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## Reflections on the World CLC Assembly



XVII WORLD  
ASSEMBLY  
CVX - CLC



*A gift for the Church  
and for the world*

Buenos Aires 2018

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**Cover Photo:** *Fr. John Tran, Ed Plocha, Frank Vuong, Carol Gonzalez, Ady Viera and Ann Marie Brennan*



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## Editorial Foreword

### *Privilege and Gift*

As I joined with the *Harvest* team in reading and editing this issue, I relived many of my experiences of 2003 when I had the privilege of being invited and the gift of being selected as one of the CLC-USA delegates to the World Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya. Obviously, there were differences. However, many gifts were very similar. No one can deny the joy one receives from a worldwide encounter with people sharing the common language of Ignatian spirituality while speaking their native tongues whether they be Spanish or Polish or Vietnamese, etc. The ease of openness in identifying strengths and weaknesses within the CLC is a grace rarely experienced in the secular world today. Being immersed in a new and different culture where poverty exists and joy can still be found through the efforts of the Church community and the people who serve, can be eye-opening and even transformational. Breaking bread together in the Eucharist is always a privilege, a gift and an opportunity for thanksgiving, and quite memorable when expressed in the languages of participants from all corners of the world.

In the articles you will notice repetitions of words, phrases and experiences by our authors. These attest to the importance each attributed to them. They are also a way of helping us, the readers, take notice of them. Each of our delegates/representatives shares some of the happenings that moved him/her in Buenos Aires. It is hoped that each of us becomes familiar with these encounters and uses them in prayer and reflection. For the next five years we will be coming back to the themes and directions that emerged from the XVII World CVX-CLC Assembly.

The words **Deepen, Share and Go Forth** are found in almost every article. To me, they brought to mind the words **Formation, Community and Mission**. My many years in Sodality/CLC have taught me the importance of the energy, challenge and inspiration I get from ongoing formation. It deepens my identity as a CLC'er and helps me stay tuned to the signs of the times. As CLC, we share and grow in the context of local, regional and national communities. (For some, there is the privilege and opportunity of connecting personally with the world community, too.) What do we do with this identity, this gift we have received? We are called to share who we are as CLC among ourselves and with others both in prayer and in action. As committed and prophetic lay Christians, we are sent forth to bring the message of Christ to the world in all the circumstances of our lives. We are recognized by what we do and who we are as CLCers.



*Harvest Editorial  
Team:  
Dorothy Zambito  
George Willett  
Nancy Head*

Delve into this issue and read the reflections of **President Ady Viera, EA Father John Tran, Past President Ed Plocha, Frank Vuong, World Vice President Ann Marie Brennan and World Regional Rep Carol Gonzalez**. Become familiar with the ARUPA and ESDAC teams. Learn about the three rounds of sharing. Enter into the communal discernment process that took place. Delight in the immersion experiences that were shared.

As members of CLC-USA, we are grateful to Ady, Fr. John, Ed, Frank, Ann Marie and Carol for representing us at the World Assembly this summer.

With gratitude to the Lord,

**Dorothy M. Zambito**

## *Congratulations to*

### *CLC-USA ExCo:*

Barbara Rudolph *President-elect*

Carmen Castagno *Treasurer*

#### **Many Thanks to:**

Ed Plocha *Past President*

Thu Tam Hoang *Treasurer*



Ady Viera  
President

## *Impressions from the CVX-CLC World Assembly, Buenos Aires, 2018*

“We journeyed together desiring greater depth and integration in the living out of our CLC charism in the world today, and the Lord called us to DEEPEN, SHARE AND GO FORTH.”

We were welcomed warmly to the Colegio Maximo de San Jose in San Miguel on the outskirts of Buenos Aires and with great generosity by ARUPA, the organizing team from Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. Their welcome enabled us to enter into the joy of being one World Community from the very beginning, and into an experience of the Church in Latin America. This was a model for evangelization in our increasingly secular world by seeing the possibilities for liberating people to choose CHRIST. We saw the Spirit at work in renewing, energizing and missioning the laity.

As part of our journey we followed in the footsteps of Bergoglio, Pope Francis, since it was in the Colegio Maximo where his pastoral vision was originally established and developed among the people and parishes in Barrio de San Miguel. We entered into a concrete experience of the missionary church through an encounter with the families and members of the parish community in the barrio. We had the opportunity to share our lives with one another, and the Assembly was touched by the enjoyment in the welcome we received.

Our Assembly was conscious of our CLC history of mission and very aware of our priorities. We live in volatile and complex times in our world's history, and an unwillingness to welcome others into our spaces plays a big part in our struggles. It was with great happiness, therefore, that we welcomed the new national CLCs of Latvia, Mauritius Island and Vietnam into the World Community, adding to the communal gift that CLC offers to our world.

Fr. Arturo Sosa, S.J., our World Ecclesiastical Assistant, addressed us and touched upon the tension that arises as we deepen our relationships, especially with those different from us. He referred to *Magis* as a living in permanent tension, being pulled to God and the world at the same time. He encouraged us to navigate this tension as part of our communal discernment, while being very attentive to the working of the Evil Spirit which may easily turn tension into conflict.

This *Kairos* moment in our Church calls us to be missionary disciples to our world through an encounter with Jesus that opens up to the Love of the Father. As world, we realized that to walk together we have to be honest about anything that hinders the Spirit from flowing freely from us and into our national communities.

This invisible but powerful current eventually erupted in deep gratitude, consolation, joy, hope and desire for the future. In that process, we briefly tasted the peace only the Resurrected Christ can give. We feel called to DEEPEN our CLC identity. We feel called to humbly SHARE our gifts. We feel called to GO FORTH to SERVE.

AMDG

# Some Side Considerations at the World CLC Assembly

*Father John Lan Tran, S.J.*



This is not an essay nor a reflection, but just some observations about the World CLC Assembly. I want to share some aspects of the Assembly that we might have overlooked.

### **San Miguel Spirituality Center**

The Assembly met at San Miguel Spirituality Center, which formerly was the training center for the Argentinian Jesuits.

The center used to host the novitiate (first two years of training), the juniorate (the second two years of training), the philosophate (two years of philosophy study) and theologate (four years of theology training). In other words, most Argentinian Jesuits were trained at San Miguel until the early 1980s.

This location was chosen for the Assembly because of its relationship to Pope Francis. Before becoming an auxiliary bishop of Buenos Aires, Pope Francis spent more than twenty years of his life living and working at San Miguel as Novice Master, Provincial, Professor and Rector (superior).

One day I walked past an office labeled **RECTORADO**. After some inquiries, I learned that Fr. Bergoglio indeed had lived and worked there. Inside, the office has a small meeting room, a conference room and a bedroom. I was told further that after Fr. Bergoglio left that office and San Miguel became a Spirituality Center, the Rectorado became a storage room. It was not until after the election of Pope Francis that it was restored.

### **ARUPA Team**

ARUPA was the organizing team of the Assembly. The name ARUPA came from the first letters of the three host national communities: **A**rgentina, **U**ruguay and **P**araguay (the bolded letters made up the name ARUPA). I was not sure how many were on the team working at San Miguel Center. My guess was that there were between 30 and 40 people.

After a few days, we all recognized these volunteers because they wore orange vests. These “construction gangs” as I called them, turned out to be very nice. They helped us in many things, ranging from check-in, logistic support and help with accommodations. Whatever you needed, you would ask an ARUPA person. For example, midway through the Assembly, we were given new bed sheets by the ARUPA team. By the end of the Assembly, we learned to appreciate the team’s presence to assist us in our needs.

### **Meals at the Assembly**

The dining room at San Miguel was narrow and long, perhaps 30x200 feet in size. The foods were placed at two serving stations in the middle, and we were never sure where the serving lines started. In the first few days the dining room resembled a battlefield where one had to do hand-to-hand combat to obtain the necessary nourishment. The problem became exacerbated when the food seemed to run out early and the hungry CLCers panicked! Eventually, we learned that, with a little patience, more food would appear. After the first few days, things smoothed out and the CLCers learned that Argentina had lots of food and no one would go hungry.

