignatian, lay, apostolic community. We have much in common, and our differences enrich us.



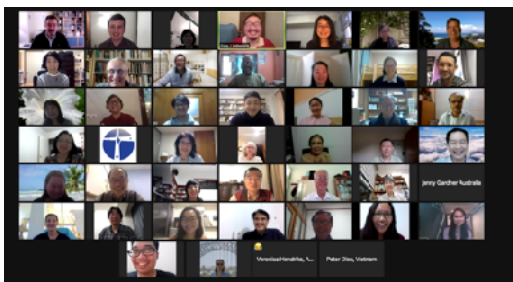
The five other members of the team - Agnes Shin from Korea, Cosmas Tsao from Taiwan, Daphne Ho from Hong Kong (World ExCo link), Greg Tjaidjadi from Indonesia, and Jeraldine Ching from Philippines - soon became like older brothers and sisters to me in the CLC journey. We walked together for five and a half years and a total of 51 online meetings. During our term we hosted several quarterly meetings over the course of the pandemic; we helped the World EXCO select members to represent our region on the Global Ecology Team and the World Youth Team; then in the last year we prepared the way for the next Asia-Pacific Assembly to take place in Tokyo, Japan early in February 2025.

All humanity was in shock at the start of the pandemic, but what to do to bring our community together to pray and strengthen bonds? Beginning with a first AP-Link meeting in April 2020 (AP Links being a link-

person from each national EXCO to Asia-Pacific), we built a program of quarterly meetings for AP Links, Presidents and EAs of CLC to get together and pray, reflect on their shared experience of the pandemic. Each animating team member was responsible for keeping in touch with AP Links for at least two national communities, and keep each National Council updated as to shared plans. In my practice, I shared regular contact with Jenny Gardner of Australia and Sarah Dench of New Zealand, two wonderful people to share the journey with, and for whom I give thanks to God.



The quarterly meetings were a gift. Soon we invited a wider circle of members to join the sessions, which meant that in some zoom meetings we held there were 60 or more members on the call from all the thirteen national communities in our region. One meeting I delivered an input on the Ignatian Year 2021 and the conversion of Saint Ignatius at Loyola. I was very moved when Cosmas translated the talk into Chinese for the benefit of members. Whatever the topic, each meeting allowed people to share and reflect in small breakout rooms on where God was during trying circumstances. Given there can at times be a "language barrier" between members, yet our working language is English, Greg did a great job in choosing suitable breakout room allocations for the various members.



Over the course of preparing those meetings, our Animating Team would meet beforehand: to prepare the letters to go out, the flow of the schedule, and the questions for reflection and sharing, along with the local times with reference to Hong Kong Time! Our team grew close. A highlight was the ten-minute debrief after a given quarterly meeting when we felt joy like young ones in a lolly shop feeling the satisfaction of achievement, and the consolation of working on the shared CLC mission.

As an aside, in late 2021, I was approached by the World Executive Council to join them as a co-opted member for the two years before Amiens (August 2023). Bringing this discernment to the Animating Team helped me take the decision. The animating team gave me the confidence to contribute at the world level and supported my discernment of how to manage serving multiple levels in the same season of my life.

The members of the Animating Team experienced personal joys, upheavals, achievements, and challenges over the course of our term. In our evaluation in a Tokyo restaurant, we all agreed that this team was another small CLC community for us, one that transcended national community boundaries and languages (while sharing in English) and was centred on being a gift for one another and the national communities we served. The team was a profound experience of CLC community and our call to be Ignatian "Friends in the Lord".



When we presented our report on the five and a half years, Agnes from Korea spoke very well on what we had done as a team. It was when each team member spoke that tears flowed. The assembly bore witness to the gift and blessing of our togetherness, the tender-hearted care for each other, and the way we had become brothers and sisters. I give thanks to God for showing me the beauty of CLC across Asia-Pacific. Renewed in hope, we had found true friendship grounded in love for each other and building the community up to be what God calls CLC to be in Asia-Pacific. The team has helped CLC in Asia-Pacific to be "living faith in the crowd" (the theme of the Korea assembly), supporting national communities to be learning, sharing, and exchanging ideas and experiences.

