

Dear CLC Family,

From November 3rd - 6th, the CLC General Council gathered in Summerside PEI for their annual face-to-face meeting. Although held later than usual, harvest time was still ongoing in the surrounding countryside and served as a backdrop for us in our time of revisiting the past year's labour, addressing the current undertakings and looking and planning for the months to come.

We were encouraged by a beautiful song based on Lk 10, "The harvest is great but the labourers few..." which, at least for me, framed the call to service as a leadership group for CLC Canada. True, we might think of those who are "sent out" as laborers (the leadership) are the ones with much to give and those who are on the "receiving end" as those with much to receive. As the days unfolded, what became clear was that the "sending out" was as much about the GC seeing the work of God in the National Community as it was about us delivering anything to anyone.

As I listened to the new members on GC (Reps for the Central and Prairies Regions), I realized that, even those of us with a bit more experience, we are all *learners* on a Spirit led journey. So our being "sent out" is not as mini-saviours but as *seekers* of the goodness and generosity of God already present and active in CLC Canada and our role is to encourage the same good order or wholeness in all areas of our CLC way of life.

We began on Thursday evening mindful that two of our GC members had to join us via Video Conference (Zoom) as their family responsibilities necessitated their home presence. Accordingly, we adjusted our Agenda so as to accommodate both Leanne Salel and Pat Lawson as they intermittently attended to family needs. The process began with a time to catch-up on how we come to the GC, to sharing the fruit of our prayer based on the preparatory Grace and scripture and then a short orientation as to the overall role and responsibilities of the GC as well as what is expected from each of the members in whatever specific tasks they carry out.

For the next three days, all members of GC shared responsibility for facilitating the conversation, as well as next steps, on the usual long list of topics. I mention only a few here.

The North American Region (NAR), ably represented by CLC Canada NAR Working Group Mary Balfe and Gilles Michaud, has already reaped the benefit of forging a new way of proceeding on a continental basis - the first step was to deepen relationships among those involved. As a surprising result, all four Nationals (CLC USA, Can (Eng), Can (Fr), Mexico) joined forces to assist in supporting the immigration of a CLC Syrian refugee family to Quebec, Canada. Thank you to Mary and Gilles who have persistent in their committed to what has been a long history of a "work-in-progress".

Finances continue to be a concern although the numbers of those who take their CLC membership seriously have slowly been increasing with slightly more than half of the National body now paying Membership Fees. Although we had hoped that members would heed the Easter (April) payment deadline, the 2016 fees are still being collected (November) which continues to make it most difficult to plan future expenditures. Never-the-less, thank you to all CLC members who have chosen to share in being financially responsible, to the four Treasurers and to Gilles who continues to do the banking in the absence of a National Treasurer.

National Communications Working Group (NCWG) consists of Gerri Tingley (Atlantic and current web-manager), Shaun Malone (Central), Liz Garrett (Central and Update Editor), Geri Albanese (Prairies) and Trevor Scott, SJ (National EA). The way forward is becoming clearer and, although we will need both an Update Editor and a Web-page manager, there has been a recent positive report from Howard Engel (Rep for the Prairies Region) in connecting with professional assistance. In the meanwhile, all Regions are asked to be attentive to anyone (or two) who would like to offer their service in being involved in editing our national newsletter. For

now, we say thank you to the Communications WG for the past year of “breaking trail” in this national endeavor of bringing a more comprehensive structure to how we use the available communication systems.

National Formation has been an ongoing concern of past CLC Leadership and although attempts have been made to initiate a “National” process, we are still at a fledgling stage. The need for Group Guide Formation has been one area of expressed need particularly by the Rockies Region. Leanne Salel (Rep for the Rockies), with other Region members, have been proactive in planning an opportunity to address this formation gap. This month, Fr. Trevor, Leanne and I facilitated a two day introductory phase to Group Guiding in Vancouver where 14 members, representing the existing 4 CLC and 1 pre-CLC, gathered to “learn more”. Coincidentally, it was noted that this was, in effect, the first Regional meeting of active CLC in the Rockies Region. The hospitality, inquiries and enthusiasm reminded me of the early flourishing years of CLC in Eastern Canada. There are a number of tireless CLC members in the Rockies Region guiding this growth and I know Leanne, Fr. Charlie, Catherine Kelly and Pat Bremner are supported by a host of others in helping to facilitate access to the Spiritual Exercises and CLC formation to all who seek more.

National Structure Evaluation (NSE) is a title that sounds rather onerous yet it is in line with the recommendations of the World Body that CLC initiate processes of evaluation so as to always strive to live the *Magis*. Since the expansion of CLC across Canada, initiated more than a dozen years ago, some *signs of the times* have led us to search for the graces received in light of what we have done for Christ, what we are doing, and what we ought to do (the process of the 2008 World GA in Fatima). A NSE Working Group, Jane Abernethy-Parker (Atlantic), Ruth Chipman (Prairies), Leanne Salel (Rockies) and Fr. Trevor Scott, took on the responsibility of developing a process to gather input from all CLC members in Canada. In the discussion of the first WG draft, GC became increasingly more enthused with the possibilities presented to also gather the oral history of the Elders. It is hoped that the NSE WG will have the first phase in collecting input to all members ready for distribution by the first of December.

Leadership Search is being undertaken by the Circle of Elders (COE) to replace the Elder on GC as Gilles term is completed in 2017. As well, an invitation will shortly be sent to all CLC inviting nominations for the president(s) - elect whose term will also begin in September 2017. Besides these two discernments processes, we continue to invite a response to fill the role of National Treasurer as well as a new Update Editor(s). In this latter case, perhaps a CLC could take this on as is done in CLC USA. Think about it!

Space has only permitted me to highlight only a few topics discussed but the Representatives to the Regions are available to share all the details with you. Additionally, further information will be forthcoming to you as we look forward to 2017 and celebrating the 50th anniversary of the CLC General Principles, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and the 35th anniversary of CLC Canada’s reception into the World Community.

Next year will be an opportunity to take time to *remember and celebrate* our vocation as members of CLC worldwide! May we continue to journey in hope attentive to the desires of the Trinity for us.

Leah Michaud
President CLC Canada