Another feature of mealtime was the announcements. The long dining room had a small, underpowered sound system placed at one end. It became a struggle both for the announcers and the listeners, especially those who sat far away. Things became even more jumbled when the messages had to be translated into three official languages by translators who could not be heard.

### **Accommodations**

We had 204 delegates from roughly seventy countries. In addition, the ARUPA team had about 30-40 volunteers. All of us stayed at San Miguel Center, three or four in a room with bunk beds! In the beginning, coming from America, I was not alone in being disappointed to have to share a room with others. Gradually, I got used to the snoring and the heat and the squeaky bed.

As for the facility, the regular chapel was too small to accommodate the crowd. Instead, we had to use the assembly hall for Mass. For our meetings in the backyard, they had to put up a large white tent, which was heated by four huge propane heaters. At times it would be too hot,

and at times too cold, but overall it was kind of fun to see these huge heaters at work.

### **Speaking at the Assembly**

We had a number of plenary sessions at the Assembly when everyone was invited to speak. The speakers often told the Assembly where they came from and in which of the three languages (English, French or Spanish) they would speak. We had six translators and a couple of ARUPA observers to advise the speakers to slow down and observe the time limit. We also had “mic runners” who spotted the would-be speakers and rushed the mic to them.

With more than two hundred delegates, we never ran out of speakers. Ideas, though, were harder to come by. At times, the moderators desperately reminded the speakers to be brief. Some speakers usually did well. For others, one or two minutes to speak was torture: that was not even enough time to warm up!

After a few days, I realized that in the first fifteen to twenty minutes of the plenary sessions, the same people felt compelled to speak their minds. After a while, people started to share at a deeper level. Eventually, the plenary sessions ended with some good understanding. We did not come to a consensus but certain themes emerged.

### **Snacks and Coffee and Knickknacks**

We had plenty of food and snacks. We usually met for two hours and then had a break when refreshments were served including sweet bread, croissants, cookies, fruits, etc. Drinks consisted mainly of coffee and juices. If you wanted more, there was a little kiosk, selling hot dogs, hamburgers, candy bars, etc. As for extra drinks, you could buy things at the bar: a bottle of wine cost \$6-10 US dollars. In short, we were well served.

Shopping aficionados could buy souvenirs and other knickknacks during breaks or on the day off. I bought a few carved animals for my friends back in the U.S. Some felt compelled to buy a mate cup. Some people sold these to raise money for worthy causes. It was just fun to be able to buy things without having to go into town.

### **EA (Ecclesiastical or Ecclesial Assistant)**

Roughly a quarter of the participants (about fifty people) at the Assembly were EAs. Most of us came as “ex-officio” (automatic) delegates to the World Assembly because of respective national norms. The presence of so many EAs could be understood positively as a sign of the closeness of the relationship between the Society of Jesus and CLC. For some groups, the EAs play a crucial role in the life of their national communities, involved in almost all decisions and activities.

On the other hand, the presence of so many EAs could be intimidating for some. For example, in some plenary sessions, some EAs tended to dominate parts of the conversation, not allowing others to contribute. Sometimes I wondered where the balance should be, considering that CLC is a lay organization. Some Jesuit presence is good, but too much of it does not allow others to grow.

Another interesting fact about EAs in the Assembly was the presence of a non-Jesuit EA. We met her the night when Fr. Arturo Sosa, the Superior General of the Jesuits, gave a talk to all EAs. Fr. Sosa recognized her presence. A strange idea came into my head. When could we Jesuits have some LAs (lay assistants) who would help Jesuit communities to be faithful to their religious vocation?

### **Conclusion**

I share these observations to give you a different glimpse of the Assembly. Hopefully, I will see you at the National Assembly next year!

### **The new World ExCo for the period 2018-2023 was formed as follows:**

Denis Dobbstein (Belgium), *President*

Ann Marie Brennan (USA), *Vice President*

Catherine Waiyaki (Kenya), *Secretary*

Fernando Vidal (Spain), *Consultor*

Daphne Ho (Hong Kong), *Consultor*

Diego Pereira (Uruguay), *Consultor*

Najat Sayegh (Lebanon), *Consultor*

Alwin Macalalad (Philippines), *Executive Secretary*

Rojean Macalalad (Philippines), *Resource Executive*

Herminio Rico, S.J. (Portugal), *Ecclesiastical Vice Assistant*

# CLC, A Gift for the Church and the World

By Ed Plocha



Ed Plocha, Past President.

“Caring for our gift, offering it more generously in joy.” *Projects 169*

Summer 2018 will always be for me “the summer of the CLC World Assembly.” The months leading up to the Assembly were spent in reading, reflecting upon and praying over CLC documents. These included: letters from the CLC World President and World ExCo members, *Projects*, *Progressio* and foundational documents such as the *General Principles*, *General Norms* and *Our Charism*.

The theme of the Assembly was: “CLC, A Gift for the Church and the World.” The opportunity to attend the World Assembly was indeed a gift. Who today could take ten days out of her/his life to journey “to the end of the earth” to be with other like-minded persons committed to the same principles and ideals for the purpose of sharing and going more deeply into how best to live out this calling, this vocation which we call the “CLC way of proceeding?”

Being part of a group of 204 people including 51 Jesuits representing 71 countries from 6 continents, was in itself a mind-blowing experience. When you take into consideration that these were people who share and can articulate deep core values about their Catholic faith, Ignatian spirituality and a lay vocation that is communal and apostolic and who share a hunger to find ways to do more, the *magis*, you have an equation in which the whole exceeds the sum of its parts. Not only that, but the excitement and enthusiasm level at the Assembly was spiritually turbocharged. It was truly a happening!

Highlights of the Assembly can be found in the Final Document available on the CVX-CLC World website. This report covers the main topic areas, content and flow of the meeting. Delegates and participants, in emails, through social media and in this issue of *Harvest*, share their experiences and impressions of the Assembly. It was also a great honor for CLC-USA to have been the godparent and sponsor for CLC Vietnam to join the World Community at this Assembly. It was very gratifying for both the USA and Vietnam delegations to be on stage and acknowledged by the body as well as by Fr. Sosa. The World CLC body is the richer for having CLC Vietnam brothers and sisters among us. *Te Deum laudamus*.

The context for the Assembly was stated in *Projects 168*: “Our Next CLC World Assembly – ‘CLC celebration, consolidation, renewal.’” It considered three major CLC realities. The first is the 50th anniversary of our renewed Ignatian community, part of our graced history. The second is the papacy of Pope Francis, a Jesuit, who is inviting us to a new vision, greater depth and experience of contemporary Catholicism that prioritizes mercy, joy, inclusivity, caring for the earth and leading lives of ongoing discernment and conversion. The third reality, also a direction pursued by the Pope, is the validation of the role and calling of the laity to be collaborators with priests, religious and other laity in the mission and ministry of the Church. In this context, we at the Assembly sought to review and renew our living out of the CLC charism in the world today with greater attention and intention.

In *Projects 169* the World ExCo writing team articulated the theme of the upcoming World Assembly, “Caring for our gift, offering it more generously in joy.” For World CLC Day 2018 we were invited to acknowledge “with greater profundity and gratitude, what we have been given, and increase our readiness to share it in

service.” Harkening back to the World Assembly in Providence 1982, it also affirmed the witness value of community. I keenly felt the great importance Assembly delegates placed on community. Our European brothers and sisters gave me the distinct impression that CLC provided for them the community that their local churches could not.