May God bless the new animating team, and initiatives brought forth by the Tokyo Assembly. May all CLC encourage each other in *Walking Together as Companions of Hope!*



Overcoming imposter syndrome

I grew up only ever knowing John Paul II to be the Pope.

Then one day, when I was a young adult, Benedict XVI was elected. There he

was on the balcony of St Peter's Basilica.

For a little while it was a disorienting sight. I remember my initial reaction was, "Why is Cardinal Ratzinger dressed up as the Pope?"

I have a similar experience every time there is an election that results in a change of government. The incoming Prime Minister, initially, always seems to me to lack the gravitas of the previous incumbent.

Humankind has spent a lot of time devising ways of making leaders stand apart from everyone else: inauguration ceremonies, elevated seating, distinctive clothing. In the field of religion, distinctive hats remain, curiously, a nearly universal marker of leader status.

Today, most of us experience a different understanding of leadership in our day to day lives. People work in teams where being leader or coordinator is simply one of many roles, one that anyone has the ability to perform. Just about everyone gets a chance to exercise leadership in some part of their life. It may be as simple as being a fire warden at your workplace or organising morning tea at your parish, but leadership is a quality that we all possess.

Where am I going with this story?

We have a shortage of guides in CLC Australia. I think part of the reason for this is that people have been in groups, sometimes for a very long time, where they have only ever known one particular person to be their guide. The thought of stepping up into that role is daunting. "Oh, I could never fill the shoes of so-and-so."

It's a self-fulfilling prophecy: the longer one person remains the guide, and others don't, the more

entrenched the disparity in knowledge and experience becomes.

However, formation for leadership is an essential part of *everyone's* journey in CLC. If all we've been doing is forming people to remain passengers, we've been doing something wrong. Most members should, after a few years' experience in CLC, be capable of leading a group and, I would hope, be willing to accept an invitation to lead a group if called upon. Conversely, longstanding guides should be given a chance to set the responsibility aside and become a "guide emeritus" if they so desire.

Many of our CLC wisdom figures have been guiding for a very long time and have earned a well-deserved break. Meanwhile, we have a constant influx of new enquirers who need to be guided. Who is going to step up? New leaders will need to be drawn from our existing membership.

Our EA, Fr Iain Radvan SJ has drawn up an exercise, "Discerning Our Personal Qualities", that I have circulated to current guides. It aims to help us identify leadership qualities in one another. I hope groups will set aside a meeting to undertake this exercise, if they haven't already.

Following on from that, we will be running an online presentation of the 'Keystones' materials for people who are ready to go deeper in their understanding of CLC. The program will be held one Saturday a month, starting on 5 April. It provides great formation for anyone who has been in CLC for at least a couple of years and is also an excellent orientation for someone who might be called on to be a guide or serve on an EXCO.

> The link to register is <https://events.humanitix.com/keystones-2025-1st-meeting>

Most CLC members are capable of stepping up to guide a group, they just don't realise it. I didn't think I had what it took in the beginning, I felt like an imposter. In fact, I *still* think I lack the depth and insight of the guide of my original group. That's only to be expected; she had been guiding for a long time. The only way you can ever get that kind of experience is to make a start.

Michael Walker, National President

Submission Dates for Annotations Material:

December	28 November
March	26 February
June	29 May
September	28 August

From the Editor

Please send your articles to:

Postal: Ann Hoare, CLC Editor, Rendu Towers, 1082/43 Evelyn Street, Newstead QLD 4006

Email: aho87668@bigpond.net.au

Articles (up to 350 or 650 words) to be in .doc or .docx format. Please provide photos and images in high resolution jpg format and separate from articles (not pasted into your document). Please provide captions for your photos.

