



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

# FOCUS

## ALTHEA: A TRIBUTE

When I first met Althea some 11 years ago, she informed me that although many called her 'Tish' she wanted now to be called Althea. She explained she had come to a time in her life when she wanted to use her full name, so, for me, she has always been Althea.

Althea founded some 11, maybe 12 years ago, a 'Christian Life Community' (CLC) in St Albans which became known as, 'St Albans Companions'. I joined the companions some months after it had been formed. I recall being given the two contacts in St Albans for CLC, as there are two groups, and somehow I contacted Althea at Harpenden Road. Initially I had email contact and even then the friendliness and openness to the stranger was present.

Over the next 11 years I was to be privileged to meet with her and the other companions every fortnight. For the first number of years we met at Althea and John's home. We didn't live in each other pockets but we did share deeply, the good, the not so good and things that stayed with us. You can imagine over 11 years we covered quite some ground.

Particular things that stay with me now are how Althea spoke of those who meant most to her; John, her sons, her mother, her father, her house keeper when she was a child, her brother and sister and more recently her daughter-in-law and grandchildren. Mixed into this were various projects relevant at the time, Radio Verulam, The Globe Theatre, Womb Twins and an endless stream of books she was writing or editing. Of course her faith was central to all this and her membership at St Albans & St Stephen's.



One memory stands out and that was her pilgrimage - The Camino de Santiago. For those unfamiliar with the Camino, it is a walk through Spain to Santiago de Compostela, which Althea took a month to complete. This pilgrimage is narrated by her through a set of CDs which share her experiences and spiritual insights. It was clearly a significant landmark in her life as she referenced it often.

We had our last meeting with Althea as a community on Thursday 7th August 2014. It was a shorter meeting though there was a difference in presence. She typed out on her iPad something to the effect, 'it is all about love; whatever may have been - in the end what matters is love.'

We as a community will continue to meet and in that great mystery those of us here will be in communion with Althea there.

Thank you Althea and thank you God for gifting her to us.  
May the Lord hear us.....

Althea died aged 68 on 13th August from Motor Neurone Disease.

NB Althea and the St Alban's Companions developed the Fruits of the Spirit Meeting plans *Gordon Jackson, St Albans Companions*

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:35-39

'it is all about love;  
whatever may have  
been - in the end  
what matters is love.'

## MAG+S Meeting

*Una Buckley, John O'Sullivan and Christine Hobden recently represented CLC at a meeting about the Ignatian family's vision for the MAG+S programme.*

MAG+S is the Ignatian preparation for World Youth Day. Before the actual few days of World Youth Day, youth from around the world gather in the host country and attend Diocesan led Days of Encounter or other experiences led by different spiritual families. MAG+S has been so successful that in the years between WYDs, members of the Ignatian family around the world have been running smaller events and programmes based on the principles.

# MAG+S

MAG+S is named after St Ignatius' use of the word *magis*, meaning 'the more.' The programmes seek to introduce Ignatian spirituality through living it; each day the groups will pray together, celebrate mass, be involved in an activity (ranging from street art, religious dialogue to social justice ministries), share in a 'magis' circle, and do the examen. The activities are often personally challenging and learning to reflect on our response to them can be very fruitful.

A number of CLC members have been very involved in organising previous MAG+S events, and CLC's role in the 2011 MAG+S programme in Spain played a big role in initiating the CLC groups at the Oxford Chaplaincy that began with MAG+S participants. It is very exciting therefore to have the opportunity to be involved in planning for the future of MAG+S. It is hoped that together as an Ignatian family we can organise a successful MAG+S trip to Poland WYD in 2016, as well as more local events during 2015.

In the coming months a small team will be set up from within the Ignatian family to be responsible for the long term



MAG+S UK at WYD Spain 2011

vision of MAG+S, and a larger operational team will be put in place to begin to plan and carry out MAG+S days, weekends and the 2016 Poland MAG+S. As we move forward with the MAG+S project we will need your support; so please do mention it to the young adults you encounter and consider joining our team! If you are interested, contact :

[christine.hobden@nuffield.ox.ac.uk](mailto:christine.hobden@nuffield.ox.ac.uk)

## Your Financial Contribution

For the Christian Life Community to exist, grow and develop requires that little thing, money! And, as a local vicar here said, "we have the money; but the only problem is, it is *your* pocket!" So we depend on our members' annual subscriptions to keep CLC ticking over. Currently they contribute nearly £13,000 each year, which becomes about £15,500 with Gift Aid.