In an April 2018 letter to the world members, President Mauricio López reminded us that this is a special *Kairos* moment in our lives as Catholics and CLCers. It is a grace-filled propitious time during which we celebrate 50 years of our recovered and renewed Ignatian identity. We are invited by Pope Francis to live out more deeply our lay vocation with renewed enthusiasm in responding to the challenges of contemporary society. This is in a volatile world characterized by increased polarization, a deepening ecological crisis, and oftentimes an unwillingness to accept others different from ourselves. This feeling of *Kairos* was evident. Folks felt that we are living in a very special time and that we must seize the moment.

### **The Assembly: Colégio Maximo de San José**

There was a great excitement at our initial meeting. A show of hands confirmed that for the vast majority of participants, this was the first World CLC Assembly they had ever attended. We were in the former Jesuit philosophate and theologate where Father Jorge Bergoglio, S.J., had been rector. Attendees were encouraged with a letter from the Holy Father to “live out your charism as a ‘gift’ in the Church...” reminding us that this is a call of responsibility to be contemplatives in action. Echoing former Jesuit Superior General Adolfo Nicolás’ message at the Lebanon CLC World Assembly five years ago, Pope Francis stated that “only by going into the received charism, may you continue to be a gift for the Church and for the world.” The clear message throughout the Assembly was that only at that deeper level can we integrate our charism in our lives, so that we can be merciful and act mercifully, for mercy is always expressed in action.

By extension we must be vigilant and not go through life absentmindedly, but rather seek deep internal unity by living a life of awareness. This is one of Fr. Anthony de Mello’s favorite expressions, that is, living with *intention* and *attention*.

This theme of living life at a deeper level and integrating inner charism was a consistent refrain of the Assembly. As a CLC world community we are invited to do this in communion and connectivity with those who preceded us, with whom we are mystically connected in what we Catholics call the Communion of Saints. We are chosen for being just who we are, as in the meditation of

the Incarnation in the *Spiritual Exercises*. We bring, each of us, our unique talents and gifts, as well as our deficits, shortcomings and limitations. Acting reflectively, not in spite of but cognizant of these, we live out the *Kairos*, the grace-filled propitious moment for discernment, decision and action.

A major difference in this Assembly was the presence of a team of “process guides” using ESDAC (*Exercices Spirituels pour un Discernement Apostolique Communautaire*). ESDAC team members facilitated, animated and guided the delegates through ten exercises which included personal prayer, sharing in small groups and in plenary sessions. This communal Ignatian discernment occurred over five days.

Parenthetically, and I note it impacted the international feel of the Assembly, the official languages of CLC were English, French and Spanish. Of these I believe English was the *lingua franca* and spoken by the majority of delegates as their second or third language. Since Argentina was the host country (together with Paraguay and Uruguay) and volunteers from these countries were numerous, Spanish was heard everywhere. Nonetheless, this English speaker was pleased to have met so many delegates who had a facility in English. As for the meetings themselves, we had very competent translators for the plenary sessions. Headsets for simultaneous translation were *de rigueur*.

### **Exercises that I found particularly relevant:**

“How many loaves do you have?” (Mk 6:38-44) This reading provided an apt metaphor for the Assembly. We all have been given loaves – gifts that we use, and gifts that we share. Life is not a zero-sum game – quite the contrary. The more we give the more we receive, qualitatively, with graces and blessings. We begin to understand and feel that in living our love we share God’s mercy, love, hospitality, caring. These are all ways of proceeding, of doing. Love is always expressed in action. Love is a listening ministry, a ministry of attentiveness. Attentiveness leads to hospitality. People are not abstractions. We must relate to our sisters and brothers and their realities. It’s about being in relationship with these people and their lived realities. By this we are called to action.

A great gift and experience for attendees was the privilege of visiting the Jesuit parish community of *Barrio de San Miguel*. Some delegates chose to visit the social center and school. I personally felt that I wanted to meet with a family that had extended an invitation to Assembly delegates. I was a bit apprehensive and feeling just a little bit awkward about visiting. I was self-conscious about being a “rich American” tourist to this poor village. However, this discomfort was dispelled like a puff of

smoke when we were greeted by young people who were laughing, singing and clapping. We were warmly welcomed and made to feel part of the community.

Later, we had lunch on the only sunny day and went to our respective meetings or families. I met Jorge and his extended family in their very modest home. We talked through translators, we sang, we prayed and we broke and ate *tortas fritas* (fried bread). We sipped Yerba mate tea through a metal straw from hand-made gourds which we passed around. It was like visiting with relatives who may have been poor materially, but who celebrated joyfully with their extended community every day. They were very grateful to be part of the Jesuit parish community and for the opportunity to have the many church-related functions that it provided. These gave meaning and rhythm and flow to daily life. It was obvious to all that the church and the parish were central to their social and spiritual lives. I told our host Jorge, that I'll probably be asked to share a little about my visit with him and his family. I asked him what message he'd like to share with CLC friends and family in the USA. Jorge, without missing a beat said, "Yes, please tell them that we all share the same Spirit. The Spirit will guide us as we continue to pray for one another." Amen!

There was an emphasis at the Assembly on ministry, service, social action and *doing*, especially from those third-world countries who on a daily basis dealt with oppressive structures, injustices, beauracracy, environmental degradation and a host of other problems. I was actually struck by the emphasis placed on "being a community," and the feeling that whatever needs to be done, it is best done by members who feel that they are part of a supportive, discerning community. The feeling was definitely communitarian. CLC is not a collection of individuals, but rather a cohesive, faith-based, spiritually-committed community on a mission of service.

In one of the exercises that ESDAC had us do, we were asked to list words that we consider "gifts" of CLC. The size of the word on the slide denoted the number of people that had used the word. These were the LARGEST words, those identified as the principle words of the Assembly attendees to describe their gifts in CLC: LOVE, TRUST, COMMUNITY, VOCATION, GRATITUDE, FREEDOM.

Another powerful exercise we did concerned communal paralyses. We as members of CLC are on a journey fraught with challenges. The disorder of sin impacts our global and local communities and manifests itself as paralyses. We are the "salt of the earth" and a "light to the world." (MT 5: 13-16) We experience

paralyses at different levels. We experience shortcomings by perhaps not tapping into our gifts, our talents. These are not "sins" as such. They are an inability to serve others, a distraction in seeking the *magis*. We looked at these "paralyses" and identified them as they relate to us personally and communally. We were asked to present these to the Lord in prayer as "untapped gift" and "hidden lights." Among the paralyses noted by the group were: self-centeredness; closedmindedness; lack of unity; lack of passion; small-groupism; immobility; elitism; contemplative-inactivity; divisiveness; pride; lack of prayerful openness; lack of shared responsibility; *My CLC*.

Each of these represents a way of being stuck. My small group identified a problem of "making things too complicated" which we labelled as a form of *elitism*. Rather than being discouraged however, we looked at these tendencies as natural occurrences in the incarnation process. They are conflicts and challenges along the way, which actually can help us to go more deeply into our *relationships as community, seeking to integrate and accept the interdependence with one another* that is characteristic of our way of proceeding as we create a new narrative in our graced history.

In our large group session we were asked to create a live group statue representing the "sin" (i.e., hamartia or "miss the mark"). The disordered attachments, compulsions of our community hinder the Spirit from flowing, moving freely in our communities. We suffer from a spiritual narcissism, the sin of spiritual pride. St. Ignatius constantly fought off this tendency in his own life. Historically, gnostic groups felt that they were more spiritual than the ordinary folks who make up the Church. Gnostics were categorically condemned. We CLCers also can become self-absorbed and self-referential, resulting in a spiritual elitism that closes us off, that keeps others at a safe distance so they cannot touch us. Only the power of truth, reconciliation and humility can bring us back to reality. In the plenary session, half of the Assembly small groups assumed a "group statue" pose while the other half walked through these statues. Then the other group assumed their pose with the remainder being observers. For me, this was one of the most powerful exercises in the entire Assembly. We were asked not to take photographs of these "statues."