The Australian Ignatian Trail Walk for CLC

The Australian Ignatian Trail follows the footsteps of the first Jesuits when they arrived in Adelaide and walked to Sevenhill in 1849. Starting from Gawler, this pilgrim way is 140 kms long and takes 7 days to walk through beautiful pasture land and vineyards of the Barossa and Clare Valleys.

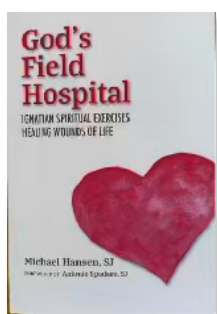
Iain Radvan, who has guided several groups along this trail, is offering to lead CLC members on this pilgrimage. Each day's routine includes prayer, periods of silence, and sharing. The eighth day is spent resting at the historic Sevenhill retreat centre. A certain level of fitness is required for c. 20 kms each day (one day of 32 kms). The cost would be around \$1800 excluding airfares. This would take place from 21st September to Oct 1st, 2025.



The closing date for Expressions of Interest is by Easter (Thursday 17th April)

Please email Iain if you are interested. inavdar@yahoo.com

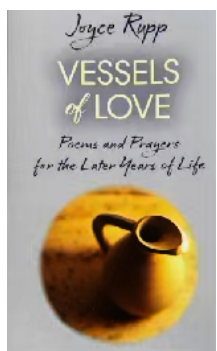
BOOK REVIEWS



God's Field Hospital offers treatment by the greatest physician of all - God the healer - for those hurt, wounded or ill, and all those who find themselves in the dark, nursing a cold heart, or holding on to a failing life. And, as with any field hospital, the church should be open on all sides, to all who feel excluded. The 60 Ignatian spiritual exercises in this book offer retreatants and directors an effective relationship with God, the healer.

Michael Hansen, SJ is a Jesuit of the Australian Province. He is the national director of the First Spiritual Exercises ministry (FSE) a retreat director, speaker, and spiritual formator.

Garratt Publishing, Mulgrave, Vic 2024.



"Have you ever thought of yourself as a 'vessel of love'? This image speaks to what I envision for the elderhood years...During this lifetime, whether we've been aware or not, a Presence of immeasurable love has been flowing through [our lives], quietly filling the vessel of our inner being. Like vats of matured wine, our ripened goodness as readied itself to move outward. Now is the efficacious time to tend 'our tiny vessel' so this graced goodness strengthens in us and benefits the life of those we encounter.

Joyce Rupp is well known for her work as a writer, international retreat leader, and conference speaker. She is the author of numerous bestselling books, including *Praying Our Goodbyes*, *Open the Door*, *Fragments of Your Ancient Name*. **Orbis Books, 2024**

The Trust fund for Special Projects in Christian Life Communities in Australia.

For those members new to CLC, I would like to introduce you to our Special Projects Trust Fund, which is for the use of CLC in Australia. This Trust has been set up from bequests and specific donations from CLC Members for the growth and development of CLC in Australia.

The specific purposes for which the “CLC Special Project Fund” was set up are as follows:

- (i) To assist all Christian Life Communities in Australia;
- (ii) To support the spiritual and apostolic activities of the Christian Life Community;
- (iii) To assist the volunteer service activities of the Christian Life Community;
- (iv) To assist individual communities and members of the Christian Life Community to participate in the apostolic, spiritual and service projects of the Christian Life Community.

We currently have three Trustees for the Trust fund and they are: Michael (Chris) Gardner, Mary McInerney and Ann Hoare, our Treasurer. The Trustees have responsibility for administering the fund through prudent investment and distribution of interest from these investments for the specific purposes for which the Fund was established. The Trustees hope to maximize the benefits and reach of the fund, ensuring that it serves its intended purpose effectively and sustainably. Directions on how to apply for money from the fund are found on the CLC Australia website. Applications can only be made by registered CLC members.

