



**Christian Life  
Community**  
*praying our life  
and living our prayer*

# FOCUS

January 2013

## BEING CLC

*“That is why I am reminding you now  
to fan into a flame the gift of God that you possess ...  
God did not give us a spirit of timidity,  
but the Spirit of power and love and self-control”*



These words taken from Paul’s letter to Timothy were a timely reminder of why we had come together as representatives of the European CLC community in St Pölten, Austria where we recently held our EuroLink’s meeting. Here nineteen European national communities were represented including two observers from Romania where CLC really is in its infancy. The theme of this meeting was “belonging” or “being CLC” and we chose this theme specifically because next year focuses on two very important events for us as the CLC World Community.

Alongside the World Assembly which will take place in Lebanon we also have the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ignatian Lay Communities...in other words our 450<sup>th</sup> birthday! In the light of these two events we wanted to take the opportunity of reflecting on what it really means for us as individuals, small groups, national communities and a European community “to be” CLC ... how this is lived out in our daily lives, in our homes, places of work and the wider community; how too is this “being” CLC visible in all these areas of our lives.

These days of praying together, sharing together often at a deep level, were a powerful reminder of the reasons why I belong to CLC. Amongst this very diverse group of people I found a real sense of community, a shared desire to find God in all things, a common recognition of the struggles that each of us encounter in trying to live out our vocation as members of this community. We came together with different desires and expectations but soon discovered a “common language” the language of CLC! This has so often been my experience of CLC as I think of the journey made with my own group over the years and of the many encounters I have had with CLC communities at national and European level.

As we journeyed together in these days several of the phrases or themes presented touched me very deeply, renewing in me the call to be more aware of the treasure I have in belonging to this Ignatian family.

In our opening liturgy we were invited to contemplate the burning bush and to “take off our sandals” for in our listening to the sharing of each one we are truly on holy ground, and it is in this sharing...this spiritual conversation that we begin to discover what community is really about. Exploring what it means to “be” CLC led us to reflect on Ignatius’ own journey and how he saw himself invited into companionship with the Trinity and in turn He invites us to see ourselves as sharing in the companionship of the Holy Trinity and in the mission that flows from that companionship. This mission is one of love and service in the community, the Church and society.

Powerful too was the analogy of the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper – “taken, blessed, broken and given”. We were invited to consider how we too, both as individuals and community, are taken (chosen), blessed in so many ways, broken and given so that “Christ working in us can give himself to others ... serve others .... feed others” (Alan Harrison sj )



This really challenged me, as did a quote from George Bernard Shaw used in our prayer on the Saturday morning:

*continued over ...*

## Being CLC (continued)

*"I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. Life is no "brief candle" to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for a moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations"*

As we stand on the brink of our great anniversary can I, can we be that torch for others? Can we share the treasure we have in CLC with others? My prayer is that each one of us both as individuals but also as community will make this coming year a real celebration of "being CLC"

*Evelyne Maloret (Jersey Originals CLC and Co-ordinator of the World CLC's Euroteam )*

## Images of Ignatius: A pre-Advent gathering of Young Adults' CLC

When we imagine Ignatius, how do we picture him? As a soldier, fighting first for the honour of a Spanish princess and then for Christ his King? As the mystic who so often wept with consolation during Mass that it threatened his eyesight? As the eager pilgrim who was ordered to leave the Holy Land? All of these images can be helpful as we enter imaginatively into the life of Ignatius.

In the week leading up to Advent, over thirty CLC young adults and friends gathered at Mount Street for a reflective evening led by our National Chaplain, Br. Alan Harrison. In his reflections, Br. Alan presented many rich images from Ignatius's life, mystical experiences and spirituality, including some beautiful paintings illustrating different aspects of Ignatius's life. Here are three images which have stayed with me during my Advent prayers:

### ***The Trinity as a chord***

In his autobiography, Ignatius recalls a mystical experience of God as three keys on a musical instrument making a harmonious chord. While Trinitarian metaphors are a notorious route to heresy, this is an image I can imaginatively understand and appreciate!

### ***Ignatius's foundation of a lay spirituality***

Ignatius founded a spirituality for everyone, and worked directly with lay people through the Sodalities he founded. As we enter our 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, we can feel blessed by this heritage, stretching back through the centuries to those lay men and women who were invited by Ignatius and his first companions to share their spirituality.

### ***Taken, blessed, broken, received***

Br. Alan applied this Eucharistic frame to God's actions in our own lives: *taking* and choosing us as his own, *blessing* us and making us holy, being with us in our *brokenness*, and *receiving* us into his Kingdom.

