ANNOTATIONS

December 2025 AUSTRALIA

We prepare again for Jesus to be born among us.

Another year over and a new one just begun.

I was recently struck by a feature of our faith, that the coming of Jesus is not a distant historical event or a fact that we can integrate into our lives and move on from, it is always fresh, always bursting anew into our awareness. When Jesus comes to us again each Christmas, He finds us slightly different to the previous year, making the encounter a new one. How lucky we are to have the gift of CLC, where we can cultivate our awareness of the perpetual newness of Christ's coming.

I found a sense of CLC's own need to be perpetually reborn as a theme throughout this year.

During the year NEXCO and the Formation Working Group conducted extensive listening on formation needs and have devised a suite of initiatives. The first to be introduced will be Guide companions and regular nationwide online Guide's events. There will be more details in the next edition of Annotations. We will also very soon be able to announce CLC Australia's first in-person national gathering since Adelaide in 2019. Some long overdue catchups are on the horizon!

Finally, we have had the ongoing international project to revise the General Principles of CLC. Thank you to members who participated in the consultation session in August. It's not just us; all of CLC around the world is experiencing a shared sense of something new coming.

Like Mary and Joseph, we trust in God's plan for us and await the arrival of the always new Jesus into our own realities in 2026 and beyond.

I wish to thank the other members of the NEXCO for their wisdom and patience in this year, where some of us started off quite new to the role, as we have learned to work together as a group throughout the course of the year. I'd also like to thank the members of the EXCOs – those who completed their service this year and those continuing – for enlivening CLC's community and spiritual life in your local area. Thank you also to those serving on our working groups on Formation and Ecology for your service and dedication to CLC.

Wishing God's blessing on all CLC members and your families this Christmas.

Michael Walker, President of CLC in Australia

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.

Anglesea weekend, 2025 – Pilgrims of Hope

Susie Hii

Pope Francis officially declared the 2025 Jubilee Year under the theme "Pilgrims of Hope". Vic EXCO decided to choose “Pilgrims of Hope” as the theme for the CLC Anglesea weekend. It was a delight planning the weekend and receiving email after email from people wanting to register.

The highlights were Fr Andy Hamilton’s talk, Trish Collier’s talk, where she shared Fr Javier Meloni’s words on discernment, and Janine’s artwork session. (See Janine’s amazing poster of “Pilgrims of Hope” in the group photo and our attempts at artwork.) The key messages I received from Andy are, “be attentive to the beauty of nature (birds, flowers), our own body, God’s presence within, be attentive to one another. To be attentive is to be grateful. One of the outcomes of gratitude is hope. Hope is deeper than optimism – God is with us. Accept the messiness of life.” It was wonderful meeting new people and catching up with old friends. As someone said, it was like a family reunion.

Hope is more than optimism. It is not wishful thinking: I hoped the weather would be good during the Anglesea weekend. 8 November 2025 turned out to be the coldest November day in 80 years! And so, the lowlight was the weather. I thought an Anglesea weekend was incomplete without a walk to the beach. Susan, Bill, Christine and I took a pilgrimage there. We met cold, rain and wind on the way. Bill offered to get his car and drive us to the beach. The car provided warmth, refuge and relief. There is no need to suffer unnecessarily. The walk along the beach against the strong wind was memorable and impactful. We met Nicole and Jennifer.

At the end of the weekend, it was a joy to hear positive feedback and helpful to hear about things that can be improved. I imagined God was gazing at us with joy and delight. Did he send the inclement weather to test our hope? “If this is how you treat your friends, it is no wonder you have so few!” to quote St Teresa of Avila.

My symbol of hope is a small wooden cross with a picture of a bird in the middle and flowers at the top and sides – look at the birds in the sky and the flowers in the fields! It was a gift to me from CLC after a previous stint on Vic ExCo. Upon returning home, I couldn’t find it and felt disappointed. Have I left it at Anglecrest or misplaced it? I hoped it was the latter. A week later, I found it and rejoiced in that which was lost and now found.

Evaluation from the group

A lovely thoughtful program. The programme covering all aspects, physical (tai chi, walks), creativity (art workshop), spiritual and social connection through Saturday night games.

