



CLC In Europe Bulletin

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Histories of grace

special Bulletin...

**European Assembly
Alicante May 28-31,
2009**

histories of grace

Dear European friends,

Welcome in Alicante, we are very happy to meet you in this wonderful place, be together, pray and discern together to move a step forward towards a prophetic apostolic community. We wish you a peaceful time.

This is our last bulletin ... we liked very much this work because it was an interesting and challenging way to know you better and to be informed about what is happening in our national communities.

Therefore we decided to publish all your grace histories, part of the preparation for the world assembly in Fatima 2008.

We, the Euroteam, are very grateful for the years of European service; we invite you to welcome the new euroteam with open minds, big hearts and eager to enter into an active communication; you will remain in our prayers.

Agnès, Martina, Monika

Personal grace history through the European reality of Christian Life World community:

1. It all started in Manresa 1980: a 2-weeks formation course for young adults, under the guidance of Sidney d'Souza sj, vice-ecclesiastical assistant for CLC-youth.

Through a song "I will never forget you my people, I will never leave you alone", I had a deep spiritual experience, a healing experience, a community experience.

2. In the nineties, in a formation course for group guides in Germany, under the leadership of Ingeborg von Grafenstein and Franz-Joseph Daffner, while meditating a picture of Moses and the Jewish people crossing the Red Sea, drawn by Marc Chagall, I received a profound understanding of what is CLC about.

3. At the world CLC secretariat during several months in 1998 and 2003, going through the archives and discovering our CLC history, I grow in deep gratitude to our predecessors and CLC founding sisters&brothers. I discovered that nothing is new under the sun. In reports from European meetings in 1974, all our main topics of today were present: young people within CLC, commitment to CLC, simple life style, working with the poor, persons at the margins and migrants, even a working group on ecumenism existed. It is great to feel as one in a long chain of CLCers, keeping the fundamental spirit and the enthusiasm of the beginnings.

4. The mandate as coordinator of euroteam from Pentecost 2004 to 2009 came at a special moment in my life: 2 months before I celebrated my 50. anniversary and during a 9-days-retreat, the decision to leave the refugee service became ripe and the desire to work with young people grow. The meditation of the rules given by St Ignatius when closing a Jesuit house for starting elsewhere were of some help during this orientation time. A new start without knowing the way to go: an existential experience of faith, hope and love

Two years later my best friend Don Branko died, 54 years old, of cancer, when I deeply experienced what St Paul's said only love remains.

Last year finally, the Parliament adopted a law on euthanasia, against the position of the State Council, the Church and an important part of civil society, I realized that 2 year's of hard work were vain and that the winds are blowing in opposite direction. It is the time to rediscover what Jesus meant by being salt, light or just by the dust from the sandals and go

5. Given this context, I can say that the Euroteam was a real basic community of trust, of every day life commitment, common service and of sister&brotherhood. Our differences were and are huge, culturally, socially, professionally speaking, and yet we experienced that we were united by Christ and by our common service for CLC.

6. All the European CLC encounters were special moments of grace for me, moments of a strong feeling what the Universal Church is about, when, especially during the Eucharistical celebrations, all differences are transcended. In Stuttgart, during one of the prayers in the plenary, I got reconciled with what called until then the evangelical sects: their true love of Jesus Christ was so visible, real and their service to the poor so committed, who I am I to put a negative judgement on it!

In Sibiu, with the groups of different denominations, coming in pilgrimage with their flags and traditional costumes from the surrounding villages to the main place, we all from the different official Christian Churches lived a great moment of consolation and harmony.

7. It was not all easy going during the last 5 years. Growing through oppositions or rejection, suffering of my own limits and shortcomings was only possible in following Jesus bearing the cross and the grace received is, that the burden is light when I'm close to HIM.

8. *Sentire cum Ecclesiae*, as St Ignatius learned us, has something to do with *sentire cum CVX*. When the needs of the world are huge, when young people look everywhere for orientation but not into the Bible, when the stones are crying to heaven in Melilla or Queuta, my desire for a revolutionary CLC is great and I have to pray every day for

- the grace of being able to uniting high expectations with human answers
- the grace to remain enthusiastic (*be-geist-ert*) for the world, for the Church, for CLC

9. Finally the grace to know and accept that all has an end. Finishing with a heart full of trust and hope in the Holy Spirit who will enflame others to continue to work in the field of CLC-Europe, perhaps differently, surely better!