A number of people would like us to say it costs 'such-and-such' to join and belong to CLC. But CLC is not like that. We are a community who share in the financial responsibility, each according to her or his means, and our subscription 'formula' reflects that. However, some have found what we say difficult to understand.

So, at this year's AGM, a revised format was passed, based on a suggested version carried forward from the previous year and since discussed and improved. This was not to change the amount people were already contributing, but to make it, above all, clearer and more realistic; previously, the suggested rate was 0.5% for everyone, but that just does not happen. What we now say, from next year for the foreseeable future, is:

- 1. After the first full calendar year, you are invited as a member to share the financial responsibility of sustaining CLC as a national and international community. You are asked to reflect upon the importance of CLC in your life and to take your financial circumstances into account.**
- 2. The subscription to CLC is therefore flexible, based on your financial means and your understanding and acceptance of CLC as a way of life.**
- 3. As a guide, the suggestion is £1 p.a. for every £1,000 of net income (0.1%) for lower incomes, rising to £2.50 p.a. for every £1,000 of net income (0.25%) for the national average and above. A table of guideline amounts is available.**
- 4. However, no-one is prevented from belonging to CLC simply because they cannot afford it, so if in that situation, you are asked to pay what you can, even if it is only £1 each year.**

So what does this mean in practice? If you are already paying a subscription, you are not being asked for more. If you are just starting with CLC, you will not be asked for a contribution until you have been with us for at least a full calendar year. If your take-home pay is below the average, you are asked for a smaller contribution. And if you really cannot afford much at all, you are only asked to contribute £1 as a token of your commitment to the CLC community. The table of guideline amounts referred in (3) above can be obtained from myself at [treasurer@clcew.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@clcew.org.uk) or 01926 428635, as can any questions that you may have.

**Brian Austin, National Treasurer**

## Living Wisdom on the Frontiers

*Monica Francomb shares a summary of the keynote input from the European Assembly, Regensburg 2014*

### Our starting point

Fr Michael Holman SJ, built on the theme of the different languages outlined by Fr Adolfo Nicolas SJ, at the Lebanon World Assembly. His starting point was to highlight our common personal encounter with Christ, experienced as unconditional love through the joys or difficulties of our life events. We hold this in common in a faith community. Yet others may still be seeking a personal experience of God, or have rejected a relationship with God, or are Agnostic. A quote from Fr Kolvenbach SJ provided the stepping stone to consider our apostolic mission to the Frontiers "*this intimacy with Jesus, leads naturally to the desire to share that experience with others.*" To share is to communicate. We retraced our footsteps, recognising that the language we use is essential in communicating in any situation:

**Prophetic language** for our faith community, but unhelpful for those who have no experience of, or have rejected a relationship with God.

The language of **Identity**, who we are, what it means to be a Christian; a member of CLC; but irrelevant to people who have not yet chosen to be a disciple of Christ.

The universal language of **Wisdom**, dealing with the realities and concerns of everyday life; of activities, concerns, joys, hopes. The common ground where we can acknowledge and explore the experiences that people share.

### Living Wisdom on the Frontiers

Fr Holman pointed out that Pope Francis has put forward St Peter Faber SJ (Fr Pierre Favre SJ) as an example of living Wisdom. His approach gives us a model that we can use in our current time.

He was **proactive**. We need to go out to the people at the edges of society, not wait for them to come to us.

Whilst working at the edges of society, Faber **recognised the importance of remaining linked back to the centre** and achieved this through correspondence with fellow Jesuits. Without this 'grounding' opportunity for reflection, we as CLC fail to bring 'something new' to our mission. It can be lonely at the Frontiers, one can experience rejection and so our formation and the support we give each other in community is important. We see the relevance of the DSSE in our approach (*discerning, sending, supporting and evaluating*). This opportunity for reflection at the centre brings depth and counters the current culture of superficiality.



**Trust**, that this is God's work, completed in God's time. The overall success does not depend upon us, which is a relief! We are an important part of the story, we are called upon to respond in 'this moment' to open up a conversation, provide an experience, but trusting that others will build on this.