Fantastic talks. Fr Andy and Trish's food for thought.

Wonderful, thought-provoking weekend surrounded by Beauty and Nature.

Friendly faces. Felt so welcomed. Strong sense of community.

Susie's guided meditations were highlights. Really appreciated Susie's meditations – they settle, calm and centre everyone through interior awareness.

Being led in the reflections. Calmly and peacefully led.

Beautiful Mass, artwork and hymns we sang.

The flowers. Fun and laughter activities after dinner.

It exceeded my expectations and broadened my horizons. The hospitality was amazing.

What could be improved

The weather! More time. More silence. **4:00 pm check-in.**

Fr Andy's questions for reflection:

1. What does hope mean for you?
2. What things threaten your hope? What things strengthen it?
3. What experience have you had that was most like a pilgrimage?

Reflections on being Pilgrims of Hope

I have not reflected much on what it means to be a pilgrim of hope until it was chosen as the theme for the CLC Anglesea weekend and our Parish Reflection Day. That got me thinking. What does hope mean to me?

One of St Paul's most iconic phrases is "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13) Faith and hope are grounded in God's love. Love fuels our faith. Love and faith give us hope. These virtues, faith, hope and love, are inseparable like the Trinity. I recall a prayer I said as a child:

> O my God, I believe in you, make my faith strong.
>
> O my God, I hope in you, make me trust you always.
>
> O my God, I love you with my whole heart and soul, teach me to love you more and more.

I taught my two children to say this prayer when they were little. Tessa told me years later that she thought "make my faith strong" was "make my face strong."

Hope and trust go hand in hand. When considering which Scripture passage on hope I like most, it is the one on Trust in Divine Providence - look at the birds in the sky and the flowers in the fields - that speaks to me most about hope and trust in God. From Emily Dickinson, I learned that hope is like a bird that "sings the tune without the words."

Reflecting on the third part of the prayer on love, now my prayer is, "teach me how much you love me, and how to receive your love with open heart, so that I will have an endless supply to give to others."

I hear and read a lot about faith and love, but not so much on hope. I asked Google what Pope Francis's messages on hope are. Here are some of the core themes as I relate them to my life.

Hope is more than optimism. Hope is a gift from God, rooted in the certainty of God's promises. Christian hope is ultimately grounded in the resurrection of Christ, and the promise of eternal life. St Paul says, "If our hope in Christ has been for this life only, we are of all people the most pitiable." (1 Cor 15:19) Importantly, resurrection can occur in this earthly life, not only after death. There are mini-deaths and mini-resurrections to be experienced in this life before the final death and resurrection. Think of the times when you have risen from the ashes.

What songs or hymns speak of hope? "Whispering Hope" came to mind. When I listen to it now, it sounds depressing. I am surprised at how it resonated with me when I was younger; I must have been going through dark times.

Hope is what gets us through the rough patches of life. It provides the inner strength to sustain us through difficulties. It is the "light in the dark night" that allows us to see the "possible impossibilities." One day, another song came to mind. *Bridge over troubled water*."As I listened to it, memories came; when I was a teenager, my brother, Philip, used to sing it while playing his guitar. Hope is a bridge over troubled water.

The Servant Song reminds us that we are pilgrims on a journey, here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load. In *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace*, where there's despair in life, let me bring hope.

Some people go on pilgrimages while others cannot do it for physical, financial or other reasons. But we are all pilgrims heading towards a sacred place. I do not like travelling, but I like the interior pilgrimage, the paths of meditation/contemplation, creating a quiet space in the present instead of always wandering to the past and future, navigating the long and difficult journey from the head to the heart.

Christian hope is not passive, but an "active virtue" that inspires action. We live out Christian hope through actions, such as caring for the vulnerable, advocating for the oppressed, promoting peace and justice, caring for one another, and caring for the environment. Hope calls me to engage people in the inner pilgrimage to know ourselves better and to meet God dwelling in us, thereby enabling us to see God in every person we meet.

Hope is practised in daily life by looking for signs of good, even small ones. It is akin to practising gratitude in the Examen. Pilgrimage is a daily undertaking to meet God in every person we meet.

