

PROJECTS:**Our next CLC World Assembly – “CLC celebration, consolidation, renewal”****No.168, September 2017*****Original: English***

Dear friends in the Lord,

1. On behalf of the CLC world Exco, greetings. It is now about 10 months to our next CLC World Assembly and time to prepare ourselves for this great event in CLC life.¹
2. Our Scriptures and Liturgy are replete with examples of “times of preparation”, e.g. Lent, Advent, and more. We too, are now entering a special time of preparation, as we embark on our journey towards our next CLC World Assembly. In this sense, our Assembly has already begun. So, we stand back, take stock, and look around, i.e. we seek “to make ourselves sensitive to the signs of the times and the movements of the Spirit” (CLC GP 6).
3. Firstly, we recall the image depicted by St Ignatius in his “Contemplation of the Incarnation” echoes of which we encounter in the Preamble of our CLC General Principles. We note the Three Divine Persons looking down on us, lamenting the worldly situation, and deciding to work the redemption of the Human race. We note also God’s great desire to engage intimately with us as both the objects of and collaborators in His Great Mission.
4. Secondly, we find ourselves confronted with a number of today’s contextual realities which we feel will resonate with our CLC world community. These realities, collectively, seem to contain the seeds of a deeper renewal for our CLC world community, of our personal vocations in life and for the strengthening of our apostolic presence in the world.

**The first contextual reality – Our 50-year anniversary**

5. The first reality is the occurrence of the 50-year anniversary of CLC since its renewal in 1967 - a significant milestone and a time for gratitude, celebration and, in the Ignatian sense, a time

¹ See CLC President’s letter No 4 - Convocation of the CLC World Assembly, Buenos Aires, 2018:
<http://bit.ly/Convocation-enPDF>

of review and evaluation. As encouraged by our own CLC GPs (GP 2), we seek to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, inscribed in our hearts, expressing itself anew in each situation and time.

6. The deep themes for celebration are reflected in the very significant graces CLC has received over its past 50 years. These graces relate especially to CLC growth in identity, community, mission and discernment processes. Let us all take time to reflect on their special significance to us, at all levels of CLC, and as lived out in our own circumstances.
7. In addition, a time of celebration of past blessings is also a good time for an honest reappraisal of how we have been travelling. So, we look back over our graced history that we might more validly discern our future and move forward more surely in the Lord's company and mission.

The second contextual reality – a papacy renewing Church

8. The papacy of Pope Francis is inviting us to a new vision, depth and experience of contemporary Catholicism, calling for a true conversion in the way we, the Church, are present to ourselves and the world. His various papal announcements advocate significant reforms in theology, ecclesiology, and especially, in pastoral practice. We seek with joy and hope to join Pope Francis and the Church in these profound reforms.
9. Especially, we hear Pope Francis as he talks to us about collegiality and a more outward missionary perspective in the world, venturing to the peripheries where we, the laity, are especially present. He calls us, as church, to fulfil a role something like that of a "field hospital", and living the "option for the poor". He talks often of mercy, joy, inclusivity, caring for the earth and personally leading lives of ongoing discernment and conversion.
10. Pope Francis has also put out a renewed call to the laity in a fundamental way, picking up again the themes from Vatican II² (in spirit, if not always by direct reference) and adding his contemporary perspective. More than ever, we feel called to a time of "thinking with the Church", a "sensus fidelium"³, that we (CLC) may make validly discerned choices according to God's will about our humble part for the good of the Church and the world.

The third contextual reality – the renewed call of the laity in our world today

(i) Renewal of the laity

11. Of special interest and inspiration to us are Pope Francis's views on the laity. Pope Francis calls for a "new awakening" emphasising how we, the laity, are commissioned by our baptism to also share in the priestly, prophetic and royal office of Christ. After all, our apostolates are

² eg, as in "Gaudium et Spes" and the "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity"

³ "Rules for thinking with the Church" (Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, Para 352 et al.)

assigned by the Lord Himself, to bring His salvation and friendship to every corner of the world and every facet of life.

12. The Pope has particularly strong words for the “sin of clericalism” and our collective (ie clerical and lay) need for reform. Whatever reforms are planned for the church hierarchy, they apply equally to us laity who may be overly complicit in a service to a self-referential church rather than engaging in a more missionary outlook in the world. Our world as laity is that of families, schools, parishes, political involvement, professions, work, culture and more. The Pope’s call to us all (i.e. priests, religious and laity) is to engage more deeply and humbly in a spirit of collaborative service in our respective vocations and missionary fields.
13. How do we as laity live a new appreciation of our CLC lay vocations? As CLC people, we are particularly blessed with the gifts, insights and graces of the ever-relevant Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. With these gifts, we feel equipped and prepared in a particular way to respond to Pope Francis’ challenge to live, as fully as we can, the mission of the laity in the world today, aware that, along the way, we will encounter a call to an ever-deepening personal conversion.