After the talk, we shared our own reflections as well as an excellent supper! It was lovely to see some people at their first CLC event, those who were in the process of



finding a group, and those who are established group members or lone members in and around London.

*Katherine Richardson, CLC Young Adults' Rep.*

## CLC North East Day

Members in the North East once again gathered for a quiet day of prayer at the usual location of Antrim Gardens Convent, Seaham Harbour.

The day was led by Margaret Wood, who began by presenting an overview of the life of St Hilda, abbess of Whitby, a woman whose life manifested the power of God, working in and through her, enabling her to achieve things way beyond what could be expected of a person of her situation and time.

We were invited to reflect on Isaiah 43:1-5, which speaks to us of the empowering presence and love of God in our lives. We reflected on our experience of God's providence and presence in our own journey of faith, especially during times when we felt almost overwhelmed by negative situations. Like Hilda are we able to accept God's call to us, trusting that He will guide, lead and empower us no matter what difficulties we encounter?

**Our afternoon session invited us to reflect on the nature of our relationship with God. Is it about keeping to a set of rules and certainties, or is it about developing a personal relationship with God? ►**

# THE GIFT OF



For a few moments, I'd like to ask you to give thanks for the copy of *Focus* you are reading.

Take a moment to think about what you value about it, and to appreciate the contributions that go into creating it ... the individual articles,  
the work of those who design the pages,  
and those who send it out.

Each month people generously volunteer behind the scenes to produce *Focus* and to provide us with such a rich source of information and news about our CLC family.

I know that over the years I have learned a lot from *Focus* about other CLC members and what is happening around the country. I've found fruitful material for personal prayer and reflection and, particularly from the front page, gained helpful insight into the spiritual life. *Focus* is a real gift - and I know from the copies circulated to Ignatian retreat centres, it is a gift that keeps on giving, helping introduce CLC to new members and the wider world.

So, my reflection is that *Focus* is a really important tool for us. In the past it used to be put together by a team reviewing and planning content, working on different pages with one overall editor. However in recent months we have been relying on just a couple of volunteers. If we want to keep *Focus* going, **we urgently need to strengthen the team.**

There are different ways that you could be involved but here is a flavour of what working on *Focus* involves: asking people to write articles - by email or telephone; editing articles where necessary to fit space; proofreading to check spelling and grammar; using MS Publisher to design the pages; reviewing previous issues and coming up with ideas for content. We can provide some training and support, if you are interested in helping.

Do take a few moments to reflect on what skills and time you have to offer and whether you might be able to help out in this way. Please help us to keep giving the gift of *Focus*.



*Una Buckley, President*

**Please contact Una directly, either by email [president@clcew.org.uk](mailto:president@clcew.org.uk) or by phone 07816754443**

► **What risks are we prepared to take as we move into a deeper relationship with God? Are we prepared for our existing understandings to be challenged, maybe to such an extent that it seems that all is changed, as if we had been "reborn"?**

As usual, our sharing was rich with faith experience, interesting and enjoyable.

A special surprise of the day was the presence of Teresa Benkhabebe-House, who hasn't been with us in the North East since her time as CLC development worker. Teresa is now resident in Northumberland and is therefore now one of our clan!

So welcome Teresa, what a delight to have you with us.

Unfortunately our usual walk along Seaham Harbour beach didn't take place - it was probably more storm-tossed than sun-drenched, and anyway the ice-cream parlour was probably shut.

Otherwise, what a lovely day we had, with special thanks to Margaret Wood, for her excellent and inspiring input.

*Eddie Langton, 'Voice of the North'*

## Retreats - what do YOU need?

**The Formation-Retreat Team  
would like your help!**

The Team needs to find out precisely what your needs are. It's no good doing the same thing in the same way every year if people's requirements and circumstances change!

To find out, a **QUESTIONNAIRE** will shortly be sent to members and a covering letter will explain what it is all about. To make it easy, questionnaires can be returned by post, by email or online at 'Survey Monkey', so that no-one is left out.

**Will you please look out for this and return it immediately, if not before!** The team would like the results before their February meeting. AND there's a time constraint using SurveyMonkey too.

**Thank you!**

# Noticeboard

## Progressio 2013

The World CLC publication  
**"PROGRESSIO"**

published twice yearly, offers reflections on our spirituality and provides a forum for experiences of CLC from around the world.

Additionally, one *Progressio* supplement provides material on our spirituality and formation.

