



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

# FOCUS

## CLC World Assembly - Lebanon August 2013

Janice Austin commented recently that a World Assembly was *'the experience of a lifetime'*. Those of us who were there can now echo that. The assembly took place this summer just north of Beirut as part of the 450th anniversary celebrations of Ignatian Lay Communities. Having as its theme *'From our Roots to the Frontiers'* and comprising over 200 delegates from over 60 CLC National Communities, it offered a fascinating insight into World CLC.

This came home to me vividly at the opening mass celebrated by the Cardinal Patriarch of Antioch, as the national flags were solemnly placed in a coloured kaleidoscope around the altar, symbolic of our union centred on the Eucharist.

It is difficult to express in cold print the vibrant and deeply inspiring experience of being part of such a dynamic, highly motivated Assembly. From the opening day, focussing on the richness of national communities, when our 'diamond' was exhibited and explained, through to the rousing Fiesta on the final evening, it was a process in which cultural and national identities were both complemented and enhanced in a common awareness of being one praying, reflecting, discerning CLC gathering.

Early presentations reflected on the journey of the Sodality, and subsequently CLC, down the years. The change is best illustrated by the fact that the first Assembly took place in Rome in the 1950's and comprised mainly priests and religious, and lasted two hours!

I found much consolation in the World Exco report on the past five years, outlining implementation of the Fatima mandate and successful developments plus issues still needing attention.



World Assembly Assemblée Mondiale Asamblea Mundial



Lebanon - Liban - Libano

At the Fatima Assembly, the Jesuit General, Fr Nicolás Adolfo SJ, challenged CLC to grow as an apostolic body, 'seeing with the eyes, hearing with the ears and feeling with the heart of Christ.' Fr Nicolás developed this theme in his keynote address, calling us to attend to the language of engagement needed: a language of history for those new to the faith; a language of prophetic freedom for those already members of the community of faith; and a language of

wisdom for frontier situations - a language which finds God in the simple things of every day and which makes sense to believers and non-believers alike, a language which finds God at work in all things. This, the General commented, is the preferred language of Pope Francis.

The Assembly then proceeded to focus on three main frontier

themes for reflection and action: Globalisation, the Family and Ecology. The international scope of CLC's ministry was further emphasised by input on and examination of these areas in language groupings and by a presentation of the work of CLC in its role as an NGO consultant at the United Nations Economical and Social Council.

A 'Visitors' Day provided a welcome relaxation from the long labours of the conference hall. Guests from CLC Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and France joined us at the splendid Jesuit college on the road to Damascus. There and later the Assembly celebrated the rich tapestry of nations and cultures represented among its members, and rejoiced that such richness was further enhanced by the formal acceptance as new National Communities, of Botswana, Guatemala and Lithuania.

In addition we were confirmed as god-parents of CLC Latvia. We met with the south Sudanese delegation who were grateful for the financial support England and Wales had provided, and with the delegation from Ireland for neighbourly relaxation.

*Continued overleaf...*

## World Assembly continued...

More formally, back in Assembly, the CLC General Norms and Principles were subjected to scrutiny and will be the object of further examination by an international committee before the next World Assembly.



**CLC Latvia meets CLC EW**



**With South Sudan delegates**

A new World Executive was elected with Mauricio Lopez (CLC Mexico) as President replacing Daniela Frank (CLC Germany), who has served a total of ten years, and a final statement was agreed summarising the whole proceedings.



**The newly elected World Executive Council**

The warm generosity and hospitality of CLC Lebanon and the competence of the administrative and translations teams were outstanding. The courage and integrity of CLC Syria and CLC Egypt in giving moving testimony to the troubled situation of their countries, and yet also providing generous entertainment and support for us was particularly inspiring. Many thanks are also due to those here who prayed earnestly for a successful and peaceful Assembly and whose prayers were so generously answered.

**Alan Harrison SJ, in consultation with Monica Francomb and Trish Coxhead**

## News from the National Assembly

The National Assembly planning team met recently to review and discuss the delegate feedback from the Assembly in July. We have taken note of comments that were made and are passing on some recommendations to the southern region for their consideration for next year's National Assembly. Many thanks to all of you who took the time to fill in the evaluation forms, especially for the many positive comments.

**Peter & Margaret Dimambro, Midlands Regional Reps**

## CLC Syrian Solidarity Fund

As delegates at the recent World Assembly in Lebanon, we were very moved to hear the personal accounts from CLC members in Syria and Egypt. People are living in terrible times. In many cases they have lost their livelihood, their homes and have to live with the fact that when their family go out, they don't know if they will return safely.