Agnes Rausch

My spiritual journey from Lille to Alicante

It is significant that all good things that happen to me most of the times have to pass through tunnel of strong feelings and different obstacles. If this is not the case I somehow can not accept it as something valuable. Even I would like to. With no struggle it has no meaning to me. Probably I need to grow more.

It was the same with my election to euroteam. I was not in Lille so I may say that my journey starts from Paris where I felt confirmed in my mission. It was when euroteam met for the first time and I got a glimpse of my responsibilities within the euroteam as a secretary of the euroteam, responsible for new communities, for young people in CLC and ongoing concern for some national communities.

Some people said maybe it was good that I was not in Lille but I do not think so. There was always a slight feeling that something is missing.

It was a great honour and I felt flattered with God's invitation to join the euroteam.

It was saying «YES» knowing it might be above my spiritual, intellectual, CLC experience and many other levels or experiences. But I did not hesitate to answer as I felt it is my time to say «Let's do it! »

It was those dreamy moments that come to an end pretty soon.

Five of us have started together as different flowers in the garden.

It took us a lot of time even up to now to find our places and to get in link with our responsibilities, national communities and to each other. Somehow it is understandable. Our reality during these five years was not the same. Many things happened, good ones and less good. Many new faces, ideas, opinions, experiences, contradictions in different projects, proposals, initiatives, events we have initiated, proposed or participated in. Such as Erasmus, summer holidays for young adults, ecumenical issues, forced migrants, new communities, formation, social justice, ignatian communication, ET Bulletin, web page, etc. Whatever we do has touch influenced by national communities, our families, friends, our own talents and limitations, professions, desires and our individual apostolic initiatives and experiences.

What I would like to point out is, it all went good as there was a great help of others in the team. Who push when I was weak to do it, who fight when I was not feeling able to do it, who ask when I was frightened, who pray when I felt in desolation, who have faith and hope in me even I was in tears, who knows how to go on by God's help when you see no way out.

I was young not only in age. I am grateful that Lord gave me such companions that make me feel like in a family where I was able to express my fears, concerns as well as hopes and desires. Where others can forgive me and where I could forgive somebody else.

Where I was thought what this call and mission means in practice.

I would not say it was always easy for them. But probably it was part of their way as euroteam members.

They did it with lot of respect and caritas. I thank them for their patience, understanding and friendship. I hope I was, at least in the smallest extent, at disposal to their needs.

Unfortunately on our way from Lille to Alicante in some point of time we lost two of our boys in team. We missed "men on work" sometimes. Fortunately we have found occasional replacement that was so good above our expectations.

There are wonderful CLC members who are silent workers in European CLC. They are little butterflies and bees in our garden who welcomed us warmly in their homes and national communities. This is our treasure in CLC Europe.

There are also many good things going on in CLC Europe. But it will be even better if we do it together. Euroteam and national communities. Euroteam can not exist without national communities. National community with no links with euroteam is a desert island. No matter how beautiful, big or breathtaking that island look alike.

Yes, sometimes I feel sorry and lack the communication with our national communities.

To conclude what I was trying to say, I am grateful to be in Euroteam, to have opportunity to meet different CLC members and national communities, to challenge all of us what we shall do with the young people in CLC Europe, with new communities, with diversity in unity among national communities and to start thinking what does it really means.

I leave in peace and with hope that we should keep searching for better relations, apostolic connections, understanding, respect for each other or just being together as neighbour communities within Europe and one community within the World community.

Maybe dreamy thoughts from the begging of the story are coming again, maybe not.

May we ask the Lord to help us make our dreams and desires for CLC Europe come true. And may we be ready to recognize His touch and wishes for us in this sense.

Martina Županić

My way in CLC

Twenty years ago I felt it necessary to find unity in my life and I searched for a way to realize this. I decided to enter CLC not only because of Ignation spirituality, but also because it is a world community. Born in Germany, married in France, I feel European, and my children say that they are European. So I was very happy when I had the possibility to go to the European Assembly in Celje in 1999. I found a young, open Community with much humour and was astonished but happy to be elected as treasurer in ET.