Pope Francis completed his pilgrimage this year. May he enjoy eternal life with God. The jubilee year, 2025, will soon be over, but we will continue to be pilgrims of hope until we reach the final, sacred destination.

SPECIAL OFFER!

Discount Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life

As a registered CLC member you are invited to experience the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, through zoom, for 35 weeks one-to-one with a Giver of the Exercises. These givers are students of the Arrupe program, a formation course that trains people to become spiritual directors in the Ignatian tradition. As they accompany you, they will be closely supervised by experts well experienced in giving and supervising the Exercises. As students they will ask for only half the rate of what it normally costs to receive the Exercises in Daily Life. This will negotiated with the retreatant - approximately $40 per session. You and your Giver may start as soon as is mutually convenient.

For enquiries, contact the Director of the Arrupe program, **Dr Michael Loughnane** (michael.loughnane@arrupe.org.au), or **Iain Radvan sj,** EA of CLC.

Victorian Treaty Becomes Law

Australia saw its first ever treaty with Aboriginal people signed and formalised as law on 13th November, 2025. It follows a decade of consultation and negotiation between the Victorian government and Indigenous leaders. The treaty has been applauded internationally by the United Nations. The absence of treaties in Australia has been an enduring reminder of the denial of First People's rights including to land, throughout Australia's colonial history. (ABC News)

It is a significant achievement to accept the invitation of the *Uluru Statement of the Heart* to embrace the calls of First Nations Peoples to look to a just future and way forward for healing and learning together. In Victoria we are proud of this historic Treaty! **Noreen Nicholson, CLC Australia Ecology Group**

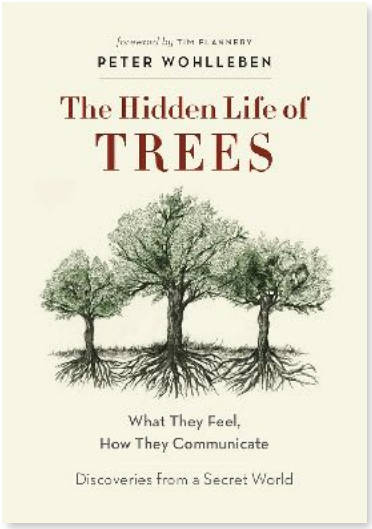
Looking for a family Christmas gift that hears the Cry of the Earth?

15 Trees is about supporting Australian revegetation projects. 15 Trees link individuals and companies to community groups who need support in the form of funding to purchase their trees (and guards) for their revegetation projects. They only plant in Australia, sourcing from local independent native nurseries, the trees are indigenous to the area in which they are planted, and in the interest of biodiversity, also plant native shrubs, grasses and ground-covers. It is located in Victoria at present.

After planting, the group documents the project by submitting to the sponsor photos, providing key details such as the site location, tree species planted, number of trees planted, and any observed or anticipated environmental and community benefits.

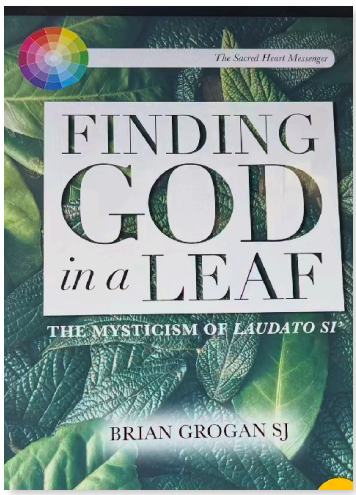
A blog link is shared with the sponsor who can follow the progress of the trees. Further information can be found at 15trees.com.au **CLC Australia Ecology Group**

BOOK REVIEW



Are trees social beings? In this international bestseller, forester and author Peter Wohlleben convincingly makes the case that, yes, the forest is a social network. He draws on groundbreaking scientific discoveries to describe how trees are like human families- tree parents live together with their children, communicate with them, support them as they grow, share nutrients with those who are sick or struggling, and even warn each other of impending dangers. Wohlleben also shares his deep love of woods and forests, explaining the amazing processes of life, death, and regeneration he has observed in his woodland.

After you have read The Hidden Life of Trees, a walk in the woods will never be the same again.



