



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

# FOCUS

## Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect

When the rich young man asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life, we remember that in Matthew's version, he was told if he wanted to be perfect he should sell all his possessions, etc. That may seem hard enough for us in modern times with so many material possessions to demand our allegiance. If we enjoy many creature comforts it is hard to detach ourselves from them, and if we do not have many creature comforts, we may still crave them and make them our goal.

**God saw everything He had made,  
and it was very good.** *Genesis, 1:31*

But Jesus presents us with a far more demanding and far-reaching challenge when He tells us to imitate the perfection exemplified by our Heavenly Father. In chapter 5 of St Mathew's Gospel we read of ways of living a virtuous life, as outlined in the Mosaic Law. Jesus encourages us to live accordingly and yet to go a step further 'Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.' So, what is this perfection? How can I, a mere, weak human live as perfectly as God? It feels like an impossible task and yet this is the standard that Jesus sets! How can we fathom (measure) (know) a love which is so enormous, so generous, so unconditional? Perhaps the clue lies in the Our Father; perhaps in the precious words of Jesus dying on the cross – 'Forgive'; perhaps continuing God's work of reconciliation [2Cor, 5:18-19],

We can look on some of the horrific things going on in our world and see the lack of tolerance, the craving for power, lack of respect for human dignity and life and feel helpless, and therefore blameless, in the face of these inhumanities. How can we have any influence or effect? How can we be held responsible? But, as followers of Jesus, we are expected to be affected – to be concerned and be prepared to work with Him in bringing about His kingdom 'on earth as it is in heaven'. If Jesus asks

this perfection, we know He will help us and it would not be beyond our daily endeavours.

So how do we relate this to our lives in practical terms? The only way each one of us can be involved is through our daily interactions and the way we relate to the people in our lives. We are challenged to look at all we meet through God's eyes. We are invited to put aside our critical and judgemental approach and look with compassion, understanding, forgiveness and tolerance on all those with whom we may come into contact - whether face to face, on our TV screens, in the press. If someone irritates us beyond all measure, can we still see the good – the God living in them? It is not easy and may seem foolish as we all have natural likes and dislikes, decisions to make and instincts to follow. However, we are called to continue to recognise all these as our gifts, tools which enable us to make discerned progress but do not damage our loving acceptance of another person.

**So God created humankind in his  
own image, in the image of God  
he created them.** *Genesis, 1:27*

To be perfect and love unconditionally like God, our Father, is not easy – probably a life time's journey - but it is the directive Jesus gives us to follow. We recognise that God living in us meets and respects God living in others. We are fortunate to belong to a community where we can support and encourage each other as we learn how to be true apostles of Jesus. We face up to our frailty, let go of our ego and, as we see how we are exposed to the amazing compassion of God's unconditional love and forgiveness ourselves, we realise more fully that this is what we are asked to imitate. . No, it is not easy, but we are Christians in the world today and we can make a difference by trying to be perfect as our Heavenly Father intended.

*Rita McManus*

## Preparing for World CLC Day

This past year has been a rich and gifted one as we have celebrated 450 years of Ignatian lay communities around the world! In Projects 158, the newsletter of the World Community, we are invited to celebrate the end of the jubilee year on World CLC day with joy and gratitude. Here are some suggestions for prayer and reflection to use individually, with your group or at local celebrations for World CLC day.

### From our Roots

As we have reflected over the major moments of our history over the last 450 years, we have felt much gratitude for the gift of CLC as founded, nurtured, adapted and shared by lay members of communities and their leaders from generation to generation, and by special companions, especially the Jesuits.

- ◆ **What have we learned after reviewing 450 years of our history?**
- ◆ **Have we felt gratitude for the gift of CLC to us personally, to our country, our world?**
- ◆ **How can we celebrate this gift?**

### Sharing our CLC Callings and Journeys

We are now a world body with members in over 60 countries. We are involved in various stages of life, in different circumstances, cultures and ministries. Yet, in our world community, we share our unity of Spirit and Ignatian Charism. We are brothers and sisters sharing a very valuable gift as Christian Life Community. We grow together; we are not alone; we share in one another's joys and sufferings.

- ◆ **Recall some of the stories of CLC communities worldwide. Which stories of CLC members/communities move you?**

- ◆ **Remember our CLC community in the Middle East – Lebanon, Egypt, Syria - as a gift to the world community.**

### To Our Frontiers

So, where are our frontiers? At the Assembly, we heard first-hand from our brothers and sisters in the Middle East as they shared their stories and immediate concerns regarding the violence in their countries. We heard from CLCers and Jesuits involved in ecological and environmental projects, work with families, global poverty, “voting with your wallet”, advocating for education for all children, outreach to youth in the Church, and more! We experienced deeply how varied our frontiers are, how they take different forms. The life of our Community calls us, supports us in journeying further towards our frontiers by first being aware of our place—family, workplace, social setting, environment—and the needs around us. We are called to reach deep within, and to find the life and passion that Christ inspires in us to meet those needs. We are called to live more closely with Christ, to live simply, in an attitude of love and peace, walking with those who suffer, who are vulnerable, sharing the joy and love and peace of Christ.