Ten years later, there are three points I would like to underline:

The first one concerns the workshop on "forced migration". To meet Europeans engaged in this area is interesting and helpful, the last meeting in the French CLC Spiritual Centre near Lille was a great experience. You never feel alone in your work after this. You remember your European friends, what they had to say, and how they go about things, and moreover, you know that they pray with you.

The second point is ecumenism. It was a great joy for me to be sent to the 3rd ecumenical encounter in Sibiu (Romania) September 4th - 9th 2007 with Agnes and Martina, including two preparation meetings in Rome and Wittenberg. I was brought up in Protestantism and changed to Catholicism for love (my husband was Catholic) and for my future children. So it was a great joy for me to meet the 'Christian Church', to hear representatives of other churches, to speak with them and present CLC to them. It was important for me to see that we all look in the same direction even if our ways are different ... And it was good to get to know each other - even if in Sibiu women were a little bit too absent among the speakers.

The last point - as important as the first two - concerns the Eastern countries. It was an important aim for Euroteam to meet the new communities in the Eastern countries, organise holidays with them, find godparents and invite them for talks. It was important for us to learn how they try to build CLC in their country, how they lived as Christians under communism and how they live now.

The point of all this is unity, the formation of a Christian family present in the world, attentive to the signs of the time. This common way deserves attention. It transformed me. To see the different ways of living with God makes one humble and attentive. It was a joyful and stimulating time. I say thanks to God and to those I met.

And finally, I have a great desire: that CLC France accepts a 'twinning' with a community on another continent.

Monika Sander

CLC Austria

40 years of General Principles – 40 years of CLC

It was not so easy 40 years ago. In a National Federation of Marian Congregations of all the different social statuses and age groups there was suddenly a fresh wind, or rather for many a devastating storm – similar to the 2nd Vatican Council.

Many Congregations were already involved in the preparations for the World Assembly in Rome 67. They looked through the suggestions that kept coming from Rome and voiced their own opinions.

And yet: the outcome, especially the new name “Christian Life Community” met with a lot of resistance. Many, namely such as had grown up in non-ignatian Marian Congregations, suddenly felt uprooted and homeless. They had made their Sodality Promise, which in most cases had been a consecration to Our Lady, and they felt the difference very painfully. A difficult situation even for the ExCo to lay open the grace of this awakening.

However, 40 years later we are now able to see clearly our graced history, although for various reasons we are presently only a small community.

The international dimension: From the very beginning we responded to international events, such as the deliberation in Manila 70 or the two deliberations in Chantilly. The World Assemblies were also a great help for us to become involved in this awakening phase and to play a positive part in the growth of the World Community.

In 1972 we organised a deliberation ourselves on the question “Which contribution can we offer towards the development of human kind”. We had participants also from Germany. Family holidays broadened our horizon and gave the opportunity to get to know families from all over Europe.

Spiritual exercises: Annual exercises of various lengths on a lecture basis had been common in Marian Congregations. But now 8-day courses of individually guided exercises became more and more popular in Europe. In the beginning there was a serious discussion as to whether this was a suitable offer also for lay persons. Today, however, this form of exercises has become common practice for many of our members.

Formation: We tried to pass on the (newly discovered) Spirit to CLC and even to the Marian Congregation by diverse weekend courses.

For some participants the formation course in Brixen 74 brought the key experience of what it means to live the exercises in everyday life as a community.

As a consequence we organised many weekends in the region of Vienna, and also on a national level in order to demonstrate and teach CLC methods.

We also offered formation courses in German like the one in Brixen, where participants could experience CLC as a community.

We used the chances which a world community has to offer to a high extent by participating in formation programmes in Germany.

Apostolic mission: After Nairobi we embarked on a discernment process according to the steps taught at the World Assembly: discerning, sending, supporting, evaluating. This led to a project by which young people took part in a house building program in Ecuador.

These steps have also shown an effect on our groups: apostolic work of individuals is being seen and supported in an entirely new way.

In these 40 years the waters seem to have swept right over us at times. There were phases when all we did was to try to survive. But looking back we can say: We have always lived well spontaneously by relying on the grace of the moment.