God, Pope Francis affirms, is present in nature, and he wants us to share that perspective, because he believes that it can generate in us a sense of wonder, awe, reverence and love for nature in all its aspects. This sense will make us strong enough to dedicate ourselves to the demanding task of caring for what he calls 'our common home.' When my home is under threat I will fight tooth and nail to protect it and those living in it, because I love it. Such commitment is needed today if our small and fragile planet is to be brought back to health.

Brian Grogan brings the background of Ignatian spirituality and a lived appreciation of God's creation to his book of meditations on Pope Francis' encyclical, Laudato Si. Rather than an exhaustive explanation of the encyclical, the book serves as a daily invitation to notice in ordinary creation the invitation of God to love and care for all God's creation. Read slowly each morning, it could give a focus for living the day in recognising God in all things, and the call go Go to be a c-creator of his beautiful world each day.

Ann Hoare

Submission Dates for Annotations Material:

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

From the Editor

Please send your articles to:

Postal: Ann Hoare, CLC Editor, 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.

NEWS FROM THE WEST

Spring Retreat 19 – 21 September

'Inspired, affirmed, encouraged, nourished and felt loved' were some of the words used to describe the experience of our annual Spring Retreat held at St John of God Retreat Centre, Shoalwater on 19 – 21 September. With a record number of attendees, 38, we feel encouraged that CLC WA is offering opportunities for spiritual formation and growth that are finding homes in people's hearts.

We were delighted to have Iain Radvan sj as director on the theme 'A Heart of Love'. Fr Iain helped us unpack and begin to understand *Dilexit Nos* from an Ignatian perspective, as well as making it very accessible and practical using the 'Love Languages' by Gary Chapman. A highlight for many was the personal 'Love Stories' that participants generously shared during the weekend. These were most touching, inspiring and poignant and in our small knit community helped us appreciate with gratitude the journeys of others. Personally, I felt closer and more connected to others in our community, as well as treasuring the power of love in all our lives. That is, the power of God in each of us.

Day of Reflection 22 September Bunbury

CLC EXCO co-ordinated with Carol Reid in Bunbury for a Day of Reflection led by Fr Iain. It was held at the St Boniface Anglican Cathedral Hall on the theme "Meeting Our Relationship with Earth: Wonder, Lament, Action." Twenty-five people were given a taste of Ignatian contemplative practice. This is the first, we hope, of many more opportunities for this growing community in regional WA.

Aboriginal Mass at St Mary's Cathedral, 19 October

"A beautiful Mass was celebrated tonight, preceded by a smoking ceremony. The welcome to Country was very powerful. It was heartwarming to see the Cathedral filled with so many people joining in. The singing and accompaniments with guitar, clapping sticks, and didgeridoo were a strong part of the Mass for me. Bishop Don Sproxton spoke well, referencing Pope Francis's autobiography." **Kerry Cirillo**

The End of Year Luncheon for CLCers and friends was held on Sunday, November 30 at Tassel's Bar and Bistro, 8 Tassel Place, Innaloo and was enjoyed by many friends, families, and members of our CLC WA community.

We wish you and your families the many blessings of the Christmas Season and the New Year.

Helen Baronie

NEWS FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA

2025 comes towards the end with many moments of gratitude. Our need for prayer for greater enlightenment and care in our world is ever present. May God continue to bless us and deepen our desire to grow in intimacy with our loving Creator.

Donkey Orchid - Wotton's Scrub

Seasons of Creation:

SA has welcomed a new CLC group to our fold, which is very exciting. This group, Trugarhad, organised the Seasons of Creation gathering at the end of September. Our SACLC region was invited to join a volunteer group called Friends of the Kenneth Stirling Reserve. These volunteers, some of whom are CLCers, regularly work in the beautiful Wotton's Scrub to help eradicate weeds that threaten the native vegetation. Specific knowledge about some of the plants on this historic site was shared as we went along. We enjoyed spotting various birds, orchids, native trees and grasses. Preserving these natural environments requires work. To have the opportunity to be with God in this place of natural beauty nurtured my soul but challenged me to continue to look for ways to protect and live lightly on this precious place called earth.

