



CLC Canada

Celebrating St. Ignatius of Loyola



From *In All Things: A Jesuit Journal of the Social Apostolate* – www.inallthings.org. Excerpts reprinted with permission.

Insights into Ignatian Mission - Does This Help People?

The directness and simplicity of this question is far removed from a fundamentalism that offers easy answers to complex realities.

In the Ignatian apostolic scheme of formation, there are two other principles that guide the response to that question. These principles are discernment and adaptation

Discernment

Discernment is the process of choosing from among many possible goods the specific good that God wants me to choose here and now. For example, in a world that desperately needs all kinds of help, what now is the most effective, most enduring, most universal, most appropriate Gospel service that we can offer? Is it to found a school? To renew parish life? To focus resources on meeting urban poverty, violence and hopelessness by establishing a network of neighborhood centers?

Apostolic discernment presumes the generosity and the capability of helping people and then asks the crucial question: "How will you help these people here and now?" Such discernment, precisely because it is focused on the Gospel for inspiration, has to be prayerful, courageous and truly integral, i.e., a concern for the good of the other and not a political ploy or a delaying tactic to protect comfortable life styles.

As an Ignatian Lay community, Christian Life Community is delighted to join with the Ignatian family, the Society of Jesus and the Church in celebrating the Feast Day of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

At our recent National Assembly in Guelph, we gathered to discern ways to move CLC Canada forward; *in particular, to promote and encourage mission, an integral part of our CLC charism.*

Rev. Howard Gray SJ explores the elements of Ignatian Mission in an article originally featured in the journal *In All Things*. Excerpts are reprinted here to encourage awareness, discussion and discernment.

Adaptation

Adaptation is the ability to fit the discerned good to the specific cultural, social and psychological realities of a person, a group or an institution. The Ignatian principle of adaptation answers a third question: "What is the best way to fit this good to the concrete realities of this situation, to the particular history and personality of this man or woman, to the needs and opportunities of this institution?"

For the early Jesuits, adaptation was essential in all their ministries.

For example, in giving The Spiritual Exercises, one asks which form of prayer will most help this person to find God? In working with little children, how can this Gospel be made intelligible and attractive? In a
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EXCO & GENERAL COUNCIL UPDATE

June 30 ExCo Skype Call

Ruth Chipman, Marilynn Heaton, Charles Pottie sj

Call Summary

- Assembly Follow-up
- National Newsletter
- Manual I - final editing & printing
- USA Assembly Support
- Fall Face to Face General Council Meeting
- Feast of St. Ignatius
- Revenue Canada Meeting
- National Web Site
- SOP 013 Review
- Communication
- Team Building Challenge (see last column this article for an excerpt from *Community, The Structure of Belonging*)

Highlights

Our CLC 2009 budget included a Fall face to face meeting in Winnipeg. General Council spent several weeks discerning the pros & cons of a face to face meeting. Mindful of our limited resources building on the graces & energy of our time together in Guelph as well as integrating the Rockies Region Representative was voiced as a national priority.

ExCo had hoped to include a youth representative as well as 2 Regional Representatives Elect in the Fall General Council meeting. We hope to have the needed financial support for this next year.

General Council Meeting

**October 2-4, 2009
Winnipeg, Manitoba**

Peter Block writes, The shift is to believe that the task of leadership is to provide context and produce engagement, to tend to our social fabric. It is to see the leader as one whose function is to engage groups of people in a way that creates accountability and commitment. In this way of thinking we hold leadership to three tasks;

- Create a context that nurtures an alternative future, one based on gifts, generosity, accountability and commitment.

- Initiate and convene conversations that shift people's experience, which occurs through the way people are brought together and the nature of the questions used to engage them.

- Listen and pay attention.

non-western country rich in its own culture and profoundly committed to its own philosophy and religion, how do you translate the Gospel so that it can enhance and not violate that culture?

Adaptation was the style of these early Jesuits, what they called “our way of proceeding.” It meant building bridges between the Gospel and contemporary seekers.

These three apostolic principles— to help people in a discerning and adapting way to come to the life and truth of the Gospel – structured Jesuit ministry from the outset. These three principles similarly structured Jesuit formation, the way young men became incorporated into the life and work of the Society of Jesus.

Ignatian formation today asks these same questions of those laymen and women who want to be part of Jesuit apostolic work or who invite Jesuits to participate in their apostolic formation.

