



## CLC Prairie Region Fall 2011 Formation Project Discerning Mission-Social Analysis Skills and Practice

### Mission & CLC General Principle #8

As members of the pilgrim People of God, we have received from Christ the mission of being his witnesses before all people by our attitudes, words and actions, becoming identified with his mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, setting the downtrodden free and proclaiming the Lord's year of favor. Our life is essentially apostolic. The field of CLC mission knows no limits: it extends both to the Church and the World, in order to bring the gospel of salvation to all people and to serve individual persons and society by opening hearts to conversion and struggling to change oppressive structures.

### Jesus' Proclamation of the Reign of God

- **Brings freedom.** Liberates each individual from the inadequacies & inhibitions which shackle him/her & give him/her the courage to be free individuals. Freedom liberates a person from— internal compulsions that spring from deep seated needs and fears— external pressures that derive ultimately from an absence of love.
- **Fosters fellowship.** Empowers free individuals to exercise their concern for each other in genuine community. Born of an experience of unconditional love...freedom empowers and impels the free person to surrender his/her freedom in love, a “free slave” to enter into relationship with others.
- **Leads to justice.** Impels every community to adopt and struggle for the just societal structures without which genuine freedom and fellowship are impossible. Where there is genuine fellowship there will be justice. A follower of Jesus cannot be content with rescuing victims, structures or converting exploiters but the dehumanizing structures themselves must be challenged and changed.

“Love ought to show itself in deeds over and above words.”

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius

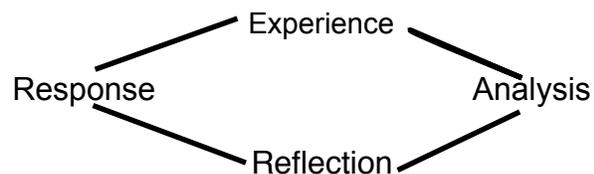
## Social Analysis-The Pastoral Circle/Power Cycle Methodology

Peter Henriot and Joe Holland (1980) published *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*. This little book has had great impact in many parts of the world. The book is centered on the Pastoral Circle, a widely used method in the church. There is a follow up book edited by Peter Henriot et al (2005) entitled; *The Pastoral Circle revisited; A critical Quest for Truth and Foundation*. Amongst the new additions include the incorporation of the Catholic Social teaching and Social Discernment in the pastoral circle. These texts may perhaps be a basic source from which we can draw skills for social analysis. CLC members all over the world have used it. The Pastoral circle was introduced prior to our 1st Regional Assembly in 2005. The latest version includes experiences and commentaries from all over the world.

Peter Henriot is a Jesuit who is currently the director of the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflections in Lusaka Zambia.

### THE PASTORAL CIRCLE/POWER CYCLE METHODOLOGY

Based on Holland and Henriot this is a circle/cycle representing four movements as follows;



1. **Experience is the Contact:** the moment of insertion, touching the reality through objective observations and subjective feelings.
  2. **Analysis:** The moment of asking questions of time, structures and values and their interconnection, in order to understand the deeper reality of the situation. This is also the cognitive, an intellectual exercise leading to understanding the reality.
  3. **Reflection:** The moment of discerning the meaning of the situation in view of our shared values, the norms of our community and the wisdom of our ancestors. This is the affective, the sense of touching the deepest of our values and strongly motivating our response.
  4. **Response:** The moment of planning concrete actions from the experience that is contacted analyzed and reflected upon. This is the effective, a sense of organizing our responses with planning, execution and evaluation
- NB:** A spiral rather than a closed circle leads to development since actions lead to a new reality, new experience.

In terms of your personal mission where are you in the power cycle?