In this article I would like to expand our thinking on the use of the Fund. Over recent years it has been largely used for subsidising Regional retreats, sending selected members to World or Asia Pacific Assemblies and subsidizing our own Australian Assemblies and Gatherings. These are important, however, applications could also be made by groups or Regions for particular apostolic activities. The Trustees ask that groups be creative in their planning and be mindful that generally this is for the benefit of CLC as a whole and not just the individual.

One other area that the Trustees would like to see strengthened in the use of the Fund, is that the applicant who is responsible for the project fill in an “Acquittal and Feedback Form” which will be sent to the applicant when the project is approved by NEXCO on the recommendation of the Trustees.

As a community we are very grateful to have this fund. As Trustees of the Fund we feel obligated to the beneficiaries who donated to the fund to use it prudently to progress the priorities and work of CLC in Australia.

Michael (Chris) Gardner

On behalf of Trustees

KEYSTONES

The NSW-ACT EXCO will be hosting an online presentation of the ‘Keystones’ Series in 2025.

Developed in Australia by CLC members, Keystones is a great series for people who have been in CLC for a few years and want to deepen their understanding and participation.

Materials that will be used in the sessions are [available here](#) on the CLC website.

Sessions will be held once a month over Zoom, starting Saturday 5 April, 2.00 - 4.00 pm AEDT. Cutoff date for registration is Friday 28 March.

CLC SPECIAL PROJECT FUND ACQUITAL AND FEEDBACK

Please complete the following account of how the money that you received from the Special project Fund was spent and how it may have met the Objectives of the Fund:

- Name of Application and person requesting funding:

- Total amount requested: _____

- Total of this amount spent: _____

- Please detail what the money was spent on:

-

- Amount to be returned (if any): _____

- Please appraise how one, or more, objectives of the Special Projects Fund were met by your activity. E.G. how it contributed to the growth of CLC in Australia. _____

- Any problems with your application _____

- Suggestions re future applications:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please return to: Trustee Co-ordinator who will liaise with NEXCO.

NEWS FROM WEST AUSTRALIA



End of year and Christmas celebrations started early for CLCWA with a shared lunch on Sunday November 24. It was good to see some new faces as well as long standing CLCers in a relaxed and celebratory mood.

We farewelled Fr John Prendiville SJ in Perth on December 12 following his recent passing. Fr John was a long time, wonderful supporter of CLC and he will be sadly missed. Fr Quyen Vu SJ led 20 concelebrants along with three bishops at the Mass of Thanksgiving for Fr John's long life of commitment and service. R.I.P.

Many members of the WA CLC Community celebrated at a Christmas Mass with the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry on December 15. It was held at Holy Trinity Church in Embleton. Members were invited to stay for a shared lunch which encouraged more personal and meaningful connections. Our relationship is growing through friendship and especially with the Director, Donella Brown who shared her story and life experiences at our spring Retreat. Further dates for ACM Masses will be communicated as soon as possible to assist planning through the year.

The State EXCO met on January 14 for a planning day, which included reviewing the previous year's activities. The group felt encouraged that events for 2025 are already coming together.

The month of March is always a busy one for CLC.

First up we have Clean Up Australia on Sunday March 2 and very ably organised by Chris Gardner.

This year he has chosen 24 Garland St, VICTORIA PARK as the area where we can contribute to keeping our city and waterways free of litter.

It will run from 9.30-11.00am and you are free to join in all or part of that time. Everyone is welcome to help including family members or friends. A flyer has already been sent to our members especially a note about parking.

Our CLC Gathering this year will be on March 23 from 2.00 - 4.00pm at the Holy Rosary Parish Hall, Nedlands. Further details to come regarding the speaker and topic of this event. Afternoon tea will be served as part of this time to socialise and renew our CLC connection.