The price is €24, which at the present time converts to **£19.50**. **How about sharing the cost and having a copy for your CLC group?**

If you would like to receive "*Progressio*" during 2013, will you please send a cheque for **£19.50** to the office (below) **OR**, if you use online banking, you can send an electronic transfer to **090151 45663507** with the ref: **PROG SURNAME (important!)**, and tell us by email: [treasurer@clcew.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@clcew.org.uk)

We will then order your copy from the World Office for you and absorb the international transfer fee. Your copy of *Progressio* will then be sent to you direct from Rome.



## Towards a Prophetic Community

### A new set of meeting plans



The set of six leaflets contained in this pack can be used either by individuals or by groups for prayer and reflection. They attempt to highlight the significance for all of us of the journey that the World Community has been making since the World Assembly in Itaci in 1998 in understanding our identity as Christian Life Community. Obtainable from the address below.

### CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY

*Inspired by St Ignatius Loyola and his Spiritual Exercises, CLC is a lay organisation, a world community of small groups of 4-10 people, helping members from all walks of life to integrate prayer and action in daily life, to respond more fully to God's loving desire for them.*

Address for all correspondence, including subscriptions and membership, contributions to FOCUS and orders for literature:

CLC England & Wales: 114 Mount St, London W1K 3AH

email: [info@clcew.org.uk](mailto:info@clcew.org.uk) website: [www.clcew.org.uk](http://www.clcew.org.uk) World CLC: [www.cvx-clc.net](http://www.cvx-clc.net)

**National President:** Una Buckley tel: 07816 754443 or 020 7831 5081 email: [ubuckley@gmail.com](mailto:ubuckley@gmail.com)

**National Chaplain:** Br Alan Harrison SJ, tel: 020 7493 7811 email: [alanh46@gmail.com](mailto:alanh46@gmail.com)

**CLC Secretary:** Monica Francomb, tel: 0151 270 2128 email: [secretary@clcew.org.uk](mailto:secretary@clcew.org.uk)

**CLC Treasurer:** Brian Austin tel: 01926 428635 email: [treasurer@clcew.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@clcew.org.uk)

**Administrator:** David Formosa: CLC 114 Mount Street, London W1K 3AH [administrator@clcew.org.uk](mailto:administrator@clcew.org.uk)

The annual subscription for *Focus only* (non-members) is now £10 or £5 for e-FOCUS

CLC is a Registered Charity, Number 1056891

PLEASE BOOK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

## CLC Individually Guided Retreat Jesus House, Llanaber, Nr. Barmouth, Wales

27 July—3 August 2013

Information from Pat Fitzpatrick  
01326 316566 / 07407673686  
Email [patfitz60@btinternet.com](mailto:patfitz60@btinternet.com)



## CLC Roman Experience

A CLC Visit to the Ignatian Sites  
in Rome,

Friday 24<sup>th</sup>, Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>, Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>, Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May

We now have an **Information Sheet** about this  
available from [clc@31cv311tp.freeseve.co.uk](mailto:clc@31cv311tp.freeseve.co.uk)  
or mobile 07989667106

## CALENDAR 2012 - 13

**9-10 FEBRUARY 2013** Formation-Retreat Team overnight meeting, Manresa Ho., Birmingham.

**23-24 FEBRUARY 2013** Extended National Team Meeting, St Mary's Convent, Handsworth, B'ham.

**23 MARCH 2013:** Midlands World CLC Day, Leamington Spa

**23 MARCH 2013:** North West Regional Day, Loyola Hall

**20 APRIL 2013** National Team Meeting

**24-27 MAY 2013** CLC VISIT TO ROME - 450 YEARS PILGRIMAGE  
See above for details

**12-14 JULY 2013**  
CLC NATIONAL ASSEMBLY & AGM, Hayes Centre, Swanwick, Derbs.  
'Let's celebrate our CLC journey—past gifts, present blessings, future hopes'.

**27 JULY - 3 AUGUST:** Ignatian Retreat at Barmouth, Wales  
See above for details

**30 JULY - 8 AUGUST, 2013**  
WORLD ASSEMBLY of CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY, Lebanon

**21 SEPTEMBER 2013** National Team Meeting

**20-22 JUNE 2014** National Assembly, High Leigh, Herts..

**Next FOCUS  
Deadline**  
Please send  
contributions for the next  
Focus to  
[clc@31cv311tp.freeseve.co.uk](mailto:clc@31cv311tp.freeseve.co.uk)  
by 21 JANUARY