CLC Belgium Fr

The history of graces of the Belgian francophone community (1967- 2007)

It is the history of a shared spirituality: passionate and often charismatic Jesuits have passed on the Gospel's message thanks to the tools inherited from Ignace.

It is the history of laymen who have been reached very early in their life, most of them during their school years, and who have remained faithful to their early experiences of prayer and of fraternal sharing.

It is the history of humble and visionary Jesuits, who have wanted these young laymen to grow up within the CVX and who have wanted the CVX community to gain more maturity thanks to its members.

It is the history of laymen's successful emancipation, which has allowed the creation of a true community and the advent of an adult partnership with Jesuits and with Ignatian nuns.

Everything is strongly tied together because the history of the community is the history of a generation. It is our history and we are aware of its significance.

* * *

Throughout the 60s, the Jesuits from the Belgian southern region are very actively involved with teaching. They set up various Congregations of Mary in schools.

Following the passing of the PG, the regional priest openly supports the undergoing transformation towards Christian Life Communities. Since his character stirs enthusiasm or resistance, his initiative is met in dissimilar ways by the Jesuits from the region. Some commit their entire selves to the mission. The majority are spiritual fathers belonging to one of the seven Jesuit secondary schools. Some lead up to ten « teams ».

Only one Jesuit, who has founded a number of Congregations of Mary after the Second World War, is still currently running his apostolic mission beside groups of adults and young people, apart from any educational institution.

In 1968, a first « rally of young people » gathers all the members of the CVX, coming from different Jesuit secondary schools, during a week end. In the same period, a number of nuns spiritually supported by a Jesuit organise a « rally » for the young girls of their schools. Around 1973, the yearly « rally » becomes mixed. In the beginning of the 80s these gatherings count up to 700 young people.

In 1976, during the Manila World Assembly, two different viewpoints confront one another: one group supports a « light » option, while the other trend encourages a « stricter » line, insisting on the specificities of the Ignatian spirituality. This has a strong impact on the Belgian community life, which finds itself divided. The choice for the more « explicitly Ignatian » line, provokes the departure of some teams.

The CVX experiences an enclosed lifestyle. Every community is influenced by the personal charisma of its Jesuit assistant. Cohabitation is peaceful, but cooperation is rare. Among the daring initiatives, in 1981, we can find the founding of a « CVX house » in Brussels. The house hosts a couple, various unmarried laymen and the founding Jesuit. This community serves the CVX. It celebrates the Holy Communion every Sunday night. The house will be closed in 1986.

In 1981 and 1982, two summer sessions gather Jesuits, nuns from various Ignatian congregations and laymen close to Josée Gsell, the CVX world secretary at the time. Moulded by Ignatian spirituality, Josée will bring us an incredible inspiration: the openness towards a world dimension and the consciousness of laymen's' responsibility.

The first generations pursue a higher education and then commit to their family and professional life. In 1986, the national community counts approximately only a third of adult members for two thirds of students. The first CVX gathering for adults occurred in 1985. In this occasion arises the desire for a real network at the national level.

A Cogepro (provisional general council) is set up at the end of 1985. It consists of a layman president, a Jesuit assistant, the president of the youth committee and a few laymen. This group has not been elected. It is thus not legitimised, but its objective is precisely to create a framework in which laymen can be in charge of the community.

In 1988, the community approves its constitutive act and the provisional council is replaced by an executive council. While the world community is already leaving its federal structure, the Belgian francophone community is hardly achieving it. For us, it is an essential step, a compromise between the total autonomy of Jesuit assistants and a developing community.

Laymen have more and more responsibilities. Jesuits deliberately start to leave the role of « leaders » for the role of « ecclesiastic assistants ». This transformation is not always easy to bring about, given the personality of certain Jesuits. Laymen who have taken on responsibilities perform the Exercises in their everyday life.

At this time, « young adult » week ends are organised. Also, in Brussels there is a brief integration attempt with a local church.

In the beginning of the 90s, the Conex (national leadership team) initiates cooperation with the CVX France with regards to the review « Christian Life ». A training-council is also set up.