We respond to these paralyses by allowing them to push us towards a deeper desire for truthfulness in our identity as members of CLC. We do not fight the paralyses, but rather we seek to go more deeply into the grace. Thus we pray for a greater depth and integration in our charism.



*My group felt that ultimately we're called "to walk humbly with Jesus."*

We ended with an exercise that sought to harvest the fruits of these days together. With the prophet Isaiah, we felt that "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth...I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." (Is 43:19) We are open to "new beginnings." The grace we sought was to listen to our hearts and to acknowledge all that has been given us over these days. We look forward with great anticipation.

We go more deeply within ourselves to name the grace that will draw us into mission.

As CLC we are called:

- **To walk humbly with Christ, with intention and attention**
- **To trust the process**
- **To "keep it simple"**

We are all called to do, to act, to use the gifts, talents and inclinations with which we have been endowed. We give glory to God's creation through our gifts and talents, despite our shortcomings and flaws. We are grateful for all of these characteristics. They make us the unique persons that we are. We realize the way we do something is just as important as what we do. We must act with integrity, conviction and passion.

## **In Summary**

Over these ten days, we delegates, in personal prayer, and small and large group discussions, asked ourselves "As CLC what are we called to TODAY?" Three responses stand out as most important to me.

1. We are called to **DEEPEN** our CLC identity, through an ongoing inner conversion that frees us to be ever more faithful to and intentional in living out our CLC charism in all its dimensions.
2. We are called to **SHARE** humbly with others the gift of Ignatian spirituality as lived out in our lay vocations. We view discernment and the tools that Ignatian spirituality provide as precious gifts to share with others.
3. We are called to **GO FORTH** to serve those most in need and to sow the seeds of mercy, joy and hope in a world that is volatile, complex and polarized.

Let us continue to collaborate, support each other, build bridges, and pray continuously for one another so that we may all deepen our call, share our many gifts, and go forth together in a spirit of mercy, forgiveness, hope and joy. With Jesus we can be co-laborers in the building of the Kingdom of God.

And, may we all be blessed.



**We are all called to do,  
to act, to use the gifts,  
talents and inclinations  
with which we have  
been endowed**



# We as One

By Frank Vuong



*Frank Vuong is an active member of CLC-USA Dong Hanh. He is a graduate of UC Irvine where he was a member of Hat Cai (the Mustard Seed prayer group). In 2012 he became National Chair of SEED Ministry. He was a presenter at the 2014 CLC National Assembly.*

## The Journey to the World Assembly

My journey to and through the XVII CVX-CLC World Assembly had actually started many months ago for me. It was at the moment when I was informed of being nominated to be sent to the World Assembly as a CLC-USA delegate that I started questioning: “What do I have to offer to CLC on the world level?” When I had been officially elected to be sent, I was both thrilled and anxious. Out of the hundreds of CLC members in our nation, I was elected, and I held no leadership position. Why was I being sent instead of others? How could this be? What gifts did I have to offer? With these questions, I remained open to the process and accepted this opportunity in being sent forth.

It’s been an interesting year, and I can only give credit to God’s providence in my life. Earlier this year, I completed the *Spiritual Exercises* in the form of the 19th Annotation. I made my permanent CLC commitment at Dong Hanh CLC National Assembly 2018. I served at SEED Retreat Northeast X (the 10th anniversary) early in July. I made my yearly *Spiritual Exercises* Silent Retreat a week after SEED. Less than a week later I was on a plane to Buenos Aires, Argentina, to attend the World Assembly. It’s been an intense month for me, and I have yet to catch up with the graces that have been so freely given. I suppose that is how my relationship with God has always been. Whether or not I have been fully aware and present to His love, He still keeps giving to me. He has the most wonderful plans for me and such a beautiful process for them to be unfolded. The timing of these transformative spiritual, community and mission experiences has indeed provided the formation needed for me to encounter God in the one world community at the World Assembly.



*CLC-USA delegates and representatives.*

The four CLC-USA delegates, Ady Viera (CLC-USA President), Ed Plocha (past CLC-USA President), Fr. John Lan Tran (Ecclesiastical Assistant) and I arrived in Buenos Aires on Wednesday morning, three days before the beginning of the World Assembly. Our plans were to spend some time enjoying the

city before being cloistered at Centro de Loyola where we would stay for the entirety of the meeting. We were four individuals that had never spent quality time together, yet we were all open to getting to know each other and experience this foreign place together.

Unfortunately for us, it rained almost the entire time of our stay in the city, specifically the section called Recoleta. We still managed to explore the city through a guided bus tour as well as a nice stroll through an appropriately gloomy and wet morning at the world famous Recoleta Cemetery. Talk about having more gratitude for life by visiting a cemetery in the pouring rain! Even with the weather, (it’s

winter in South America during our summer months in North America), we were still able to enjoy the culture that Buenos Aires has to offer. The food is wonderful, especially their meats, which totally upholds their reputation. I also learned Argentinians do everything much later, leading to a livelier nightlife! Buenos Aires has kept a very European feel. The levels of poverty and wealth can be easily seen from the various areas of this very large and densely populated city. Being in a foreign land gives me a sense of humility as well as awe and wonder. I am reminded again how small I am in the grander picture that God designs. This world is large, and going beyond my comforts and boundaries is a challenge that has helped me to grow.



*A view of Buenos Aires.*

### **Onto the CVX-CLC World Assembly...**

After three nights at a hotel in one of the more touristy areas of the city, it was time to be picked up at the Colegio del Salvador in downtown Buenos Aires by the ARUPA team. Arrangements had been made to pick up early arriving delegates at this Jesuit college.

As we entered the main hall of the college, I realized for the first time that CLC really is a world community! When I started shaking hands and introducing myself to delegates from France, Belgium, Spain, Sweden, etc., I felt as if I were encountering Christ. It was purely amazing! We soon saw the college's church. The church reminded me of the churches in Europe. It held many beautiful statues of Jesuit saints, as well as beautiful ceiling paintings of parables and bible passages. Our bus took us to our final destination at Centro de Loyola. The bus ride was about an hour long, away from the center of Buenos Aires. We arrived in San Miguel - one of the poorest sections of greater Buenos Aires.



*The main stairway of the College.*

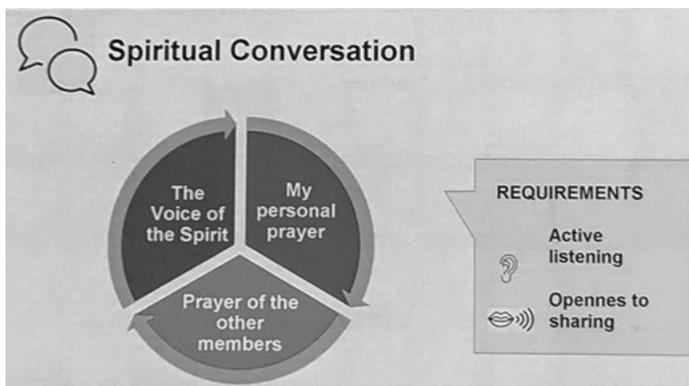
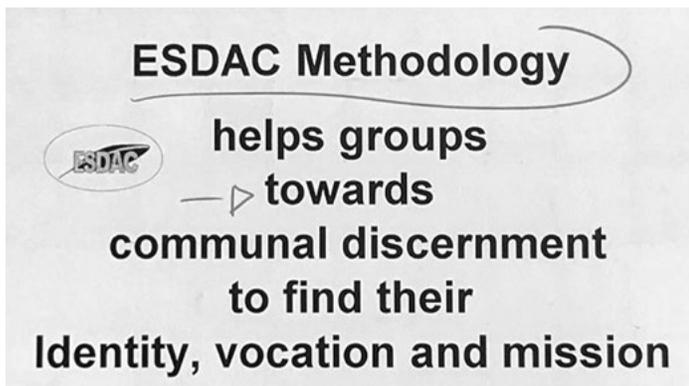
Centro de Loyola is the name given to a campus facility called Colegio Máximo de San José. Over the years this grand and large complex has housed over 2000 Jesuit novices and scholars. It was the central place of early Jesuit formation for Argentina and many neighboring countries. It is the place where Fr. Jorge Bergoglio (now Pope Francis) had lived, worked and served as the rector and provincial before becoming auxiliary bishop and then cardinal bishop of Buenos Aires. His earlier life in service to the Church began here. It was appropriate for CLC to celebrate its 50 years at this location with our connections to the Jesuits and our direct line of fidelity to the Holy See.

