



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

FOCUS

An Adventure into Advent

As I write this we are beginning our Advent journey. We begin to remember and spend time with the Gospel figures, each making their own journeys in various ways with different expectations, hopes and needs.

Mary, setting out across country to her cousin Elizabeth, full of joy and fear and wonder. Joseph, wondering how the simple future he had planned with his wife could have been so turned upside down. Later, the shepherds, leaving their valuable sheep behind them and running across fields to find the child of whom the angels spoke. The three wise men gathering together precious gifts and searching the skies for signs to lead them to this greatest of kings.

Turning then to ourselves for a moment.

What does our own Advent journey look like?

What or who do we take with us, or need to leave behind?

Where do we begin the search, and what do we look for along the way?

For each of us there will be different answers. Advent is an invitation to go deeper into our own uniquely personal adventure towards Christ – the story of which we cannot know or predict, and that takes a lifetime to unfold.

Pope Francis puts this well in his recent interview with America magazine: “Our life is not given to us like an opera libretto in which all is written down; but it means walking, doing, searching, seeing... We must enter into the adventure of the quest for meeting God. We must let God search and encounter us.”

St Ignatius called himself a pilgrim in recognition that he was always on the road, journeying towards God. So if we want to go searching for God where will we find Him? And where will God go searching for us?

Again the Gospel provides an answer. Christ comes to the animals’ stable. He meets those who expect Him least and beds Himself down in the middle of their everyday world.

We can go looking for God in many places, but God seeks us out in the ordinariness of our life. God meets us in our reality. We just need to let Him in.

Ignatian spirituality, particularly the Examen, or review of the day, offers us a way to do this. A tool to allow God to find us in the ordinariness of everyday life. We invite God to look with us each day at what we have done and where we have been, the people we’ve met, the good the bad, the indifferent. We ask God to reveal God’s self to us. We ask God to be with us in what really is, not just what we would like to be. We ask Him to walk with us on the journey.



This Advent marks the end of a particular journey for me as I end my term as CLC president. At my final national team meeting we took some time to review and ask ourselves how as a community we have discerned together, sent and supported one another and evaluated the fruits. There are many consolations – wonderful national assemblies deepening our CLC identity, the growth of new groups, the visits of Fr Luke and Franklin Ibanez from CLC World Secretariat, new

literature and meeting plans, greater financial co-responsibility and connectedness with World CLC. There have also been some shadows— the ageing of members, less people willing to take on service within the community. For all this work of CLC—light and shadow—I am hugely grateful. I am also confident that God is journeying with us, working for good, enabling us to encounter Him and to bring Him to others in a more real and present way.

In *‘Evangelii Gaudium’*, the Joy of the Gospel, Pope Francis invites us all to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ—to an openness to letting Him encounter us. “The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realise that He is already there, waiting for us with open arms.” May you find and be found by Him this Advent— wherever you are.

Una Buckley, President of CLC EW 2009-13

Our CLC in Leamington wanted material to reflect on before Advent arrived (when we would be using Paul Nicholson's 'Advent Pilgrimage'), so we thought we would reflect on something that caught our attention at the Oxford Day about the World Assembly, which was Fr Adolfo Nicolas's reference to the **'globalisation of superficiality'**.

Am I, are we, superficial?

First of all, what on earth does he mean? We found a reference to the first use he made of the term back in 2008 when speaking at the Universities in Mexico. He said

"When one can access so much information so quickly and so painlessly; when one can express and publish to the world one's reactions so immediately and so unthinkingly in one's blogs or micro-blogs; ...then the laborious, painstaking work of serious, critical thinking often gets short-circuited..."



When...the ugly or unpleasant sounds of the world can be shut out by one's MP3 music player, then one's vision, one's perception of reality, one's desiring can also remain shallow...

When one can become "friends" so quickly and so painlessly with mere acquaintances or total strangers on one's social networks – and if one can so easily "unfriend" another without the hard work of encounter or, if need be, confrontation and then reconciliation – then relationships can also become superficial."

Later, in 2010, speaking in Belgium he added: "We have more information than ever, but less ability **to think, to reflect, to digest** the information ... and this is happening in the church as well."

We used these thoughts to structure our CLC reflections, which might be useful for other groups:

Our CLC asked ourselves the questions:

What do we understand by the term "globalisation of superficiality"?