Helen Baronie



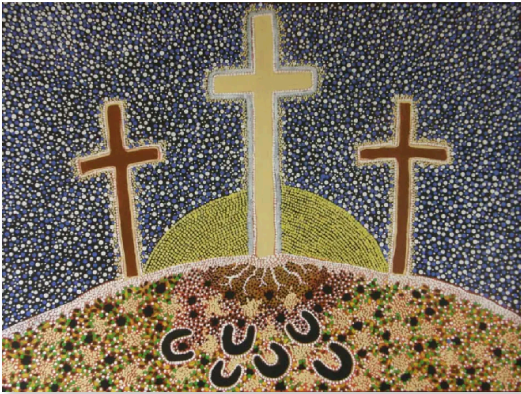
NEWS FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Our SA CLC family is weathering our hot, dry summer; most of us with hoses in hand, grateful to have water to apply. We are either enjoying or avoiding the hoopla of The Fringe Festival, Writers Week and the Adelaide Festival of Arts. The Soweto Gospel Choir performed with great energy and power, urging all of us to work for justice in our world. We ask your prayers for June Duffy, whom many of you know. She continues her valiant battle with breathing and mobility challenges. We also ask your prayers for our two preCLC groups, one in the Adelaide Hills and one 'inner west in the Underdale /Lockleys area'. They are on their path toward membership in our Christian Life Community. Pray for their discernment. We also pray for the success of two Lenten offerings by our members. Petranel Ferrao and Rob Jorissen are offering seven sessions of introduction to Ignatian Spirituality in the Christ the King Lockleys Parish. Judy Foster and Geraldine McAskill are offering two Ignatian prayer sessions on the Yorke Peninsula. We pray for them and all their participants; looking forward in hope for new CLC members. May your Autumn be a beautiful blessing.

Paris Huffman

Cultural Competency Course

'Painting of the Three Crosses'
- Yvonne Edwards



As we enter the season of Lent our minds and hearts inevitably turn to repentance and reconciliation. Reconciliation has taken on a robust meaning in our contemporary civic society in Australia. When we speak of Reconciliation in the public arena we think of our First Nations People and the hurts and injustices they have born since colonization.

Many of us are sad about the outcome of the Voice referendum, especially that it seemed such a landslide away from Reconciliation. As part of CLC we have as a priority working against injustice in our world and walking with the poor and the marginalized. In line with that priority NEXCO has subsidized a Cross-Cultural Competency Course which informs and enriches our understanding of the history, culture and spiritual beliefs of the traditional owners of this land. Last week I completed this course and I found it a very good introduction to Aboriginal perspectives and culture, especially through a Catholic lens. I learned a few surprising things and

best of all, there is a bountiful supply of valuable resources for further exploration. I encourage others to take advantage of this opportunity offered by NATSICC, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council.

Paris Huffman

This course is free for registered CLC members and as advised by NATSICC, it can be accessed on the website <https://natsicc.saltcompliance.com>. Your email address is your username and follow the links to create a password.

Vigil for the Earth Developments in South Australia



The wide arc within which the Climate/Ecology movement sweeps, requires each small group keen to be involved, deciding on a focus. The focus of ARRCC (Australian Religious Response to Climate Change) is the injustice of the fossil fuels industry. During the Season of creation, it planned to join with the World Ecology movement to ask the government to withdraw logistic and financial support for all fossil fuels industries. However, the World Ecology group decided to focus instead on the injustice in Africa of land being taken by a pipeline to transport oil, so ARRCC needed to adapt its action.

There has been a growing reflective and counter-cultural movement to use the power of silence on the streets to direct people towards an awareness of joy as an essential ingredient of health: personal, and planetary. To organise such gatherings can be a serious challenge because public gatherings have become enclosed so they can be controlled by entrance fees and private 'security' agencies.

It is essential, before the power of a large silent and reflective crowd can make it onto our streets, that government and its law-enforcement agencies be negotiated with and mass media outlets approached, so that there is a real possibility of the power of silence working.

Helen Cantwell

The final frontier: Youth

Since 2019 the Society of Jesus worldwide has held to a list of four Universal Apostolic Preferences. Three of them roughly align with our own CLC Australia preferences:

1. Showing the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment,
2. Collaborate with Gospel depth, for the protection and renewal of God's creation, and
3. Walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice

The fourth, however, did not come up when we discerned our national priorities, either in 2021 or in 2024:

4. Accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future

At the world level, CLC also rates Youth as a priority and has a global Youth team.