### **My Personal Experience...**

Process is everything and everything is process.

My ongoing formation has now come to an extremely heightened understanding of the CLC vocation. Everything was about process! The whole assembly required a process for us to trust and to be transformed. The facilitating team of this process was not the ExCo as it may have been in past world assemblies.

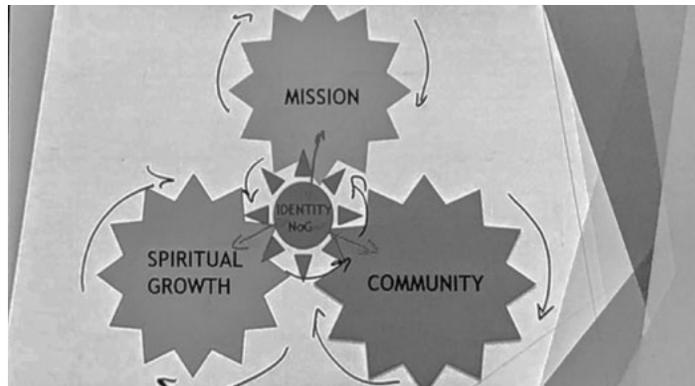
Exercises for Spiritual Discernment on Apostolate in Common (ESDAC), the process facilitating team, sent three of their members from Europe to help the world community discern our calling and direction for the next five years. They used a process based on the *Spiritual Exercises* by using prayer exercises, spiritual conversations and very creative contemplative and meditative activities to help us go more deeply into communal discernment. Their introduction to this process was "you are the expert of your own experiences." Therefore, the prayer and sharing sessions were based on our experiences of prayer. We had to respect these experiences as movements of the Holy Spirit in this process. For most of the delegates, it was something very new and different. This process challenged delegates and made some feel uneasy.



Many delegates struggled with this process because they are used to having a clear and detailed agenda. This was a challenge because it required deeper trust in being led by someone else, ultimately by the Holy Spirit. One of the delegates, an Ecclesiastical Assistant, shared during the plenary session, “I was lost after yesterday morning’s prayer exercise, more lost in yesterday afternoon’s session, but now today, I am happily lost!” His comment helped us to see that openness to the process was necessary to receive God’s graces. Having the process based on the *Spiritual Exercises* ultimately helped all the delegates as it is one of the commonalities in our identity and charism as CLC. The process is about relationship and bringing us together!

For me, I felt right at home and had a good insight of what was to come out of this discernment journey. As the days went by, I felt in tune with the Holy Spirit. Being on silent retreat a week earlier helped me be prepared for this. We were coming closer to consensus after each prayer exercise. Imagine, 30 groups of 6-7 CLC members from different nations, backgrounds and levels of formation. I was among national CLC Presidents and ExCo members from all over the world! I felt like such a small, insignificant member when sharing with CLC members who have lived our way of life for over 20-30 years. I remained open to be moved by the Holy Spirit to allow me to be one with the delegates and to be able to share thoughts and sentiments in our group.

In the beginning days of the assembly, we had several “encounter” groups. At one point, I was simply in total awe when I was sitting in a small group with each person having a different accent: Irish, German, British, African and American. Having conversations with them was a new experience. Although we each have our own primary language, we recognized that we share the same lifestyle - CLC. We have a common vocabulary when talking about our spiritual lives: the Exercises, *Examen*, discernment, formation, process, *magis*, etc. It is our CLC language, lifestyle and culture that bring us together and help us to become one world body.



We spent the beginning days of the assembly becoming one. The process was to collect all of us from numerous backgrounds and nations, and give us a single common starting point. Our starting point was the letters and invitations from Pope Francis and the CLC World President to open ourselves up and dive more deeply into becoming contemplatives in action. We are 71 nations that became one apostolic body in discernment. Beautiful.

The 204 delegates were divided into our communal discernment groups for three days of processing what it means to be “CLC: a gift for the Church and for the world.” In my group were CLC Presidents, an EA and ExCo members from Ecuador, Slovakia, Madagascar, South Korea, Kenya and USA. We had sharing sessions full of laughter, joy, some sadness and so much peace and serenity. I felt right at home sharing with them almost as if back with my local community. This was a slice of heaven for me, being with our neighbors and in communion with God.





*Immersing ourselves within the community and barrio of San Miguel in which Fr. Jorge Bergoglio (Pope Francis) pastorally served.*

The sessions that stood out for me were: praying on our graced history timeline, our name of grace, naming of CLC and reconciliation for our sins. The graced history timeline started at the beginning of the Marian Congregation shift and change to Christian Life Community, through all the events of World CLC (establishment of *General Principle and Norms*, identifying our Charism and identity, embracing the *Spiritual Exercises*, world assemblies, etc.) along with big Church events such as the election of Pope Francis. Prayer and reflection on this timeline took us more deeply into what we can name as our gifts. This session was followed with identifying our sins and our move towards reconciliation, a most powerful session for me.

What are our sins within CLC? Our 30 small groups came up with a combined list, and the sin that surfaced most (and especially from my own small group) was the sin of pride. We were tasked with identifying what sins paralyze us, keeping us from being authentic and living out our apostolic calling. Indeed, pride exists in many different forms affecting CLC on a global scale as well as within national, regional and local communities. How exactly are we plagued with pride? We identified elitism, being self-referential, not putting God at the center, not trusting His process and plan, being exclusive, and more practices that ultimately cause division.

Two moments of beauty that I encountered in the assembly were our immersion day and the day of silence. During an immersion day in the barrio, we experienced some of the poverty and the realities of the people that Pope Francis had cared for pastorally during his time there. Delegates had options to visit families, the social center and the youth. I chose to be with the youth to learn how they function in San Miguel. I learned that they are not too different from the youth and young adults in the USA. They were extremely lively, welcoming and proud to have Ignatian spirituality formation in their community. They have a deep prayer life and are active in mission. I was inspired to share this encounter with the youth and young adults back home.

We had three full days of communal discernment exercises and chose the middle day to be in silence. Imagine being on a silent retreat with 200 others! You could feel the power of prayer through the quiet long corridors. As one contemplative body we sensed the nearness of God.

As it had come near to the end of the assembly, we synthesized a final report that would be the official document that summarizes it. Led by the process by ESDAC, the world community went much deeper into identifying our gifts so that we can continue to be CLC, a gift for the Church and for the world.



*This is the “mate” drinking cup that a community would share in drinking yerba mate, a special tea that is popular in South America, especially Argentina. It was part of the centerpiece of our small sharing group to symbolize community and being one body.*

### **Taking This Experience Home...**

The World Assembly began with a question found in the parable of feeding the multitude, “How many loaves have you?... Go and see.” (Mark 6:38) In our Assembly we asked the Lord for greater depth and integration in living our CLC charism in the world today. I believe we had really gone deeper and look forward to bringing our understanding of our charism back to share with our national and local communities.

Considering our national community as CLC-USA, I can identify certain paralyses. One is our failing to be more united as one body. The World Assembly helped me to be more aware of the current reality, revealing how we are still rather divided. Getting to know other national communities by speaking with delegates gave me insight into how they operate and are structured. They are able to identify themselves as united communities without parallel governing structures. The diversity of our national community is a strength. CLC-USA is unique, similar to the world community with our regional and cultural groups/clusters. God has a plan that can bring us together. The process for becoming one apostolic body is about relationship with one another and seeing God in everything

CLCers are called to live as contemplatives in action. We must not forget the contemplative part and stress only action. As CLC, our spiritual foundations are to be rooted in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius and lived out using the pillars of spirituality, community and mission. God invites us to become more united as one body by His grace. Part of our CLC identity is to be one discerning community, always seeking God’s will.