Following the call of Father Kolvenbach asking Jesuits and the CVX to have special regards for young people and migrants, the Conex decides to found the « CVX house » for university students. A « forced migrants » committee is also set up.

Since the beginning of the 90s, the number of CVXs in secondary schools has been decreasing. Laymen teachers do not engage at all with the CVX. In 1995, the youth committee is dissolved and specific activities aimed at young people are abandoned.

This painful decision coincides with a first training session (of a week) aimed at laymen who are planning to guide a local community. This training will take place again in 1998. Moreover, two sessions of four days are organised to train local community coordinators. It is the shift towards an adult community, formed by adults.

The presidents who take the lead on the Conex make an effort to fortify the bond between members and between regional communities. The community symbolically marks an irresistible evolution towards an absolute community.

From 2000 on, the community in Brussels increasingly acquires a specific dynamic; given the presence of European institutions, various members from different countries, France in particular, join the community. Usually, these stays in our community are only temporary. Accordingly, a specific welcoming structure has been set up.

CLC Croatia

Christian Life Community in Croatia was founded on 6 February 1991 after spiritual exercises for students. Two small groups, each made out of 15 members were founded. The leaders of the groups were scholastics (the candidates for SJ).

Our first contact with some European Communities was with Community in Slovenia with which we have been in very good relationship since then and to whom we are thankful for all the support in our way towards the membership in Word community.

In 1991 the war started in Croatian Republic, we wrote together with SJ the letter about the history of conflicts in this region on several pages. We sent it to the addresses of CLC-s of all European countries asking for support in prayers, but also to spread the truth about this war in Croatia. The response was unexpectedly big and warm.

In those years we kept intensive contacts with young people from Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), in whose homeland was war. We sent them letters, guitar strings; we welcomed them when they were trespassing through Zagreb. Some of us participate as volunteers in refugee camps where we worked with children of exiles and refugees.

We had our representatives in all major European and World CLC meetings since the beginning until today.

Through these 17 years of existence we regularly had spiritual renewals and spiritual exercises from three to seven days, and also big spiritual exercises in everyday life. We participated in CLC courses in Germany and also we organised ourselves this course several times in Zagreb.

After Zagreb, small CLC groups were founded in Rijeka and in Osijek.

Since 1993 we have started collective CLC summer holidays in different parts of our homeland.

We started printing periodical "Living together" ("Živjeti zajedno"), monthly Notifications ("Obavijesti"). Since year 2000 once a month at Radio Mary we have radio show which we edit and lead under the name "Cardoner".

Since year 1997 we organize weekly Eucharistic adoration.

The largest part of our members passed through Integration of life and faith course which came to Croatia thanks to Craighead institute from Glasgow, Scotland.

At World Assembly in Nairobi in 2003 we were affiliated to the Word CLC

CLC England and Wales



GRACED HISTORY OF CLC ENGLAND & WALES FROM 1967

In our journey as a community of apostles we have experienced many graced moments some of which are captured here in the individual reflections of a small group of CLC members.

In 1967, as members of the Sodality Cell Movement we attended a historic meeting in Rome. 38 national communities, including England and Wales voted to replace the rules of 1910 with our General Principles and we adopted a new name. This was because the meaning of the word 'Sodality' had been lost, and we wanted to express our new-found identity. National communities were free to adapt the title and in England and Wales we called ourselves the Christian Life Movement (CLM) for some years before changing to Christian Life Community

During the 1970s, Fr Dave Townsend became our National Chaplain and encouraged us to take responsibility for the running of our organisation. A more representative National Executive Committee was formed and a team to produce our newsletter (Focus) was established.

The gospel enquiries of the old cell movement, still widely used in the 60s and 70s had taught us to pray on the gospels and apply them to our lives but few had direct experience of the exercises. Gradually more and more members made retreats. During the 1980s the importance of the Exercises as an old instrument almost 5 centuries old was reaffirmed. We discerned our mission as finding ways to make the spiritual exercises more available to members. Funding was made available for members (and continues to be made available), to train as spiritual directors, and now CLC retreats are offered regularly at national & regional level using CLC directors. Retreats for beginners have also been offered in different parts of the country. And many of our groups have experienced the exercises through 19th Annotation Retreats.

