

## *Updating the National CLC on the work of the General Council*

Dear Members of CLC Canada,

In my letter to you in the September edition of “Update”, the National Leadership Team was preparing to spend days together at the General Council’s annual meeting and I indicated that my intention was to “update” the National Community as to the content and process of GC’s face-to-face gathering.

While using Skype on Internet has provided an efficient and inexpensive way to gather the General Council throughout the year for their regular meetings, I affirm the importance and necessity of meeting face-to-face once a year. So, in September, your national leadership team met in Summerside, PE. The four GC Regional Reps—Leanne Salel, Calgary AB., Kwan-Sui Crowe, Thunder Bay Ont., Magee McGuire, Guelph Ont., Gerri Tingley, Saint John NB, along with incoming Atlantic Rep Jane Abernethy Parker, Enfield NS; our National EA, Fr. Trevor Scott SJ, Halifax NS; Interim Treasurer and Elder Gilles Michaud, Breadalbane PE; Secretary Pat Lawson, Nackawic NB, and myself met for 4 days hosted by the Sister of Notre Dame.

Gathering together each day in prayer, we were able to listen, dialogue and see and feel the passion each had as we discussed (sometimes with struggle) the issues facing the CLC National Body. To be able to chat over coffee, during meals and quick walks in the fresh air during breaks, and socializing as a ‘family’ group after long days and evenings of work, helped us to ‘know’ each other in a way not possible during the Skype meetings!

### **THE GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING**

The first evening of the GC meeting (Thursday), we began with looking at “what we have done” during the course of the past year (a recalling to mind) using the Power Cycle process.

The next full day and evening (Friday) was devoted to “what we are doing”, so we began moving through the agenda items that were current issues. We dealt with reports from the Regions, Communications, Finances, the Circle of Elders, the North American Region, the Common Mission Statement (CMS) Working Group, and listened to input from the National Ecclesiastical Assistant, the Treasurer, the Communications Coordinator, the Elder and the Regional Representatives. The late afternoon and evening was utilized in forming three separate working groups dealing with the 4 Frontiers, Communications, and updating the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

Saturday was a time to begin looking at “what we ought to do” and we formulated recommendations corresponding to the current agenda items discussed as well as for the future direction of CLC Canada. For instance, a final recommended wording for the Common Mission Statement was formulated, a proposal to explore a collaborative North American offer to host the 2018 World General Assembly was tabled, a Communication strategy was proposed and the need for National Formation strategy was presented.

Sunday was a day designated to decision-making in response to “what we ought to do” on issues tabled during the Friday and Saturday deliberations. Briefly, a few of these decisions are noted.

## **Decisions**

- Steps will be taken to develop a Communications Working Group to facilitate and guide the process of communication within the National Community. Changes to the web page were agreed upon and the Update publication will be reduced to four editions per year.
- A priority concern is the need to develop a National Formation strategy as access to formation and resources are not equally available in all Regions. A first step is to make formation manuals available, free of charge, on the CLC web page. Also, over the next year, the Leaders' Manual will be revised and work will continue with updating Manuals II and III.
- Input in the *Update* by the four Frontiers Working Groups (Youth, Family, Poverty and Globalization, Ecology) will help to inform CLC of the work undertaken by each of the Frontiers. The focus of this activity is aimed at facilitating the development of an informed and formed National Community in discerning possible future mission areas.
- The final wording of the CLC Canada Common Mission Statement was unanimously agreed upon and the process of informing the national body was initiated.
- The GC agreed to continue exploration of a possible collaborative effort by the North American Region (CLC Canada-Eng, CVX Canada-Fr., CLC USA, and CVX Mexico) to offer to host the 2018 World General Assembly.
- A 2015 budget was presented, discussed and approved. The hope of this budget is to end the year without a deficit but this will be very much dependent on the collaboration of each CLC member in Canada. A concerted effort will be made by Regional Representatives to encourage all members to faithfully pay yearly National Membership fees.

## **Access to information**

The General Council Representative in each Region will be available to give the Regional ExCo a full accounting of the GC's annual face-to-face proceedings.

## **FINAL NOTE**

The General Council's effectiveness is dependent on what is happening in the local CLC in each region. Conversely, each CLC must be cognizant of what is happening at the National level to be truly authentic, faithful and committed members of CLC Canada. As well, Regional Reps, as an integral part of General Council, must be appreciated and supported in their desire to grow a healthy and effective Regional CLC so that CLC Canada will continue to grow, transform and develop (united by the Spiritual Exercises) as an authentic discerning community for mission.

Most notable for all was the rather disappointing response to the call to be co-responsible for the financial needs of the National Body. For some years now, the GC has been most diligent in drafting very "thin" budgets that barely meet basic expenses, yet National contributions have consistently fallen short. Almost half of the National membership is not paying the yearly membership fee of \$70.00 (\$50.00 for National needs and \$20.00 for Regional needs) and CLC reserves are being depleted. We are very thankful for conscientious members who pay yearly fees and to members who liberally give extra to ensure costs are covered.

By weekend's end, those who gathered as distinct members of GC from diverse Regions, left as companions co-responsible in desiring to listen intently to the whisperings of the Spirit in and through the National body. Individuals arrived and through prayer, conversation, attentive listening and laughter, a leadership team formed national solidarity. Regardless of the identified areas of serious concern, there was a willingness to commit to working for a greater good...a well formed, Spirit-filled National Community firmly rooted in the Spiritual Exercises ready and available to embrace God's desire for wholeness and holiness. We, as a National CLC, strive to be effective in ongoing acts of love building God's Kingdom through Christian Life Communities.

All in unity with the Trinity,

Leah Michaud  
President, CLC Canada