

Dear CLC Sisters and Brothers,

As we continue our Easter Season journey, isn't it delightful that the evening stars are taking longer to appear and the pussy willows along the country roads are heralding the greening of the countryside? My inclination is to be outdoors digging in the soil but there is indoor work needing to be done so I am at the computer.

With the *Update* publishing only every quarter, there seems to be such a long space of time in-between with considerable General Council activity. I will take this opportunity to share some of the highlights of a few of these activities with you.

World CLC Day

By the time you read this, the March 25th CLC World Day will have come and gone. This specific day, the Feast of the Annunciation, was set aside so that the world community could take time to be united in mind and heart. The roots of this day run deep. It was on the Vigil of the Feast of the Annunciation at Montserrat Spain that Ignatius laid down his sword at the altar of Mary "Our Lady of Montserrat". Some years later, on March 25, 1563, John Leunis, a young Belgian Jesuit teacher, gathered a group of students and on the Feast of the Annunciation started the first Sodality of Our Lady (Marian Congregation) in the Annunciation Chapel in the Roman College. In 1968, on the Feast of the Annunciation, Pope Paul VI confirmed "The General Principles of CLC" and announced a new name: the Federation of Christian Life Communities.

In a unanimous decision at the 1982 World Assembly in Providence Rhode Island, the Federation of Christian Life Communities became Christian Life Community...one world Community. To support and grow this global relationship, the world ExCo communicates to the world body in four yearly *Projects* bulletins. This year the World CLC Day landed on Good Friday. It was good to hear how many CLC in Canada make the effort to choose an alternate day "to pause" and take time to celebrate our being "one" with our brothers and sisters in more than 60 countries around the world (be sure to read *Projects* 163 and take a 'breathing space').

General Council

In the past year, we have been meeting almost monthly through Skype to deal with some pressing issues. Most gratefully, we were blessed with meeting at the yearly face-to-face in September 2015. This was a time of grace and paved the way to deeper understanding and communicating this past year as we grew in forming a collaborative leadership team. Following are some of the issues and our progress to date.

Finances

In some small ways, we are breathing a little easier these days as our financial situation has stabilized somewhat. It might seem that we have considerable funds amounting to \$47,000 but

approximately \$29,000 are designated funds meaning that these are monies set aside and reserved for specific causes: funding for delegates to the World General Assembly, funding to assist Canadian delegates attending the National Assembly, the John English Fund that cannot be used until a yearly accrued interest of \$500 is reached. Plus, we must set aside over \$4,000 to pay for our World CLC Dues (the low dollar has had a big impact here).

Our Budget for 2016 was set at \$14,000 based on anticipated revenue from 200 CLC members. We had to reduce the EA and President's travel expenses by \$1,000. The good news: we were able to begin planning ahead by setting aside \$500 for National Formation. We look forward to an increase in membership embracing financial co-responsibility.

Treasurer

Gilles Michaud, the Elder on GC stepped in as Interim Treasurer for a year. His term ended January 1st. With still no candidate for Treasurer, he has agreed to take and make deposits (Membership Fees) and pay expenses (World Dues etc). He was not willing to continue tracking the flo-thru funds as this takes considerably more time to do. So, we continue waiting until such time as this position is filled by a generous member. In February, the GC sent out a letter explaining that the due date for the 2016 Membership Fees was April 1st and I am grateful to all those who have made an effort to respect this timeline. Hopefully, memories will be jogged for those "willing but forgetful".

Regional Representatives

The major activity (mission) in CLC takes place on the local and regional level. So it was decided that, at every Skype meeting this Spring, each regional representative in turn would present a very comprehensive report of their respective region. These "portraits of the regions" have been of such value to the GC that it was decided to publish the reports on the CLC Canada web-page so that the National Community can see the journeys of our CLC Family in Canada: the commitments, the activities, the struggles, the impacts, the hopes. Listening to individual regional graced histories helps us know and appreciate the fact that CLC continues to live the call to be a discerning community in mission.

Like-wise, each Representative, as coordinator of one of the Frontiers Working Groups (Family, Youth, Ecology, Poverty and Globalization), has been invited to give an update as to the progress thus far. The National Ecology Working Group has written two short articles for Update on the "Soil" and on "Forests" with an accompanying Prayer Exercise for each. The National Working Group on Poverty and Globalization is preparing a questionnaire for National circulation to help focus attention on the issue and as a means to ascertain where more information/formation is needed. This month the GC will hear from the Frontier on Family.