- ◆ **How am I called to be more responsive in attending to and hearing God's call within me?**
- ◆ **How can I improve my support of the growing sense of mission of the members of my local CLC group?**
- ◆ **Is our use of DSSE moving us to greater openness and generosity for moving to the frontiers, individually and as community?**

Please share the fruit of your reflections in pictures, music, art or narrative - email [focus@clcew.org.uk](mailto:focus@clcew.org.uk) or send to CLC, 114 Mount Street, W1K 3AH

## An Invitation for a Summer Holiday in Slovenia

Dear CLC friends<

I'm Damjan Zagozen (43) from CLC Slovenia. **My family offer to host a CLC family, student, couple or single person from CLC England or Wales for one week of summer holidays in Slovenia.**

We are four, my wife Mateja and two daughters, Neza (17) and Anamarija (13). We have already experienced CLC summer holidays in Germany and Austria and last year we helped to organise European CLC holidays in Slovenia with over 30 participants. We have always found very interesting and useful a sharing of our life/holidays with people from other communities.

This year we would like to share our holidays and practise English. We live

in a semi detached house in countryside, close to the town of Kamnik, 30 minutes drive to the capital Ljubljana. Our home is next to the mountains and 1.5 hr from Adriatic sea.

Slovenia has many natural beauties we could discover together and share our attitude to life and faith in daily life. The low cost airports of Trieste and Klagenfurt are very close.

Anyone who would be interested to visit us and spend a week together can contact us via email [zadamjan@gmail.com](mailto:zadamjan@gmail.com), Skype [damjan.za](https://www.skype.com/user/damjan.za) or by phone [+386 41 599 377](tel:+38641599377).

We kindly invite you to contact us by **the end of February** so that we can organise our holidays and request



annual leave on time. If there are more interested families, we could contact other Slovenian CLC members that would like to gain such experience too.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact us:

**Damjan Zagozen**  
**Loke v Tuhinju 9B**  
**1219 Laze v Tuhinju**  
**SLOVENIA**

# Probation—the changes explained from within



*Gordon Jackson is a CLC member from St Albans. He writes about his experience as a Probation officer and member of Napo, probation union.*

I was back on the street today armed with my 'Save Probation' posters and leaflets. It has been a difficult week as the winding up of the 35 Probation Trusts that deliver an aspect of Justice in England and Wales begins. Most staff have now been told which side of the fence they will be placed, that is either the small publicly retained Probation service or the bigger 'soon to be' private Community Rehabilitation Companies.

A woman asked me on the street, 'What are you seeking to protect?' Ultimately, I believe we seek to protect the Public. The Probation service in England and Wales supervises in the region of a ¼ of a million people a year. That is split roughly between 40% of prisoners on licence (typically a prisoners serve half their sentence in prison and half their time in the community) and 60% of people who have been subjected to Orders by a Court often as an alternative to custody. So in an average town probably around 600 citizens are being supervised by Probation, a prison without walls.

The usual assumption about privatisation is that a service is failing. However, in Probation's case it is not; indeed the Justice Minister uses every opportunity to praise Probation staff. It is exceeding its targets and has been credited with reducing reoffending by 4.9%.

Probation is particularly interested in working with those of us who have created by our actions, victims. It is that interest that led initially to the Police Court missionaries in the late 19th century entering the Courts and asking Magistrates to put 'offenders' in their charge rather than prison. They were concerned about the impact of Imprisonment for then petty crime and its impact on the family of the perpetrator. Punishment does not necessarily require people to be locked up, though of course for some crimes the seriousness demands detention.

Probation, at its simplest, believes you help people change by believing they can and if they believe it, it should result in fewer victims.



Currently it works as a unified service with people with minor offences to those with the most serious. Issues relating to the risk the individual presents, particularly if it is escalating, can be facilitated within a unified service. The two organisations that will exist on 1st April, yes this year 2014, should these plans continue, will have separate employing bodies, separate structures and as many as 200 other organisations working as subcontractors. This I believe will increase the risk to public safety and thereby victims.

The Justice Minister justifies this change by stating it is the only way he can introduce supervision for those over the age of 21 and who receive less than 12 months imprisonment. Indeed that is a good proposal that needs some work but does it justify privatisation and splitting the current Probation service? Another great injustice is that the current Probation Trusts have not been allowed to compete for their own work. Another is that those staff assigned to the retained Public Probation will become civil servants yet those in the other will not. This appears in direct breach of the Civil Service Code of Conduct which states, 'As a civil servant, you are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition and are expected to carry out your role with dedication and a commitment to the Civil Service and its core values: integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality.' Yet the principle of fairness is being ignored as implementation is driven at speed by 1st April, mere weeks away.