Despite all of this suffering, CLC members do their best to use skills to help other people, eg supporting refugee work, helping in crisis centres and sharing food with neighbours. They said that they had to focus on hope for a peaceful solution to the conflict - in their words, the resurrection, following the current suffering of the passion.

A letter from the World CLC Executive Council, newly elected in Lebanon, highlights various concrete things we can do: [http://www.cvx-clc.net/filesBanners/CLC\\_letter\\_Syria.pdf](http://www.cvx-clc.net/filesBanners/CLC_letter_Syria.pdf)

You are asked to consider a donation to a **CLC Syrian Solidarity Fund**. Please read the letter, pray and reflect on **your** response. These are our brothers and sisters; what are we able to do to support them?

*Monica Francomb - World Assembly Delegate*

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## How to make a donation

**By cheque:** cheque payable to 'CLC' and write on the back 'SYRIA WITH GIFT AID' (if you are eligible\*) or 'SYRIA WITHOUT GIFT AID'. Send to the CLC Office at: 114 Mount Street, London, W1K 3AH

**By online banking:** transfer to: Santander Business Bank SORT CODE: **09-01-51** ACCOUNT NUMBER: **45663507** with the Ref: "SYRIA [SURNAME] GA" for Gift Aid donations (if you are eligible\*) e.g. 'SYRIA AUSTIN GA' or 'SYRIA [SURNAME] NGA' for non Gift Aid donations and advise us by email: [treasurer@clcew.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@clcew.org.uk) that you have done so.

All the donations will then be accumulated, the gift aid to be reclaimed added, and one single transfer made to the CLC Syrian Solidarity Fund from CLC-EW. Thank you !

*Brian Austin, CLC National Treasurer*

\* For Gift Aid eligibility see [www.hmrc.gov.uk/s/giving/gift-aid](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/s/giving/gift-aid) Please note that donations from groups are not eligible.

You can read more about our delegates experience of the World Assembly at [www.clcew.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.clcew.blogspot.co.uk)

All the assembly documents are available at [www.clc-cvx.net](http://www.clc-cvx.net)

## Our CLC Mission and Icebergs

*In soaring Middle Eastern temperatures this summer, icebergs weren't perhaps the first image that leaped into delegates' heads, but when it came to reflecting on our apostolic mission, the symbol of an iceberg was a helpful tool. Trish Coxhead (Zaccheus CLC) one of our delegates explains.*

"God's glory is seen in a person fully alive"  
St. Irenaeus

During the World Assembly, Franklin our World Executive Secretary, opened his talk with this well-known phrase. Every person's life is a valuable project in God's eyes. The Second Vatican Council stated that the vocation of the laity is to live in the world, which means in our jobs, families, studies and social lives! The lay person is challenged to be concerned with and committed to the ordinary things in life and to do so in accordance with the Gospel.

This means that there is no lack of mission in CLC. Lay members live their daily lives fully, at work, socially and in families, but this is generally unnoticed and its fruits are certainly not recorded in any official way. However although a fundamental part of this mission is unobserved, the Gospel is brought into the world.



**Did you know 90% of an Iceberg is under water?**

This is where the image of the iceberg helps us – the biggest part of our mission is invisible and yet supports the whole body. Invisible, but essential. Therefore 100% of our members are already very busy with their mission. The first challenge is to rediscover and value these 'ordinary' activities as our basic mission as lay people. Another way of putting this is to live our daily lives with 'apostolic intensity'. 'The treasure we have in our Faith and Ignatian spirituality should shine through us in some way in our daily lives...'

Listening to Franklin was inspiring, because as well as challenging me, it reminded me that my primary 'mission' is what I already do in my life every day. These daily activities have value and are important. By putting words on this, he shifted the emphasis to recognising and reflecting on the richness of all those things we all do every day – in other words, that large chunk of the iceberg under the water!

## National Assembly—The Way Ahead

At the National Assembly, working with the theme 'Past Gifts, Present Blessings, Future Hopes', we explored our future hopes with small group sessions. Seven groups were available, so each of us could only attend one or two of them. The objective was to give us the opportunity to take part in the decision making process of the national community for the years ahead – 'from our roots to the frontiers'.

Each group had a facilitator to guide, rather than give input, and to help us to think things through and, hopefully, come up with our own ideas of practical ways forward. We were asked to make them 'smart': simple, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed.