What do I really hope to bring back home from the World Assembly? I desire for our national community to strive to become one single body. For this to happen, we delegates must arouse awareness of the problem. By using our documents, discussion and communal discernment we hope to make progress in this area. I firmly believe we can make this a reality, with God leading the process. With joy we proclaim CLC a gift for the Church and for the world.



*The faces of the delegates form the face of Jesus. We are one world community, united in Christ.*

### **Questions for reflection:**

1. Name the “sins” that paralyse your CLC.
2. Immersion experiences can be transformative. What immersion encounters have you had?
3. How have you lived CLC as one community?

# World Assembly

By Ann Marie Brennan



*Ann Marie Brennan is a past President of CLC-USA. She is a Promoter for Metro NY CLC. She was elected Vice President of the World CLC ExCo.*

## **CLC, a Gift for the Church, and a Gift for the World**

Our former World CLC President, Mauricio Lopez, likes to quote Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., “We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.” This July, as over 200 people gathered together in Buenos Aires, from over 70 countries all around the globe, there was a strong sense of our being spiritual beings uniting together in the joy and love that Jesus so desires for us—and speaking the common language of Ignatian spirituality. It was an amazing gathering!

I encourage you to read the Assembly documents: the final document with *Projects 170*, the letter from Pope Francis, the talk by Father General Arturo Sosa, S.J., the talk on the History of CLC by Magdalena Palencia, and the talk, “The Francis Option: Evangelizing a World in Flux” by Dr. Austen Ivereigh. These provide useful insights and a good basis for our prayer and reflection on the gifts of our CLC charism. Note that all the documents will be included in the next *Progressio* Supplement #74.

A main portion of the Assembly was dedicated to personal prayer, spiritual conversation and discernment in common. From this intensive experience we brought the collective fruits of our holy listening to find areas of convergence with the Holy Spirit’s invitation to us as a world community. We saw that in a real act of faith the Holy Spirit does indeed work through our prayer and through our exchanges with one another in the community.

There are several key themes that arose for me personally over the course of the Assembly that may also be helpful for you and others in your own local group or in the wider national community or even world community.

### **The Encounter**

The Immersion Experience often offers a practical way to engage with a community and/or issue in a deeply felt way. For the Assembly to have such an experience in the setting where Pope Francis once was a pastor was one that we did not want to miss. Indeed, one of the highlights of the Assembly was this immersion in the Barrio of San Miguel. It began as a pilgrimage walking along the streets to the three chapels in the Barrio. We had lunch; we visited with the local people; and we celebrated Eucharist together in a local park. Quite remarkable was the involvement of the many local teenagers who greeted us at one chapel by lining the street on either side of our walking entourage, singing and clapping hands with such contagious energy and smiles. Many of us had tears in our eyes, feeling the joy and welcome. After lunch, we broke into small groups led by a young person—“a missionary”—to visit with a local family and share our faith experiences with one another. My group, consisting of CLCers from Indonesia, Kenya, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay and the USA, visited with an older couple in their late 70s and their daughter. They gave us a lovely spread of coffee and cakes. It was the young man, about 16, who led the conversation by asking the couple to share their faith experience. Initially shy, they talked about their experiences in the church; how they felt supported by the community; how the husband, having onetime lost his job, was offered some handy man work around the church buildings. They said that they did not have much, but they had each other. They were grateful to God for all their blessings; and they had no complaints. I felt that we were on holy ground, seeing Christ in one another. As we were leaving to say goodbye, I realized that I did not have a gift for them, so I took off my earrings and gave them to the wife. She gave me the greatest hug with tears in her eyes. Then the family of

three came outside to wave goodbye to us as we walked down the road and continued waving even as we turned the corner.

### **The Invitation**

The practice of inviting others to share their faith journey is one we may tend to overlook or be shy about in our secular culture, and consequently we may miss opportunities of enlivening each others' lives. Interesting was when Mauricio first asked the local pastor, Father Rafael Velazco, S.J., about arranging the immersion experiences in San Miguel, Father was reluctant to do so. He was concerned about the inequality in the relationship with more vulnerable people. However, after a time, he consented to an arrangement where people came together—encountering one another as equals and sharing their faith. As it turned out, the local people, young and old alike, told Fr. Rafa that they were so very pleased with the experience. It was a profound exchange for all of us, far exceeding expectations.

### **The Spiritual Conversations**

The ESDAC team (Spiritual Exercises for Apostolic Discernment in Common) presented a process called “Spiritual Conversations.” While some were familiar with this process, not all were. This was a good experience for all of us to learn and practice together. The idea is to share the fruit of one's prayer or faith experience in a first round of conversation. Members of the group listen with an attitude of respectful and grateful listening; it is not a time of discussion or problem-solving. After the first round, there is silence to reflect on particular feelings, questions, insights that arose within you. Then, in the second round, people share on what they heard or felt in the first round. In the third round, people try to name the consensus they heard and offer prayers to God on what they lived and shared.

For several days, the assembly was given a series of prayer exercises to use for personal prayer which progressed on topics such as: Gifts personally received in CLC; History of CLC; Graces received during these days; Name of God; Communitarian Paralysis; CLC Name of Grace. We met in the same small group throughout these days. My group, consisting of CLC members from Germany, Zimbabwe, USA and EAs from Japan, Singapore and Switzerland, was a wonderful group—open to the process, trusting, good-humored! We developed a strong bond fairly quickly, feeling like our own group back home!

### **Apostolic Discernment in Common**

The personal prayer, small group spiritual conversations and the plenary discussions laid the groundwork for moving toward apostolic discernment in common. The idea was that we were cultivating the desire, openness, freedom and awareness in our relationship with God and in the building of God's Kingdom—all essential before discerning on a particular point. We were experiencing and noticing the various movements both toward God as well as away from God—as a community. Then we looked at those points of convergence, and tried to make sense of the message that the Holy Spirit was revealing through each of us. The ESDAC team had very creative ways for us to do this—laying out our group's “name of grace” in patterns across the floor of the tent, in our displays of group statues illustrating a specific CLC paralysis, collecting our prayers of giftedness in a basket, etc. With so many people coming from so many diverse experiences, our goal was to live and practice this process more deeply so that we each can bring it back home to our respective communities. While many would have liked to have taken it further in discerning an apostolic action in a specific direction, there was not enough time to do this. Still this process allows for members to take to heart Pope Francis' message to make Christ present in our surroundings and to give apostolic meaning to all our activities. We can and should employ these discerning processes to respond to the urgent needs that present themselves in our own concrete realities and situations.

### **Tension + Evil Spirits + Paralysis**

CLC members are generally pleasant, agreeable, compassionate people. Even so, as a human organization, we experience tensions, differences, limitations and even paralysis. It is critical to recognize them and to deal with them. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Tensions when dealt with maturely can lead to creative solutions to problems, and so, in such cases the tensions are actually opportunities.

Fr. William Barry has some useful pointers on this in his book: *Toward Communal Discernment: Some Practical Suggestions*:

- *It is all too easy to gloss over serious divisions in a group. The Lord can work his wonders even on a group that seems at first hopelessly divided.*

- *Feelings of anger, suspicion, guilt and helplessness need to emerge. Members of a group need to think the unthinkable and say the unsayable.*
- *Members of a group need to desire healing, to desire that Jesus makes us brothers and sisters again, to present themselves to Jesus as they are and to ask him for what they want.*

At the Assembly, we dedicated one prayer exercise acknowledging our communitarian paralysis, contemplating how we waste the gifts we have received, and sharing openly our observations. This was actually a very freeing moment because in a dedicated session for prayer, people could identify and express the very ways their local, national and even world community seemed limited, stuck, even sinful. Even more freeing was the recognition that many of these limitations were shared in other national communities. We were not alone in our struggle and we took some consolation in that! Also consoling is that it is good to address these limitations and tensions openly as we desire to move through the struggles toward reconciliation and resolutions—with one another.