A great disappointment is that the e-petition opposing the decision did not reach the 100,000 signatures needed for a Commons debate. This tells me that despite the work Probation does it is not widely known. For me this issue is not about being left or right politics, this is about standing for Justice and with it peace.

## National Assembly 2014

### High Leigh, Herts, 20-22 June 2014

The National Assembly is an annual weekend gathering for the CLC community in England and Wales. It is an opportunity:

- to meet other CLC members
- to learn more about Ignatian spirituality and the CLC way of life
- to gain a broader perspective of CLC nationally and worldwide
- for listening, private prayer, reflection and small group sharing

- for communal prayer and Mass
- to relax, with social time and entertainment
- to enjoy full board and lodging at a reasonable price in beautiful surroundings.

This year the National Assembly is being coordinated by the Southern Region and we are looking for members who can help. **If you or your group are able to contribute in some way please contact Shola Adegroye [shola.adeoroye@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:shola.adeoroye@yahoo.co.uk) or call 07727898411.**

More details will be available in March Focus.

## MIDLANDS REGION WORLD CLC DAY

### *CLC and the Family*

with Br. Alan Harrison SJ

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 10am for 10.30am start**

St. Peter's, Dormer Place, Leamington Spa, CV32 5AA

Mass 4pm celebrated by Fr. Simon Bishop SJ

Cost £7. Please bring food for a shared lunch

Contact Peter & Margaret Dimambro 01926 428399

[mdimambro@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mdimambro@hotmail.co.uk)

# Noticeboard

## NORTH WEST REGION WORLD CLC DAY

*at Loyola Hall, for the last time!*

*Memories and New Beginnings*

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 10am for 10.30am start till 4pm**

Cost £10 (tbc). Please bring food for a shared lunch

Contact Tony and Betsy Jones 01706 845164

[tonyvjones@ntlworld.com](mailto:tonyvjones@ntlworld.com)

## *A Rome Experience 2014*

*Friday 23 - Monday 26 May*

Those of us who went to Rome to celebrate our 450 years were thrilled with the experience.

Alan Harrison SJ has offered to repeat his

'guided tour' of the Ignatian sites in 2014.

Please book your place NOW.

**Dates: May 23-24-25-26 2014**

Express interest for further information from:

[info@clcew.org.uk](mailto:info@clcew.org.uk) or 01926428635

## *CLC Holiday*

*at the Jesuit House, Barmouth, Wales*

*Saturday 28 June - 5 July*

We are having a shared holiday with the possibility for other meetings during the week.

We can arrange some spiritual input, too.

Cost around £175 per person for the week!

Please book your place or express your interest

**NOW.**

[info@clcew.org.uk](mailto:info@clcew.org.uk) or 01926428635

## Articles for FOCUS

**You** are invited to contribute to FOCUS with articles, either about your own life of faith, your experience of Ignatian spirituality at work in your life, about your CLC life as an individual or as a group, or your experience of a particular mission or ministry. About 600 words for a page-1 article or 400 words for a half-page on pages 2 or 3. Please send to

[focus@clcew.org.uk](mailto:focus@clcew.org.uk) or 114 Mount Street, W1K 3AH

## HELP WITH RESOURCES

Each month we aim to share ideas to expand our horizons, collaborate and help us to grow in faith.

Please send your ideas and suggestions to [jenarmstrong@talktalk.net](mailto:jenarmstrong@talktalk.net) / 01926 885347

## CALENDAR 2014

15 FEBRUARY	Midland Region Team Meeting at St Peter's Leamington Spa . Start 10.30 am. All welcome.
15/16 FEBRUARY	Formation & Retreat Team Meeting, Manresa
22/23 FEBRUARY	Extended National Team Meeting Handsworth Birmingham
22 MARCH	Midlands Regional Day, Leamington Spa
22 MARCH	North West Regional Day, Loyola Hall, L35 6NZ
10 MAY	National Team Meeting venue tbc
23-26 MAY	Rome Ignatian Experience (see above)
20/22 JUNE	National Assembly, High Leigh, Herts. (see p3)
28 JUNE - 5 JULY	Barmouth Holiday (see above)
13 SEPTEMBER	National Team Meeting venue tbc
22 NOVEMBER	National Team Meeting venue tbc

## 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 3A

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: Monica Francomb, tel: 0151 270 2128 email: [president@clcew.org.uk](mailto:president@clcew.org.uk)

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

CLC Secretary: Vacant secretary@clcew.org.uk

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

Administrator: Admin Team: [administrator@clcew.org.uk](mailto:administrator@clcew.org.uk)

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

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**Next FOCUS  
Deadline**  
Please send  
contributions for the next FOCUS  
to  
[ubuckley@gmail.com](mailto:ubuckley@gmail.com)  
by **Monday 24 February**