The topics available were:

- **Accompaniers and Group Guides**, led by Sr. Sarah-Anne Kane - providing accompaniers and / or guides for groups and giving them the help they need.
- **Discerning, Sending Supporting and Evaluating**, led by Eddie Langton - Introducing this process and embedding it into group life.
- **Service within the Community**, led by Una Buckley - Encouraging members to accept co-responsibility for maintaining CLC and the way we are organised.
- **Authentic CLC**, led by Jackie Gill - Ensuring that members and groups are fully aware of what it means to be CLC.

- **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**, led by Katherine Richardson - Taking an honest and objective look at our community, warts and all.
- **Growing CLC at different stages in life**, led by Kathryn Lydon - Exploring opportunities for growth at different stages in life – young, adults, students
- **CLC and Ecumenism**, led by Monica Francombe - Exploring opportunities for growth focussing on ecumenical aspects of CLC and the potential of involving and respecting all Christian denominations



### Summary of the conclusions

The groups proved to be extremely productive and the results were shared with everyone at a plenary session, far too much to share with you here.. But a summary of these results is now available and can be emailed or posted to you on request from:

[administrator@clcew.org.uk](mailto:administrator@clcew.org.uk) or CLC, 114 Mount Street, London, W1K 3AH. These will also be taken forward by the national team in the coming months (and years) and CLC is grateful to all who took part for their combined wisdom. 'Watch this space' as they say!

*Brian Austin, NA13 Planning Team*

## Noticeboard

### \*NEW— HELP WITH RESOURCES

Does your group have a tried and tested resource material that you could recommend to another group? Each month we hope to share ideas to expand our horizons, collaborate and help us to grow in faith. Please send us your ideas.

RECOMMENDED BY EDDIE LANGTON (NE Region)

'The Discernment of Spirits—an Ignatian guide for everyday living'

by Timothy Gallagher OMV.

Published by Crossroad Publishing, New York. Available from Amazon. Recommended as an accessible guide.

*'It is simple to follow and an enjoyable read'*

*'An enjoyable way to find balance day-to-day'*

Send [your suggestions](#) to

[jenarmstrong@talktalk.net/01926885347](mailto:jenarmstrong@talktalk.net/01926885347)

### MIDLANDS REGIONAL DAY

Thoughts from the World Assembly in Lebanon

By Monica Francomb

At the University Chaplaincy, Rose Place, St Algates, Oxford, OX1 1RD.

Saturday 19th October 10 a.m. – 4pm. Cost £7.

Please bring food for a shared lunch.

Contact Peter and Margaret Dimambro 01926 428399

### HEYTHROP COLLEGE CHAPLAINCY,

University of London, Kensington Square, W8 5HN.

Launches

'Loyola Lectures'

considering faith in difficult circumstances

14th November, 6.30p.m.

the speakers are parents of Jimmy Mizen, who was murdered in South London, and how they found solace in their faith.

### SOUTHERN REGIONAL DAY

Reflection from the World Assembly in Lebanon

By Alan Harrison SJ and Trish Coxhead

Saturday 2nd November

At 114 Mount St (Farm St) W1K 3AH

10am for 10:30 start– 4pm.

Suggested Donation £5

Contact John O'Sullivan

07836 7778419

### NORTH WEST REGIONAL DAY

Feedback from the World Assembly in the Lebanon

By Brother Alan Harrison and Monica Francomb

Saturday 9th November Loyola Hall L35 6NZ

Tea/coffee 10 a.m. Start 10.30 - 4p.m.

Please bring food for a shared lunch and books for

Bring and Buy. Suggested donation £10.

Contact Kathryn Lydon 0151 733 2806.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY

Would like to give some more time in service of CLC ?

Contact: Brian Austin, Una Buckley or Monica Francomb

(see below) for more information

## C A L E N D A R 2 0 1 3 - 1 4

19 OCTOBER	Midlands Regional Day at Oxford University Chaplaincy
26 OCTOBER	National Formation Team meeting Manresa House
2 NOVEMBER	Southern Regional Day at Farm St
9 NOVEMBER	North West Regional Day at Loyola Hall
30 NOVEMBER	National Team Meeting, Manresa House
22/23 FEBRUARY	Extended National Team Meeting, Handsworth, Birmingham
22 MARCH 2014	North West Regional Day, Loyola Hall, L35 6NZ
20/22 JUNE 2014	National Assembly, High Leigh, Herts.

### 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@dcw.org.uk](mailto:info@dcw.org.uk) website: [www.dcew.org.uk](http://www.dcew.org.uk) World CLC: [www.cvx-dc.net](http://www.cvx-dc.net)

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

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

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contributions for the next FOCUS  
to  
[ubuckley@gmail.com](mailto:ubuckley@gmail.com)  
By 26 October 2013