The cooperation of the National CLCs in Europe, led to European CLC conferences and common issues. Multi-culture and multi-faith England gave us an international dimension, in Europe and the world, that other CLC's did not have. Our understanding of the 3 hallmarks of CLC, **Spirituality**, **Community** and **Mission** deepened with the help of our Eurolink who was inspired by other national communities. He went on to share on the topic at a Jesuit Province meeting and wrote an article for Focus in 1995.

The special relationship we enjoy presently, with the Society of Jesus has its roots in the collaboration of individual CLC members, CLC Development Workers, and dynamic Jesuits in the past. Initiatives such as The Society of Jesus inviting CLC to their Province meeting for input, to the appointment of Jesuit regional Chaplains has enabled the relationship to grow and develop. Currently, our President is a member of the Jesuit Spirituality Commission, there are regular meetings between the Jesuit Provincial and CLC and a willingness to work in partnership to develop Ignatian Spirituality.

1991 A radical change was made in the way CLC operated. For the first time we employed a full-time development worker. This was discerned by the whole community. That we were able to take this forward was due to the generosity of the Society of Jesus, and other members of the Ignatian family, plus the willingness of members to increase their contributions. The effect of this move saw growth in CLC that would not have otherwise been possible as well as an increased awareness of the contribution we can make to the Ignatian Family at large. The Development Worker post was in place for ten years.

1994 After the Hong Kong World Assembly, our understanding of Mission began to change as we explored the idea that everything we are called to do in our daily lives is Mission. **'There is no such thing as a small or big task .We may think we only have a small task but whether big or small all tasks are important and authentic, if inspired by the Lord'** (Rene Cortazar keynote speaker, Hong Kong World Assembly 1994).

All CLC members are active in the service of others, both in the ordinary events of their lives and in the 'extra' activities which they undertake. Our life is essentially apostolic. We see this clearly in the

Directory of 'Activities and Skills' a data base that lists the different ministries of our members. It was established by one of our members after Hong Kong 1994. We see it as an important resource to assist us all in working more effectively as an apostolic community.

1995 The meeting plans, our main formation material became available to members, thanks to the skill and hard work of our then full-time chaplain Tony Horan sj. A large part of our formation takes place in the local group meeting and so the meeting plans are very much a part of our graced history. They are regularly updated and added to, as we grow and develop.

1998 **Our Common Mission**, Itaici, Brazil, challenged us to take a step further in our understanding of mission, perhaps best summed up by the following; **'different ministries but the same mission', 'mission is not about doing more and more; it is about what is the more effective'**. The meeting plans written by our Itaici implementation Team continued to enrich and develop our understanding.

2000 Following CLC being introduced into a university chaplaincy our desire to encourage the growth of young adult CLCs led to a very well attended information afternoon from which several young adult CLC groups flourished. These young adults were also instrumental in the creation of 'Mountain Spirituality - An opportunity for Young adults to escape for a weekend and stand outside the rush of modern life, to have time to reflect and to find God. Working with the Jesuits, young adults were very actively involved in the creation of the First Sunday Mass for Young adults in London. Presently, there are 6 vibrant groups in the London area.

2003 **Kingdom Come** was a series of lectures linking the Spiritual Exercises to aspects of daily life. This was a joint initiative with The Westminster Spirituality Centre. The lectures were very well received and raised the profile of CLC.

One of the 'graces' to emerge from the World assembly in **Nairobi** was **'shared responsibility'**. Our mission/ service may be individual but as members of an apostolic community we discern, send support and evaluate as a community. Our national Assemblies since Nairobi have been related to mission as we continue to explore what it means to be **'sent by Christ as members of one body'**.

2004 A discernment process was undertaken by the National team. The fruits of this discernment have resulted in regional teams taking more responsibility for our community's growth within their own region, including organising CLC information evenings, developing literature and formation programmes.

2007 Following on from the World CLC leadership course in Rome, we reflected on the ways to foster 'leadership' in CLC. A major Formation event is now planned in 2008, entitled **'Discovering our Giftedness the CLC Way'**. It is hoped that at least three members from the four regions, three young adults and others will attend, with the intention that these delegates disseminate what they have learned in their regions. The work on leadership is ongoing.