The time is approaching for both Central and Prairies Region to name new Representatives. As we look forward to working with the new Representatives, we wish to acknowledge Magee

McGuire and Kwan-Sui Crowe who have contributed a great deal to CLC Canada governance. It is consoling knowing they will be engaged at the regional level with a greater understanding of how the Regional parts fit in to make a whole National Body.

SOP

The Standing Operating Procedures (SOP) are developed to further explain how the different Articles in the Canadian CLC Constitution are understood and implemented. Since CLC Canada recently updated its Constitution, there is a need to also revise the SOP to reflect the changes in the Constitution. This has been a slow process, often sitting on the back burner in order to address more urgent needs. Happily, since the beginning of this year, GC has managed to update 11 SOP, approximately half of the SOP.

Refugees

The generosity of CLC members never ceases to amaze and surprise. Central Region is an example of the faithful ongoing fund-raising for the education and care of Haitian children living in the Dominican Republic. The response to the Syrian refugee is evident as Churches and groups collaborate to welcome refugees. In each of the 4 Region of CLC Canada, members are involved, in varying degrees, with this effort. Individual CLC members from across Canada have also donated time or money to the North American Continental Regional effort to finance a displaced CLC family to immigrate to Quebec, Canada.

Now, we have news of the recent earthquake in Japan and in Ecuador and a looming famine in Ethiopia. How do we respond to all the needs? Some years ago, the World CLC ExCo decided to establish a process at the Secretariat in Rome where donations from members around the world could be gathered and sent to the areas in crisis reflective of CLC being and acting as one world community.

Formation

The CLC Canada Leaders' Manual has been an under-utilized resource. With such a relatively small National Community, it is surprising that so many in leadership are unaware of the "treasures" available to assist leadership in their various roles and responsibilities. Perhaps we, the elder generation, have been somewhat negligent in passing on formation resources that were developed at a time when there were a number of vision-oriented leaders. The passing of time has warranted the revision of this specific Manual. Fortunately, two gifted members who understand the adult formation process and CLC way of life accepted the task of beginning the work. Although being two of the busiest people in the Atlantic Region CLC, Betty Poley and Pam Daigle willingly set aside time to virtually re-organize the Leadership Manual. A Working Group will complete the work over the next months. It is said that if you want a job done in an organization, ask the truly busiest and they will never let you down. Thank you Betty and Pam!

Communications

It has been a desire for the last few years to have a support system for the Communications Coordinator. The idea to develop a Communications Working Group began with the former GC. Thanks to the persistence of our current Coordinator, Gerri Tingley, we are delighted to have generous CLC members who have agreed to be members of this visioning and consultative body. Fr. Trevor Scott sj (National EA) will be the designated GC member on the Working Group with current Communications Coordinator Gerri Tingley (newly retired Update Editor and soon to be retiring Web-master). Liz Garrett (new Update Editor), Shaun Malone (Central) and Geri Albanese (Prairies) will round out the Working Group. The search is on to find a CLC member who would be willing to take over responsibility to be web-master.

Discern, Send, Support, Evaluate

This process, presented at the World General Assembly in Nairobi in 2003, was a new tool that was developed to help CLC to be more effective in the discernment of mission. Now widely used in CLC Canada, we have come to realize that the “evaluation” step is critical for the ongoing life of an apostolic community. In the DSSC Manual developed in CLC Spain, the Evaluation Stage (using the Power Cycle) begins with

1. a clear perception of the actual reality
2. expressing gratitude to God for the benefits received
3. a confirmation that what is being done is what was discerned
4. or a recognition of difficulties or unexpected outcomes that requires amendments or corrections

The Manual concludes, *“The evaluation has no sense if we don’t take care of the Ignatian pedagogy of being always in discernment, attentive to the events, processes, constant clamours of life that constantly question us, and make us aware of how limited we are, at the same time realizing the miracle of being sent by God, in following Jesus poor and humble”*.

Evaluation of the National Structure

In tune with this sense of ongoing discernment, in the Fall of 2016, GC will be asking CLC Canada to enter into a period of EVALUATION of how our current National Structure supports the CLC *“way of life and mission”* (GN 13 b). During this month of May, CLC members will receive a letter from GC further explaining the desire to engage members in a consultative process.

As this process of evaluating how we are is a new undertaking for us as a National Body, let us pray for wisdom, guidance and patience to be attentive to the voices within CLC as well as the voices of those with whom we collaborate and share the journey.

Finally, after this lengthy read, I pray that you continue to experience the joy of the multiplicity of God’s blessings as revealed in Creation during this season of emerging new life.