Where have we seen or experienced this attitude in our everyday lives?

What challenge does this present to us today?

'We ask for the grace to be open to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us and to what we are being called to respond'

Scripture reference: **1 Cor 13**, in particular v 8-13

Leamington Spa CLC

Update from the National Team

Office Accommodation: CLC currently have an office at Farm St, in central London generously provided by the Jesuits. It is used as a storage base for CLC archives, our postal address, meeting space, and a base for our administrator David Formosa to work from one day a week. However Farm St is short of space, and the Jesuits have asked us to give up the room as it is not in daily use. Following a series of meetings between the national team and the Jesuits, and reflection on CLC's needs and priorities we have found a solution. We have been offered a share in the office next door which is used by the Farm St house accountant during the working week. We will have space for our own desk and storage, and will be able to use it exclusively at evenings and weekends.

Administration: At the same time, David and Maria Formosa, who have been our Office Administrator and printed Literature have decided to step down. We are extremely grateful for all they have contributed over

many years, and hope they enjoy a well-deserved rest. This means we need to find new and creative ways to cover administration activity for the community. We have a list of activities ranging from 30 minutes a week to several hours a month, most of which can be done from home if you have access to email and a computer. We also have some core activity, for example sorting post which will need to be done at Mount St in London.

For more info or if you think you or your group might be able to help please contact administrator@clcew.org.uk

Website: The Jesuits are revamping their web presence and have agreed to CLC being part of the project. Under this proposal we would still have our own web site address but we would be more closely linked to the Jesuits website, which would make it easier for people to find us – we hope in time to be able to add additional functionality as well. This is very much a work in progress, so in the mean time Katherine Richardson will help improve our existing website.

If you would like to give feedback or help please contact webmaster@clcew.org.uk

God-Parenting Latvia

Some time ago our national team was contacted by the World Exco and asked to consider whether CLC England and Wales would be willing to God-parent Latvia as they embark on their journey into full membership of the World CLC community. After some discernment the National Team agreed with this proposal and at the World Assembly in Lebanon this was sanctioned by the World Exco.

So what does this mean for us as a national community? When an emerging national community applies to the World Exco to be considered for acceptance into full membership of the world community, it has been customary for an established national community to be invited to accompany this emerging community. This accompaniment will last for a period of some years and is an opportunity for the God-parent community to encourage and support the emerging community as it grows in its understanding and living of the CLC way of life.

This for us can sound quite a daunting prospect but the advantages can far outweigh the negatives once the process has begun.....for the godparent community it can prove a time of real strengthening and growth, particularly in a greater appreciation of what it means to be "community", not simply a national but an international community. In sharing our giftedness and resources we can grow in our own understanding of the CLC vocation and charism. Strong friendships can be formed and often for the godparent community it can be a very inspirational journey, one that can help us to look beyond ourselves. Yes challenging, but deeply rewarding. As a national community we have as much to gain from the experience as to give. We hope that it will challenge us to grow in our CLC way of life, and understanding of ourselves as an apostolic body, and we look forward to that challenge.

However this needs to be seen as a whole community mission and we begin by asking you to support this initiative with your prayers both for our own community and for Latvia as we embark on this journey together. We are also hoping in the coming months to encourage ways of closer contact with members of CLC Latvia, not only at national team level, but also in the wider context of our community. We have already had some contact with the members of the Latvian community through their visit to our national assembly in 2011 and from the visits Alan and I made to them in Riga.

We are now looking to set up a small team of people who will work more closely with the Latvian community and explore ways of cross-border communications at different levels within our communities. If you are interested in being part of this team or would like further information, please contact evelynemaloret1@hotmail.co.uk or 01534619241

Evelyne Maloret

CLC in Latvia

I was asked to write a small column about the CLC in Latvia, that our new God-parents can meet virtually and start to know us step by step. Here in Latvia, we



Delegates of E&W and Latvia in Lebanon

were very happy to know who was chosen to be our God-parents of CLC and we look forward to deeper encounter and collaboration within the next 5 years.

The CLC in Latvia started in 2004 when a group of people after finishing a

course on "Integration of faith into the daily life" organised by the Christian Life Institute (head and initiator Marika Zelče – Čerāne), made a decision to go on deepening the Ignatian spirituality. The small communities firstly appeared in Riga (Magis, Fiat), but later, step by step, the new groups appeared in other Latvian cities and towns: Liepāja, Rēzekne, Ludza, Lielvārde, Bauska. CLC/Latvia numbers 42 members in total. Now there are 4 groups taking part in a pre-formation process and introductory sessions on Ignatian spirituality. The ecclesial assistance for the CLC Latvia has been provided from the Lithuanian - Latvian Jesuit province.