We have kept a record of the main formation events since 2003, in order to begin to recognise the work of the Holy Spirit in the community. A new publication entitled 'Refreshing Springs' reflects the visions, actions and hopes of the community as we continue to journey. In 2008, we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us and lovingly built a community of mutual support, a community of apostles **sent by Christ as members of one body**.

CLC France

We are contemplating our history since 1962 and asking for a better inner knowledge of all goodness received, since only through its full acknowledgement, we can fully love and serve God.

The people who have influenced our history

First of all, we have received grace through the *people who have opened new paths* for the growth of our CVX France:

- Paul-Roger DALBERT, s.j. who, between 1957 and 1960 has given rise to groups of lay-men and has strongly encouraged them to embrace Spiritual Exercises; or father René Roger, who has also awakened groups of students and of young households in order to let them discover ignatian spirituality and its taste of freedom.
- José GSELL, CVX's first national secretary (from 1962 to 1971) whose spiritual experience and work have renewed the ancient Congregations of Mary, in order to give rise to our present CVX.
- Other Jesuits, who have strongly supported the development of Spiritual Exercises, teaching them in the most varied forms, better adapted to laymen's rhythm of life (retreats in life); who have guided local communities and who have developed the teaching of ignatian spirituality, notably life according to spirituality...
- We can not mention them all: Michel Bureau, Jean-Claude Dhôtel, Maurice Giuliani, Pierre Gouet, Claude Viard, faithful friends of our CVX, who have enhanced its ability to follow Christ through the practice of Spiritual Exercises, « *source and specific instrument of our Community* ».

Our partnerships within the context of the Church and laicism in France

We gratefully acknowledge the activity and *support of the very numerous religious apostles of ignatian spirituality*, without whom the present CVX France would not be able to experience such a significant growth. Apostles have often been explicitly sent by their superiors in order to help the CVX, they have supported the creation of numerous local communities, they have made them appealing to young people and at present they contribute to the spiritual guiding and at the training of some laymen. These activities have been experienced through strongly fraternal relationships, to the extent that they have been celebrated in the large gathering of the ignatian family (Lourdes, 2006).

We are grateful to the training and *the services provided by laymen guides and laymen regional assistants*, whose number is in constant growth and allows to respond in a way or another to the significant growth of our national CVX, which at present counts 6100 members (including newcomers, religious guides and diocesan priests).

We also gratefully acknowledge the importance of experiencing our effort to follow Christ within *an ecclesiastical context where, following Vatican II*, the room for laymen is growing. This is occurring within a Church which, in France, has become even more modest and serving, less tied to established powers and therefore freer.

Some "historical" dates significant for the CVX France

The evolution from a national congress to a world congress allows us to acknowledge our enlargement: the CVX France is now more mature and conscious of its growth. We quote:

- **1991**: following the international pilgrimage in Loyola (in a year of ignatian anniversaries), a "breathe of fresh air", we experienced: *an inflow of young people* belonging to the Youth Network and supported by a partnership with other communities and religious congregations.
- **from 1991 to 1995**, we experienced *a very important insight, involving the whole CVX*: are we going to be in charge of a spiritual centre or not? (Biviers)
- It is the first insight of this kind, a turning point for the history of the CVX
- Ever since the CVXs, the CVX is at the head of Biviers and of other joint missions in the spiritual and social domain; being constantly in charge of these joint missions transformed the CVX France and is undoubtedly still transforming it.
- **1997**: *the payment of contributions* becomes a reality which is not questioned anymore within the community
- **1999**: at the Lyon congress "*Prophets of hope : sharing a taste for life*"
- the "market of hope", an eloquent forum of the multiple human involvements of the CVX's members, gives a *very concrete vision of our CVX's apostolic dimension*
- **2006** at the Lourdes Congress: together with a new way of experiencing our partnership with Jesuits we joyfully acknowledge our *belonging to the ignatian family*.

The Community is also experiencing a *better care for children's needs* (800 registered for 3000 participants): kindergartens and spiritual paths adapted to each age are offered to them thanks to the support of the YEM (Youth Eucharistic Movement). ??