(ii) Our world today

14. There is little need to cite here the endless litany of the woes of the world. Our media is saturated with it. Suffice it to say that it is unlikely that, ever before, have we been collectively confronted with issues of war, starvation, mass migration, polarisation of wealth, the fracturing of family, a disregard for the environment and the denial of basic human rights, as we are now.
15. It only takes a glance through our CLC global websites and literature to appreciate how many of our CLC members are living with these trials in their own daily lives. While some of us are fortunate to live largely free of many of these difficulties, we are all, nevertheless, called to address them according to our Faith - and as our Lebanon Mandate recommends.
16. How can we respond to these great needs of our world? Once again, we remind ourselves how well placed we are as lay people, living a CLC/Ignatian charism, to take the message of Christ and His mission to all parts of the world. We seek to cooperate to the fullest with this new awakening of the central place and role of the lay vocation, and to work collaboratively with the full Church for Christ’s global mission.

A “Kairos” moment

17. These above considerations collectively suggested that we are living a “Kairos” moment in time⁴. Dictionary definitions suggest, a “Kairos” moment is when we are being confronted

⁴ See CLC President’s letter No 4 - Convocation of the CLC World Assembly, Buenos Aires, 2018:
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with a time that is especially right, critical, opportune and proper to take a deliberate course of action to achieve a desirable end. The circumstances and dynamics of our times seem to suggest that we are present to such a “moment” now. We therefore seek to respond to this moment in a spirit of review, consolidation, and the fullest engagement, both personally and collectively as a global community. Our coming World Assembly presents us with a special opportunity to do this.

The journey to our CLC World Assembly – and two “movements”

18. Above, we have described three broad contextual realities. Now, we also re-present as a reminder, and as introduced in our Convocation letter, three beacons that we hope will help illuminate our journey to and experience of our next World Assembly:

- a) **The Theme:** “CLC, a gift for the Church and the World.”
- b) **The Scripture text:** “How many loaves have you?... Go and see” (Mk 6:38)”
- c) **The Grace:** “We desire greater depth and integration in the living out of our CLC charism in the world today.”

19. In addition, and in the context of the above, we have also already proposed two basic movements (see Convocation letter) which we now also re-present here:

- a) **1st Movement – Review and renewal in living of our CLC Charism:** Reflecting on and reviewing the many graces received through and inherent in our CLC vocations, we seek a greater depth and integration of our way of life according to our CLC Charism, i.e. we seek an integration in our personal and communal living of the three pillars of CLC, namely, the pillars of spirituality, community and mission. We seek to live personally, as fully as we can, Pope Francis’ invitation to a new lay awakening and personal commitment to Christ’s mission in our everyday lives - and the implied process of ongoing prayer, action and conversion.
- b) **2nd Movement – Living our CLC Charism in the world today:** We seek the fullest depth of engagement in the world, personally and collectively, according to our CLC Charism and appropriate to our life circumstances. In doing so, we respond to the prompts of Pope Francis, the spirit of Vatican II and our own GPs, that remind us that “The Spirit ... challenges us to see our serious responsibilities and to seek constantly the answers to the needs of our times ...” (GP 2).

20. In this issue of Projects, we will amplify a little on the first movement. In the next issue of Projects (Projects 169), we will amplify on the second movement.

21. **A suggestion for reflection on the “first movement”:** As part of our journey to our next CLC World Assembly, we consider:

- a) ***Our history:*** Let us review our experience of the graces of our 50-year history including as experienced at the various levels of CLC, i.e. at the global, national, small group and personal levels. Whilst we share some common perceptions at a global level, there could be considerable variations at the other levels as graces are received and lived according to context, be it national, local, cultural, or whatever. In this way, we contemplate the rich diversity of CLC life and action around the world.
- b) ***Renewed appreciation of our Charism:*** Informed by the above reflections, we now respond to the question that Christ has directed to us: “How many loaves have you? Go and see”. We seek the grace of renewed personal appreciation of our Charism.
- c) ***Renewed living of our charism:*** Now, how can we personally live our vocations and mission in our daily lives more deeply? (Reflection here is a prelude to Projects 169)
22. We hope that the above reflections, and those of Projects 169, will help prepare us for our next World Assembly and any further discernments about CLC directions. We urge your fullest engagement in the journey ahead. World Assembly preparations are continuing. So, if you have any thoughts or inspirations, we would be very happy to hear from you. Please send comments back to our Executive Secretary, Alwin Macalalad⁵ by 30th November 2017.
23. We look forward with great hope to what lies ahead for us and take inspiration from the words of St Paul: “Glory be to Him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:20).

United in prayer and action,

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With and on behalf of CLC W-Executive Council

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