Evaluation

Clearly, antecedent to any program of formation, there must be some kind of scrutiny or evaluation of those who want to enter into an Ignatian apostolic mission. Does this man or woman have a desire to help people? From where does this desire come? Does this individual show the kind of sound judgment and flexibility of spirit that are a prerequisite for discernment and apostolic adaptation.

In any serious apostolic formation program, screening and assessment are important. Here, the Ignatian criteria for making the Spiritual Exercises and the dispositions necessary for Ignatian apostolic mission coalesce. As in the Exercises, so, too, in apostolic service, one looks for generosity, religious maturity, self-reflection and self-knowledge, a faithful heart, psychological balance and a desire to serve the priorities embedded in the Gospel.

Clearly, simply being employed in a work sponsored by Jesuits is not enough. We are talking about those who want to become more directly involved in deepening the religious foundations of a Jesuit social ministry. These are the kinds of people who can profit from Ignatian formation, because they possess both the call and the grace to answer that call.

Apostolic Formation

Formation is not a term universally understood in the same way. Ignatian formation is closely associated with integration, or bringing together in a harmonious way. It is a process that takes time, patience and mentoring.

The Spiritual Exercises should be an integrating process, as men and women look at how they have incorporated God’s hopes for them into their lives.

Throughout the four Gospel portraits of Jesus, we meet someone conscious of his call as a summons from his father. The father’s call guides Jesus’ choices: what to teach, how to heal, when to comfort and when to confront, with whom to share his mission as his disciples.

In The Spiritual Exercises, Christ is central as the integrated, fully formed way to God. The work of the Exercises is to learn him, to love him and to serve him.

These Ignatian guidelines constitute the imitation of Christ: to accept his truth, to accept his friendship and to accept his mission. Ignatius presents a developmental process, a formation that brings heart and head and soul together in relationship to Christian discipleship. He called the personal acceptance of this discipleship an election. It means integrating one’s life with Christ. It does not replace other loves — for family, for friends, for life — but it does reorient them into a relationship of even deeper loyalty and care. Everything I genuinely love is more deeply loved by Christ.

Ignatian formation is radically spiritual. Consequently, it is a liberating formation. It is a formation that can take place only within my freedom, one that honors my personal experience and guides my talents and graces.

This freely chosen and personally enriching process of following Christ creates a feeling of consolation, an affective realization that I am doing what God wants me to do. The call is God’s, the inspiration is Christ’s, but the acceptance is mine.

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Apostolic Formation

What should be clear is that someone who wants to become intimately involved in an Ignatian enterprise has to have a desire to link that work — be it a school, a retreat center, a social work, a parish — to the ongoing work of the Kingdom preached by Jesus.

Professional excellence, years of practical experience, quality training, specialized skills — all these can serve the Kingdom, but only a genuine union with Christ can reveal what the Kingdom means: to help people to love God and to love their neighbor. There is vulnerability in such spiritual formation. Easy pieties, sentimental devotions and do-it-yourself mysticism crowd today's bookstores under the headings of inspiration, meditation and spirituality. What most of these present is self-fulfillment without self-sacrifice or a life conversion.

Christian Life Community - Around the World

- USA Assembly, Washington - July
- Kenya Assembly - August
- South Africa Assembly - August
- India Assembly - September

- Fr R.P. Luke Rodrigues S.J., from Mumbay province has been appointed on June 09 as Vice ecclesiastical assistant of the world CLC. Fr Luke is National EA of CLC India and delegate of the provincial for formation. He will take over from Fr Alberto Brito SJ, appointed as pastoral director of "Foyer catholique Européen de Bruxelles".

Ignatius Feast Day Celebrations

July 24 - CLC Atlantic Region

July 31 - Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Toronto

July 31 - St. Ignatius Parish, Winnipeg

What Ignatian formation demands is the radical humility to stand before God as a loved sinner who serves best when he or she acknowledges the weaknesses that have led to loving Christ as Redeemer.

The First Week experience of The Spiritual Exercises has to be incorporated into any Ignatian formation process. Radically, one helps others best by a profound experience of the solidarity of helplessness. Because I know my need of Christ, I can work all the more humanely to make his forgiveness and compassion available to others.

Ignatian Mission Reflection

*GP 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 favour.*

As individuals, communities, as an evolving apostolic body how are we cooperating with Christ's mission?



At the USA National Assembly
Fr. Alberto, Lise, Julie, Luc, Fr. Charles

Fall gatherings and activities bring with them increased exposure to influenza. Health Canada has a good information site at

<http://www.fightflu.ca/>