Following the gathering in the Wotton's Scrub, some of us reconvened at the hall next to St Matthew's Church in Bridgewater, where we enjoyed some lunch. This was followed by prayer, reflection and sharing.

It was a meaningful way to celebrate the Season of Creation and the 10th anniversary of Laudato Si'.

Judy Foster

Helen & Michaela Cantwell & National Parks supervisor

Reflections from the Seekers Group - many have been involved since the 1980s:

Gloria Sanderson: "I was immediately attracted to the process of CLC, especially to the quiet, attentive, non judgemental listening and the open, honest sharing. The hospitality of our meetings has been delightful. We have taken a long journey together. During that time we have farewelled four of our group who are deeply missed but are at peace with God."

Therese Casse: "CLC changed me as a person. I knew God better through meditating every day, which helped me become closer to God. As a child I was afraid of God, who I thought would be my punisher when I sin. God became my friend. I became more loving, compassionate and ready to help my neighbour."

Chris Walsh: "Although our past members remain close in spirit, the loss of their physical presence in such a close-knit group leaves an irreplaceable gap: we had given each other love and support, shared our lives and our faith journey over many years. We were all growing older – had the time come, we wondered, after such a long innings, to gracefully retire? But circles, no matter their size, can always expand and we have welcomed Judy, in her nineties, into the Seekers fold. We do not know how much longer we will journey together, but know that our times are in His hands."

A Brief Guide Tip for Annotations

The Evaluation/Review of the meeting is a very valuable component. As the Guide you may not always facilitate the meeting, but you can remind the facilitators of the helpful suggestions for appropriate evaluation questions that appear in our Australian CLC Handbook. You can also recommend Periodic Evaluation questions from the Handbook for members to reflect on before the meeting.

As the Guide, during the Evaluation, you may name common themes you observed in the sharing. This can highlight for members the action of the Holy Spirit working in and through the group, as well as in individuals.

Paris Huffman

NEWS FROM VICTORIA

At their recent CLC meeting, the Bairnsdale group shared a different version of an Examen. **Chris Power**

At the end of the day: A Mirror of Questions by John O'Donohue

What dreams did I create last night?

Where did my eyes linger today?

Where was I blind?

Where was I hurt without anyone noticing?

What did I learn today?

What did I read?

What new thoughts visited me?

What difference did I notice in those closest to me?

Who did I neglect?

Where did I neglect myself?

What did I begin today that might endure?

How were my conversations?

What did I do today for the poor and the excluded?

Did I remember the dead today?

Where could I have exposed myself to the risk of something different?

Where did I allow myself to receive love?

With whom today did I feel most myself?

What reached me today? How deep did it imprint?

Who saw me today?

What visitations had I from the past and from the future?

What did I avoid today?

From the evidence – why was I given this day?

John O'Donohue. *To Bless the Space Between us: A Book of Blessings,* Doubleday, 2008, p. 98.

In October, CLC members in Melbourne, Janine, Susie and Anne, enjoyed the opportunity to meet with a CLC member from the Philippines. Milla Santillan was in Melbourne for a private family visit and we also got to enjoy her CLC companionship. Milla also joined the Travellers CLC group for one of their regular CLC meetings.

Mila told us about an outreach program run by CLC in Manila. Manila has a high number of elderly single men who live in low standard accommodation (boarding houses) or on the streets. CLC was able to arrange group outings for some of these men.

Susie Hii

Korean CLC Concludes the Year with Gratitude

The mission of CLC is less about what we do and more about *who we are*, our presence as a reflection of Jesus himself. Rooted in Ignatian spirituality, CLC helps each member discern how they are called, through their deepest desires, to be Christ for others. As Jesus reminds us: *"Whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matthew 12:50)*

With this spirit, the Korean CLC members gathered for their final meeting of the year under the theme "Being Christ for Others."

On November 26, Yongsuk Kim, Sohyun Chung, Fr. Hyunjik Kim SJ, Younbin Park, Jihyo (Joanna) Kim and Sojeung Park (From left) met at Faber House in Parkville. Each member shared a heartfelt letter of gratitude to Jesus, reflecting on the blessings and quiet graces received throughout the year. The gathering concluded with a Mass of Thanksgiving, offering praise to the Lord who gently guides and accompanies our faith journey.