For many years Ēvalds Ikaunieks has been an informal leader (or soul and brain, but otherwise – professor of Mathematics at University of Latvia) of the CLC/Latvia. Developing our community engagement and formation process, in the summer of 2013 the first Exco has been elected. The members of Exco: Inese Runce and Asnate Dimza have participated in the CLC World Assembly in Lebanon where Latvia for the first time has been invited to participate as an observer.

In October of 2013, we also witnessed another great gift of God. Jesuits moved to Riga, and the first Jesuit who arrived is father Alģis Gudraitis SJ, the current ecclesial assistant of the CLC/ Latvia. One of the most visible areas of our ministry in Latvia has been the translation of books on Ignatian spirituality: Examen Prayer by Fr. Gallagher, Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything by Fr. Martin and Spiritual Exercises are underway.



Inese Runce, President of CLC/Latvia

The full version of Inese's article which gives a brief history of the Jesuits and Ignatian Spirituality in Latvia stretching back many centuries can be viewed on our website: <http://www.clcew.org.uk>

Noticeboard

The CLC Syria Solidarity Fund - LAST CALL If you would like to make a donation, (by Christmas PLEASE)

By cheque:

Will you please make a cheque payable to 'CLC' and write on the back 'SYRIA WITH GIFT AID' (if you are eligible*) or 'SYRIA WITHOUT GIFT AID' to the CLC Office at: 114 Mount Street, London, W1K 1AH.

By online banking:

Send an electronic 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 tell us by email: 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, so that we avoid multiple bank transfer fees.

*For Gift Aid eligibility see

www.hmrc.gov.uk/individuals/giving/gift-aid

NB Group donations are NGA.

Two new opportunities in 2014

Feedback requested asap

A Rome Experience Again?

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. Would you be interested?

Dates: May 23-24-25-26 2014

Please let us know asap: info@clcew.org.uk or 01926428635

A Holiday at the Barmouth House?

The decision has been taken that, as a result of the recent Retreat Survey, we will not be offering a week-long Retreat next year. This means that we can use the facility for another venture. How about a holiday? (or other gathering/course?) Cost not more than about £150 per person for the week! Would you be interested?

Dates 28 June - 5 July 2014

Please let us know asap: info@clcew.org.uk or 01926428635

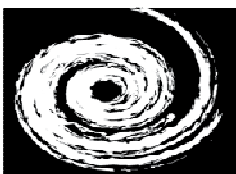
HELP WITH RESOURCES

In the light of the Philippines disaster
An appropriate recommended read might be :

[Where the Hell is God?](#)
by Richard Leonard SJ

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

Please send your ideas or suggestions to jenarmstrong@talktalk.net/01926885347



PHILIPPINES
TYPHOON
APPEAL

There are 300 Jesuits working in the Philippines . They are working to help people rebuild their shattered lives. To make a donation www.gbjm.org or send to JM Typhoon Haiyan Appeal, 11 Edge Hill , Wimbledon, SW19 4LR.

C A L E N D A R 2 0 1 4

15 JANUARY CLC Information Evening Mount Street

15 FEBRUARY Midlands Region Team Meeting, Leamington Spa .

15-16 FEBRUARY Formation-Retreat Team Weekend, Birmingham

22/23 FEBRUARY Extended National Team Meeting, Birmingham

22 MARCH Midlands Region World CLC Day
at St Peter's, Leamington Spa

22 MARCH North West Regional Day, Loyola Hall, L35 6NZ

10 MAY National Team Meeting venue tbc

23/26 MAY Possible Rome Ignatian Experience

20/22 JUNE National Assembly, High Leigh, Herts.

28 JUNE - 5 JULY Possible Barmouth Holiday

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:

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CLC Treasurer: Brian Austin tel: 01926 428635 email: treasurer@clcew.org.uk

Administrator: David Formosa: CLC 114 Mount Street, London W1K 3AH 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

Next FOCUS

Deadline

Please send contributions for the next FOCUS to

ubuckley@gmail.com

By 20th December