### **Apostolic Meaning in All Our Activities**

As contemplatives in action, we are encouraged by Pope Francis to give apostolic meaning to all of our activities--to make Christ present in all of our surroundings: family, school, work, parish, town, country, in creation, etc. He also says in the letter, “We can only enter the heart of God through the wounds of Christ.” That poses the questions of **where** do we see the wounds of Christ in our circumstances, **which** do we choose to respond to, and **how** do we respond.

We may also consider these questions collectively. To be part of a world community is in itself an amazing gift! So, as this community, do we even dare raise these questions together? Where do we see the wounds of Christ collectively? How might we use our discernment processes with openness and freedom to understand, to serve, to respond and to act?

Three urgent wounds surfaced at the assembly and are mentioned in the final document: the polarization of attitudes, the ecological crises, and the unwelcoming treatment of immigrants and refugees. There are other wounds present in our own families, with young people, abuses in our Church. How do we hear the cries of the wounded in these situations? How do we listen to one another? Dialogue? Pray? Discern a response? How do we show care? What actions do we take? How do we act to bring about reconciliation? As said earlier, we are limited, but we are able to discern the *magis*—matching our availability, experience and competence with the most

urgent needs before us. The Pope reminds us that it is our responsibility to go forth to encounter others and to nourish them with the love of Christ.

### **Next Steps**

From the perspective of the World ExCo, as President Denis Dobbstein indicated in *Projects 170*, the final document is...not final. It is the hope and expectation that national communities will continue to engage these processes of spiritual conversations and apostolic discernment in common. As the dialogue within and across communities continues, we will also have a better sense of what is most resonating for our members. The words Deepen, Share and Go Forth offer useful ways forward.

The recommendations from the Assembly:

**To the national communities:** “The process of communal discernment can prove a powerful tool to improve the quality of our apostolic calling to the Kingdom ... in living our call to Mission which is specific – and prophetic – to our lay vocation. ... Share the methods and fruits of this process to facilitate greater depth and integration of our charism in the apostolic lives of our communities.”

**To the World ExCo:** “Expand, develop and evolve this process for use at the various levels of our world community.”

The World ExCo will meet in Rome in November, and in building a team, a community, they will begin the process of discerning next best steps, certainly incorporating feedback on the experiences of the local and national communities. AMDG!

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

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# Discerning a Dream Together – Becoming an Apostolic Community of Love

By Carol J. Gonzalez



Carol (CJ) Gonzalez is a member of Chesed CLC in Pittsburgh, PA. She leads weekly spiritual support groups for incarcerated women, and has been active in community development locally. A former history teacher, she is a contemplative activist, an Episcopal laywoman and is married to Henry.

As some of you have already heard me say again and again since returning from Argentina, the privilege of being at the XVII CVX-CLC World Assembly in Buenos Aires this summer is one of the graced highlights of my life for which I am profoundly grateful. Having the opportunity to serve as a “Listening Observer” representative for the North America Region (Canada, USA, Mexico), along with reps from the other continental regions, personally represents something of a culmination of the past sixteen years since I began my journey with *The Spiritual Exercises*. The South American context has even further roots woven into the preparation for being present. This is the continent where my husband Henry was born. So we eagerly made this pilgrimage together. Henry was able to be present at the Assembly for the lively, open Visitor’s Day. From the very beginning, our acceptance of a cancelled flight led us to trust God, a clear thread of grace on this journey. Our connecting flight out of Dallas was cancelled after many hours of waiting. The night flight turned into a daytime flight. This afforded Henry the awesome opportunity to see from the air the continent of his birth and early years, after so many decades away. Tears flowed frequently as we silently, prayerfully, joyfully made our way over 5,300 miles. Having prepared as much as I could reading many documents and talking with other CLC members, I found myself very humbled. I realized how much more I have to learn and rested in the invitation to trust the Lord. We became aware of how fundamentally intertwined we are, sharing our common home, Earth.

## Relationship - Community - Deepening

*The call to know who we are as CLC, to know and love one another in community and to be open to interior conversion by the Spirit for Magis mission in the world!*



From the very first moments in Buenos Aires as we departed the plane, we met one of the Philippine delegates who’d been on our flight. As we navigated immigration together, this new friendship led to ongoing conversations with another delegate from Indonesia. We talked about a project of creating and selling portable bamboo tableware that we hope will allow CLCers never to have to use plastic flatware again! We found ourselves joining other CLC members arriving from around the world as we eagerly gathered at the airport with some of our host

ARUPA team members. They were like family welcoming us from abroad! ARUPA’s generosity, kindness and attentive hospitality contributed greatly to the positive and prayerful experience for everyone, as we genuinely experienced a felt sense of one world community.



Another precious grace of relationship happened on the first day as I was walking the interior quadrangle and heard someone call my name. Sabe, one of the delegates from South Africa and I fell into each other’s arms with tearful joy. We were



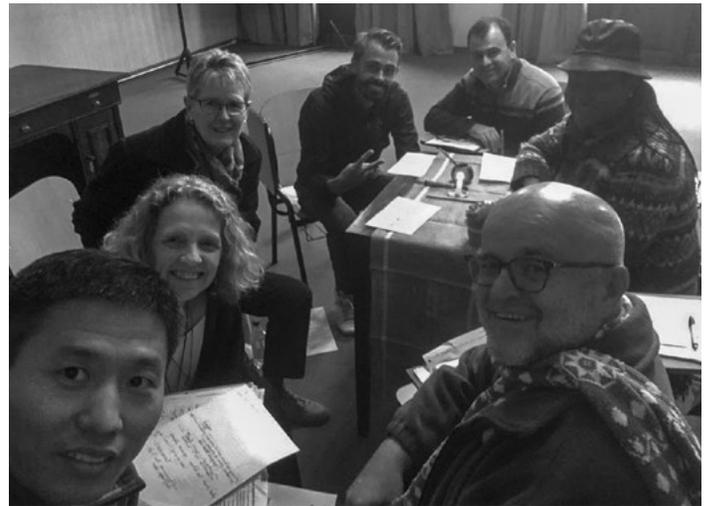


*CVX-CLC Regional Representatives: Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia-Pacific, North America, & Middle East.*

surprised and grateful to have the opportunity to be in the same place at the same time. This was a ‘presence’ beyond Facebook where we’d met on one of the many CLC pages! Well aware this may be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be together, we hugged a lot over the next ten days!

The opportunity to participate with the other representatives of CVX-CLC World Regions (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, and North America) established new relational connectedness. Our presence contributed in liturgical, symbolic ways in the Opening Assembly. Our team of regional reps brought up the World Assembly Flag, reflecting our unity as a body of national communities living as one world community. We also had the privilege of leading the prayers on the closing day.

Meeting in person as a North American Region with people I’ve known almost exclusively from Zoom conversations contributes to enhanced relationships that can lead to greater apostolic effectiveness and witness in the world. Those online conversations over the last five years have borne fruit as some CVX (French Canadian) and CLC Canada members have reconnected in the process. The Syrian Refugee Project unfolded as we recognized an urgent need to collaborate. Sharing of resources, twinning and immersion experiences are just some of that fruit we hope to continue and deepen with our shared experience.



The opportunity to meet in a small group during the central discernment days revealed the Ignatian way of proceeding. Silent pause between speakers, extended prayerful silence and the three rounds of sharing led to an intimacy among us. These new CLC friends from Sweden, Nigeria, Malta, Austria, Hong Kong and Australia created a safe space. We could share moments of desolation as we navigated disappointments during the discerning process with a desire for interior freedom and openness to listen deeply to the Spirit.