## Social Analysis

Social analysis means that we evaluate social structures since all social situations are affected by them. Peter Henriot SJ et AL(2005) identifies the following structures;

1. **Economic Structures;** these affect the organization of resources e.g.; corporations, banks, tax policies, trade patterns, unions.
2. **Political Structures;** affects the organization of power e.g., parliament, police parties, constitutional guarantees of human rights, local councils.
3. **Social Structures:** affects organization of relationships e.g., families, racial patterns, tribes, villages, recreation clubs, schools.
4. **Gender Structures;** affects organization of male-female patterns and roles, e.g. division of labour, work, status, school opportunities, decision making, sexual expectations.
5. **Ecological Structures;** affects natural environment e.g.; weather patterns, sustainable agriculture, population distribution.
6. **Cultural Structures;** affects the organization of meaning e.g.; traditions, language, communication.
7. **Religious Structures;** affects the organization of transcendence e.g.; churches, sacraments and rituals, moral commandment.

Which structures impact your mission?

How is your mission impacting these structures?

*Charity responds to personal needs-helping the homeless,tending the wounded, feeding the hungry, but it does not address the reason why these needs are not being met by society. Social justice looks at the economic, political, social, cultural, religious and mythical systems that cause poverty, sexism, inequality, war, racism and environmental abuse.*

*Charity gives the hungry a fish, social justice teaches a person how to fish., seeking to improve the cultural systems that contribute to hunger.*

*Participating in and benefiting from unjust structures is analogous to one who does nothing to stop the abuse of a spouse.*

*Larry Gooley S.J. Guideposts*

## **SOCIAL DISCERNMENT AND THE PASTORAL CIRCLE/Power Cycle**

The basis of social discernment is in our Ignatian roots. God's action in history is discernable. This is done by carefully paying attention to one's feelings, causes of deepest movements, desires rooted in values and steps to action.

St. Ignatius invites us to "find God in all things". This orientation is at the heart of CLC, aptly expressed in the preamble of our General Principles, contemplation of the Incarnation and rooted in the Spiritual Exercises.

The pastoral circle is enriched when in our experience we consider the world with the same glance of the Trinity, seeing the world with the rich and the poor, black or white, living and dying, loving and killing, etc.

When we then get in touch with our feelings, we give rise to the engaged service to the community. This is discerning God's signs around us. "Discernment done with social foundation, a social purpose, and a social consequence becomes a way of sharing God's action in history."

## **Catholic Social Teaching**

Catholic social teaching can be summarized in Christ's teaching: "Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" Overall, its underlying principle is, that personal freedom and full human development can be achieved only in and through interpersonal relationships that build up healthy communities and societies.

Vatican II affirmed the Catholic Social Teaching : "The joy and hope the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well."

Catholic Social Teaching takes on an incarnation approach, starting with data of human experience hence the description of the experience; what is the lived experience? What is happening to the people? Are we listening to the people most affected? Can we do or share their experience? Do we need to undertake exposure/immersion?

Catholic Social Teaching includes analysis of issues and situations. We investigate reality in systematic and analytical ways. What are the causes of the issue /situation? What are the consequences? How are these elements linked? Who are the key actors? (agents of influence, decision makers etc.)

## Theological Reflection

Catholic Social Teaching is part of the applied moral theology. It draws on Scripture and Tradition. We reflect on the situation or issues in the light of the Gospels and Church's teaching such as;

- Are Gospel values being upheld or denied?
- How do the Scriptures speak to this issue or situation?
- How do the principles of Catholic Social Teaching speak to this issue or situation?
- What does the Church's teaching have to say about it?
- Can the experience of Christian community through time help us to discern this situation or issue?
- Catholic Social teaching is not just theoretical; it calls us to act for justice and peace. In planning action we draw on reason, human knowledge and tradition.

## Using This Resource

As Individuals

Questions for reflection:

1. What lived experiences in your life story have led to a call from God to use them in building the reign of God ?
2. How has your local CLC supported and sent you, and helped you evaluate your call to your particular mission?

As Community

Fr General Nicholas' in his Fatima presentation "Prophetic Lay Community" claimed that 'CLC community is not just for mission: it is itself mission'. In what ways do we experience our CLC way of life as mission?

Since the Regional Assembly where are we experiencing the energy and possibilities to build the vision of God's Kingdom reflected in Prairie Region's Assembly statement? Which aspect of social analysis; pastoral/ power cycle, Catholic Social Teaching, theological reflection is particularly helpful in supporting your mission?