Recognising that conversation was his main tool, we hear that St Peter Faber SJ, **prayed** in advance for those he hoped to speak to. He specifically asked for the grace to love them; for discernment to know the right person to speak to, what words to use and to recognise the right moment to speak. He sought, through conversation to touch their hearts, to open them to the possibility of further encounters. We aspire to follow this example in our relationships with people. We seek to live out our CLC apostolate authentically in our daily lives.

There are different ways of communicating, through thought, words and actions. In our present reality, actions speak louder than words, personal experience carries credibility. We need to use the right language for the right situation. To be channels of God's grace in our world, we seek a renewed depth in our listening, discerning and response to Jesus Christ in our personal faith lives. The way we live CLC Community enables us to step outside of our own concerns and to listen deeply to others.

## Noticeboard

### MIDLANDS REGIONAL DAY

FINDING GOD'S WAY IN OUR LIVES:  
exploring Ignatian Discernment

with Sr Margaret Harlock RLR  
Saturday 18th October  
10am for 10.30am start to 4pm.  
At Manresa House , Albert Road, Harborne  
Birmingham, B17 0AN  
Please bring food for a shared lunch  
Cost £8  
There will be a raffle for funds  
Contact Peter & Margaret Dimambro  
[mdimambro@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mdimambro@hotmail.co.uk) 01926 428399

### NORTH WEST REGIONAL DAY we invite you to CALLED TO BE FAMILY"

thoughts on the World Assembly Theme  
Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October

At TABOR, Sharoe Green Lane, Fulwood, Preston PR2 8HE  
Tel: 01772 717122  
e-mail: [tabor@carmelite.net](mailto:tabor@carmelite.net) [www.carmelite.net](http://www.carmelite.net)

Tea/Coffee 10a.m Start 10.30 – 4pm  
Please bring food for a shared lunch.  
Contact Fiona Craven 01772 712052 or  
Mary Sellers 01200 428653

Buses 19 or 23 from Bus station/ lifts from the train station  
Lifts may be available by arrangement from Preston Station  
*Please bring pictures or photographs of what family means  
to you for use in our centrepiece display.*

### DAY ON ACCOMPANIMENT

Saturday 29th November

Led by Brother Alan Harrison SJ

St Francis Xavier, Salisbury Street, Liverpool, L3 8DR  
(adjacent to Liverpool Hope at Everton)  
Contact Kathryn Lydon 0151 733 2806

### MEETING PLANS/RESOURCES

Are you looking for reflective material for your meetings?  
Can we recommend the reflections from this year's  
National Assembly *"From Our Roots to Our Frontiers"* -  
sufficient for four meetings or more.  
Available from address below  
See all our other sets of meeting plans in the  
[Publications List](#) please ask for a copy

### MEETING AND WELCOMING THE ROMA: A CHALLENGE

A European meeting in Luxemburg

Who are the Roma ? How do they live? What is the situation  
of Roma migration in south, East and West Europe?

Friday 14th November— Sunday 16th November

You are invited to attend this gathering at the house of the  
Franciscan sisters in Luxemburg. Speakers and  
presentations of projects from French CLC members, film,  
reflections and sharing of ideas.

Languages—English, French and Spanish

Cost for weekend 100 Euros, includes accommodation and  
meals . CLC members offer to host any extensions of stay

Further information from [Bernadette.grosch@education.lu](mailto:Bernadette.grosch@education.lu)  
or [araus@pt.lu](mailto:araus@pt.lu) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

## CALENDAR 2014

18 OCTOBER	Midlands Regional Day. Manresa House, Harborne, Birmingham.
18 OCTOBER	North West Regional Day , Tabor Carmelite Retreat House, Preston
25 OCTOBER	National Formation Retreat Team, Manresa House , Birmingham 10.30 for 11a.m. start
22 NOVEMBER	National Team Meeting venue tbc
29 NOVEMBER	Day on Accompaniment, Liverpool
14 –15 FEB 2015	National Formation Retreat Team , Manresa House, Birmingham
21 March 2015	Midlands World CLC Day Leamington Spa
10 –12 JULY 2015	National Assembly, Hope University , Liverpool

### 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:

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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  
(November)  
[ubuckley@gmail.com](mailto:ubuckley@gmail.com)  
by 26 October