In February I was privileged to join the Australian delegation to CLC's Asia-Pacific regional assembly held in Tokyo. 'Youth' surfaced almost immediately as an area of focus at the Assembly, and it has ended up as the number one priority expressed in the Assembly's final document, followed by Formation as number two. It is also very striking, to me at least, that the new animating team that was elected are either young themselves and/or expressed a passion for this frontier.

There are currently very few young CLC members in Australia: only about three or four. It's not just us; the situation is similar in other countries. The community in South Korea is of a similar size to CLC Australia and it, too, has almost no young members. Participants from Hong Kong and Macau shared similar stories.

It needn't be so, however. CLC Japan, also a similar sized community, has had a resurgence in its youth membership due to the hard work of its EA Jun Nakai SJ and a young Guide, Chisono Yamamoto, in inviting young people into new groups. They shared about their experiences to the assembled delegates. Several youth strategies were canvassed, with the burden now falling to the animating team to carry this work forward.

Much hope has been placed in the new animating team that they will catalyse attention to Youth in our region. CLC Australia's own Teresa O'Brien was elected to the group so we will have a direct line into its emerging agenda. The members have a lot of energy and I expect some good initiatives will begin to emerge before long.



Our Hope-filled Path: Priority 3 'Walking with the Excluded'

Bairnsdale CLC Group used the **2025 NATSICC Australia Day Reflection and Discernment Guide** to help us focus on Priority 3 'Walking with the Excluded'. We began with Music 'Bapa' sung by Gurrumul, an Opening Prayer and Australian Canticle of Praise (inspired by Psalm 24) to centre our hearts and minds.

We then read the NATSICC 2025 Australia Day Statement to gain insight into the perspectives and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and explored the historical context and positive future possibilities of Australia Day.

Our reflection focused on Ephesians 2:14 **"For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility."** and the key messages in the Australia Day Statement using the following questions

- > *What does this day mean to me?*
- > *How might it feel for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples?*
- > *How can I approach it with compassion, understanding, and a spirit of togetherness?*

Following our reflection, sharing and considering what practical small steps we could take, we decided to have conversations with our family and friends about what it means to be Australian - ways in which we can take opportunities that embrace the diversity and richness of our heritage, and ways of acknowledging the journey towards reconciliation and unity. We also decided to work collaboratively with our Parish Liturgy Team to reintroduce the Parish Message Stick as part of our Sunday Gospel Procession and use the Parish Coolamon when appropriate i.e. carry baby Jesus in procession at the Family Christmas Vigil.

Chris Power, Bairnsdale

**An Australian Canticle of Praise
(Inspired by Psalm 24)**

This land is God's,
and all that is in it,
The red earth and rainforests
the oceans and mountains.
All that dwells on this island continent
belongs to God.
Loving God, you are the Creator of all that is
and we praise you
For creatures unique to this great south
land- fish and birds, animals, and plants,
flowers and trees in their diverse kinds,
For the ancient peoples of this land
who maintained its sacredness for centuries
For convicts and settlers who bore the
hardships of wrestling with a
harsh environment
For migrants down through the years
who have provided a diversity of culture
that enriches an already bounteous land.
For those who seek to enter our Country
in search of freedom, safety, and new hope.
For all of these, Creator God
we praise and thank you this day/week. "



NEWS FROM QUEENSLAND

After a week of waiting, preparing our homes to cope with Alfred's arrival, eerily calm, and empty streets bringing vivid reminders of COVID lockdowns, Alfred made landfall north of Brisbane with a mighty roar and left a trail of destruction behind him. Some of us were blessed to come out unscathed but others had their homes completely or partially destroyed and 400,000 homes were without power. Instead of a CLC meeting on the Sunday, Our Lady of the Way group gave thanks for our survival and prayed for those left to pick up the pieces.

Ann Hoare