Simply being present with one another as roommates, sharing meals, walking and worshipping made it easy to form significant relationships in a short time. We often



shared from our hearts the similar challenges of living a CLC way of life on mission in the world. Building on the many online connections prior to the Assembly had enabled me to experience CLC members around the world. The personal interactions with delegates and EAs from the Netherlands, South Africa, Egypt, France, Germany, Japan, Vietnam, Cameroon, Ecuador and Taiwan contribute in significant ways to further discern how we live our CLC vocational call through daily updates, prayers and invitations.

### Process - Ignatian Discernment - Sharing

Grateful for the witness of others who've written in this issue about the communal discernment process, I echo the gratitude for the gentle, humble European team of ESDAC (Spiritual Exercises for Communal Apostolic Discernment). Their experienced wisdom, along with their creative use of music and symbolic props helped to bring abstract movements to life as we journeyed together with Spiritual Conversation (prayerful listening and expression). Others have already described the powerful experience we shared around the naming of our core sins, the paralysis of stagnation embodied in the frozen "statues of salt." This brought most of us to tears, sensing the weight of losing who we are called to be (as salt that has lost its taste). This was always against the backdrop of God's love. We as loved sinners yearn for interior freedom and availability to love as God loves. Some of us experienced this paralysis with a sense of desolation about a missed opportunity to act on one of our four Frontier areas, that of Integral Ecology. Canadian delegate Michelle Mahoney wrote in a recent CLC Canada newsletter:

*"One of the greatest disappointments was the experience of Communal Discernment regarding proposed changes to the General Principles. We were asked many*

*times for 'questions of clarification' with information having gone out to delegates months in advance. Repeatedly, even the most mature CLC members made comments and suggested further changes to the previous proposed changes. The result was that there was confusion and swaying of opinions, inviting the false Spirit into the process. Eventually, none of the proposed changes was accepted, including Canada's proposal [of a 5-year plan to study the GP's for possible language that could be more inclusive of the environment]. I felt very sad but also felt that the Spirit was telling us that we need to deepen our experience and understanding of communal discernment on ALL levels. As communities and individuals we need to ask ourselves: 'Are we really Spiritually free [and having all the necessary information] as we enter into our individual and communal discernments?'"*

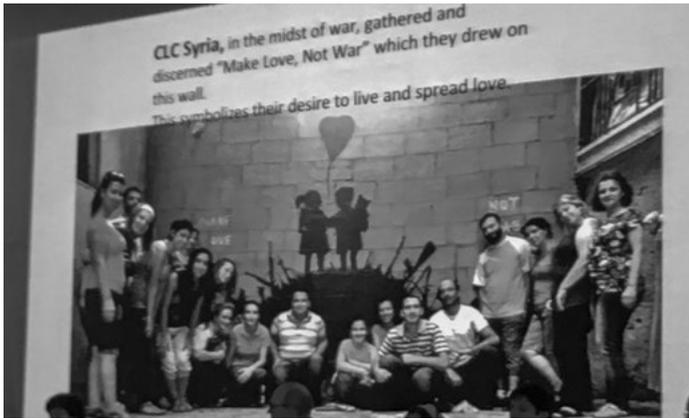
This may have contributed to why we did not come away with any major recommendations or resolutions, but journeying together we did share a common belief that, as Michelle concluded, *"At this time in our history, the Trinity is calling us to Deepen, Share and Go Forth with what we have already been given, especially the gift of Communal Discernment, in reading both the Movements of the Spirit AND the Signs of the Times."*

### On Mission as an Apostolic Community of Love— Collaborating More Effectively - Going Forth!



The necessity of working through our differences using our Ignatian tools of contemplative prayer, spiritual conversations, discernment processes and DSSE will lead us into the joy and depth of the Holy Spirit as differing perspectives, backgrounds and cultures become more than the sum of their parts as One World Body on Common Mission. Signs of this life-giving movement appeared throughout the Assembly, including:

- Ann Marie Brennan gave a graced presentation from the past five years on two of our Frontiers (Global Poverty and Integral Ecology)



- An evening of lively conversation on Apostolic initiatives from around the world as delegates from Poland, Uruguay, Kenya, USA, Ivory Coast, Australia, Guatemala, Nigeria and Canada shared how we are seeking to hear and be open to the invitations of the Holy Spirit to serve the marginalized, spiritually hungry. We desire to care for all creation as we discern a *Magis* response in the spirit of AMDG! There was a strong desire to learn more about CLC members on mission and to stay in touch beyond the Assembly, more effectively using our website and various online opportunities.
- Colorful, vibrant displays from each national community are available as a photo album on CLC-USA's Office of Apostolic Action & Advocacy Facebook group. They may also be posted in entirety on the World CLC website.
- There was evidence of young CLC leadership particularly from Latin America and Africa. The presidents of Bolivia, Chile, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Latvia, Nicaragua and Venezuela, and the treasurer from Zambia were all under 35. Many more delegates were in their 20s and 30s. Their energy was transformative and profoundly hopeful!

Someone recently posted the meme: "A Dream written down with a date becomes a Goal, a goal broken down into steps becomes a Plan, a plan backed by Action becomes Reality." As we seek to make Love real in the world, we start with discerning a dream together, on this journey of becoming an apostolic community of love.



*Carol with 3 flags of the North America Region.*



*Regional Reps leading the final day prayers.*

# IN MEMORIAM



## **Father Kenneth A. Buddendorff, S.J., 1929-2018**

Father Kenneth A. Buddendorff, S.J., died Friday, Aug. 3, 2018, in Grand Coteau, Louisiana. He was 88 years old, a Jesuit for 70 years and a priest for 57 years. He was born in New Orleans on Sept. 9, 1929.

Fr. Buddendorff's ministry included work in secondary and higher education, as well as provincial administration for the former New Orleans Province. He had a special interest in promoting Christian Life Community. He promoted CLC tirelessly and enthusiastically. Father helped develop a program to train directors of The Spiritual Exercises reflecting his keen interest in making the exercises available as widely as possible in a way that empowered the laity. We remember with gratitude all that God has done through Father's life of service to God and CLC.

## **Edythe Mary Westenhaver Darrow, 1928 - 2018**

Edythe Mary Westenhaver Darrow, 90, of Martinsburg, West Virginia, went to be with the Lord on Friday, July 12, 2018 at Canterbury Center. She was born July 11, 1928 in Cleveland, Ohio.

She was an amazing woman who was loved and will be missed by her family, friends and church. She lived an adventurous life, touring Europe and living in the Vatican for six years as a journalist. Edythe was the author of several books and worked as a vocational therapist at East Ridge in Martinsburg.

Widely known in the Mid-Atlantic Region, Edythe belonged to the Shepherd's Gate Community in Martinsburg. Her great contribution to World CLC was as Executive Secretary in the World Secretariat during the years prior to and following the formation of CLC 50 years ago. Throughout her life she was committed to and passionate about Christian Life Community. Edythe was a great gift to those who knew her, to CLC and the Church.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Lawrence William Darrow; a sister, Gail Kotab; and a niece, Deborah Ann Krupp. Edythe is survived by nephews, Edward, Jon and Bill; nieces, Jamie, Tabitha and Ashley.

**Frank Valente** of Westchester CLC New York, on June 30, 2018.

**Marie Porter** (100 years old), the mother of Marie Seeger formerly of Westchester CLC New York, on August 3, 2018.

**Clarence Markham** of Eagles Wings of Newport, Oregon, on August 21, 2018. He served as National CLC Treasurer.

**Leonard Macalusa**, brother of Peter Macalusa of Northern New Jersey CLC, on October 23, 2018.

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*Harvest*

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**St. Louis, MO 63108**

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## **Calendar**

National Assembly  
Pittsburgh, PA  
July 18-21, 2019

## **Next Issue**

**The Wounds of Christ**