Together, we gave thanks for the grace that has sustained the Korean CLC for nearly seven years, for the joy of returning to in-person gatherings since July, and for the blessing of welcoming new members. We also celebrated the third anniversary of the Western Korean Catholic Community, an initiative prepared through prayer and discernment with CLC. In one spirit, we prayed for the grace to remain instruments of the Lord, serving others with love.

Looking ahead, the Korean CLC will continue meeting in person throughout the upcoming year, walking together with renewed hope and gratitude.

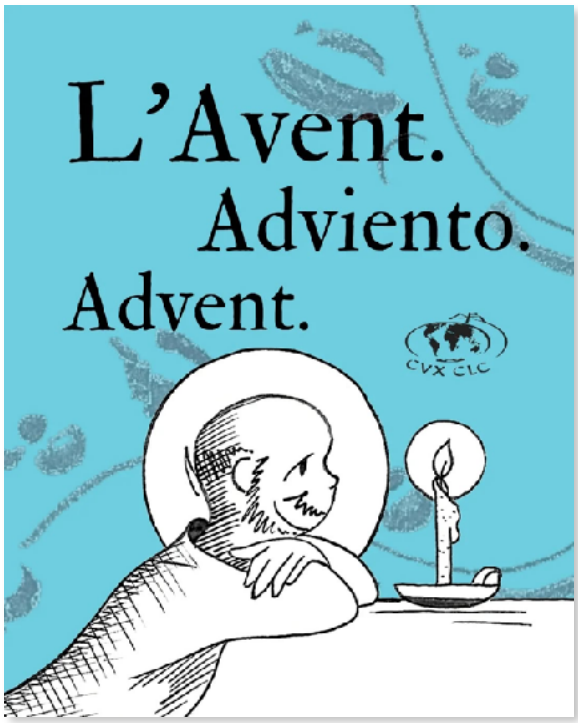
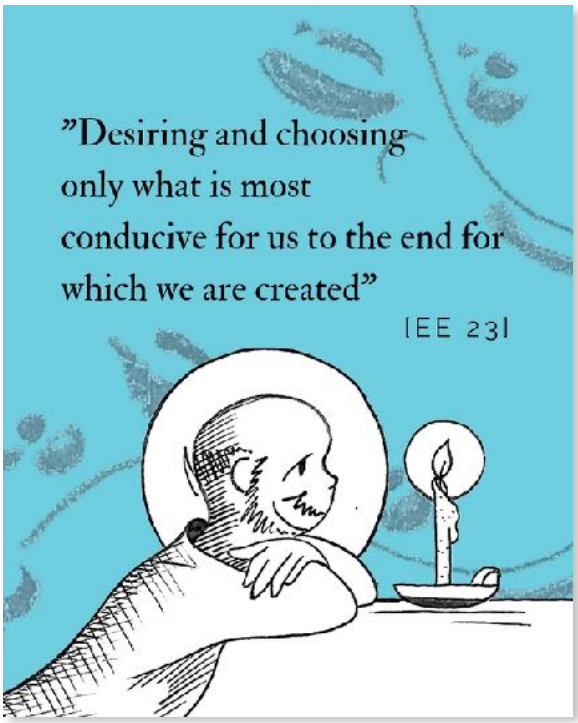
Korean CLC Group

NEWS FROM NEW SOUTH WALES

Sydney CLC members came together to celebrate the end of the year at St Francis Xavier Lavender Bay on 29 November, attending the Saturday Vigil mass followed by a shared dinner in the church hall. **Michael Walker**

NEWS FROM QUEENSLAND

In early September our President, Michael Walker travelled to Brisbane to meet with Queensland CLC. Our Lady of the Way and Canisius groups celebrated Eucharist with Michael at Holy Spirit Church followed by brunch at the appropriately named Chatterbox cafe. Following the success of this gathering, we will meet again for an end of year celebration on 14 December.

We were also blessed with Iain's Heart of Love retreat in November. This beautiful retreat was gratefully and lovingly received by 16 CLC members and friends. **Ann Hoare**

Advent Greetings from World CLC