Spouses who are not members of the CVX are also taken into account within our large gatherings, creating thus a way of sharing our faith ...which is appealing!

The increasing importance of training and the evolution of the CVX France organisation

Firstly, we are pleased about the role that the *Review « Christian Life »* played within our history. The review and its supplements were introduced since the CVX's beginnings. It has played an essential role towards the development of our community, its spiritual training and the apostolic influence.

We are also very pleased about the increasing role played by *training*. Training has become a continuous priority and has therefore been organised and developed very sensitively. A « training committee » has been created in 1989 and in 1993 it has launched a training plan for all regions; in 1998, all the committee's members have worked to provide training on the field. A network of 40 trainers currently supports:

- Courses to discover the CVX and to better serve the community;
- More and more diversified week-ends: for guides, people in charge, newcomers (welcoming path formalised in 1997) and for people in charge of reception.

Moreover, the training according to the Spiritual Exercises is increasingly perceived as "*the source and the specific instrument of our spirituality*"; to the extent that all the trainings offered in 2002 involved experiencing Spiritual Exercises in their various forms.

Various *publications and documents* have appeared, in order to help those who strive for the growth of their local community and of each of its members.

We consider these artefacts, constantly redrafted and redeveloped, a very important grace received; similarly, a movement is currently striving to *improve the governance* of the CVX, to deepen *the involvement in the CVX*, and to confront itself with the big questions of our times (*apostolic workshops*: CCC, forced migration, work, art, health, education...)

Growth through challenges

We acknowledge that our history has witnessed some moments of withdrawal (in C.L.), power conflicts and lack of understanding, leading to the departure of some, sometimes old, members. These have been painful events which demand more dialogue and humility between us.

Many people leave the CVX after having followed it for a few years; their departure could give rise to a judgement which will allow them to follow the path towards the Church which suits them the most. Nevertheless, we are strongly concerned about the mission of the CVX in our Church, about the present aging of our Community and most of all about many peoples' resistance to perform the Exercises.

We hope that by overcoming these crises, through the displacements and responses that the CVX as a whole tries to set up in order to better serve Christ, the path towards more fruitfulness will be opened. However, we are confronted with some tension which is difficult to bear on a daily basis.

The service beyond borders

We also gratefully acknowledge as a grace of growth, the guiding of newly born communities in Europe, such as the new Community in Lithuania.

In the same way, we acknowledge the support of the training course in Lebanon: an international meeting where Lebanese, Syrian, Egyptian peoples have met...an event which may seem modest but which can be considered a sign of peace in an environment torn by conflict; we are pleased that some of us have been able to attend the event.

May the goodness gratefully received tie us even more to our Lord's love, and may he dispose of all he has given us according to His will, in view of His grace and of the life of humanity.

CLC GERMANY

Taking up the challenge of presenting the growth of CLC Germany as a history of grace the first thought coming to our mind is the motto of the World Assembly Hongkong 94: „Not you have chosen me but I have chosen you and called to go out and bear fruit, a fruit that will last“ (John 15,16). That means that whatever growth has happened and whatever fruit has developed we can see quite clearly how much it was a grace received from others and from the Lord rather than the result of our own efforts.

Trying to figure out these graces we cannot just pick up some single moments or events but we can discern some main ways which the Lord, in his grace, has used to bring about and foster the growth as CLC in Germany.

So, let us consider what challenged us to set off and to go ahead, to let our horizons be widened and our understanding of what CLC is all about, be deepened. Let us focus on how he has led us to what we are now as this particular part of WCLC – in order to be attentive to where the Lord will want to lead us in the future.

Channels of His Grace for us as a national community

1. Constant sharing and receiving from brothers and sisters and communities in other countries and regions of WCLC: inspiration from the different World Assemblies, from European events, from the constant mutual sharing with those countries chosen for continued partnership as well the neighbouring ones; the fact that several of our members collaborated in the W-Exco and on European level.
2. Good relationship with SJ and continuous support of the provincials which allowed us to have throughout all these years CLC-promoters e.g. Ecclesiastical Assistants who were able to work for CLC for longer periods and thus could play an important role in building up communities, in shaping formation courses , in preparing lay people for giving the Spiritual Exercises - and above all were prepared to serve CLC as a lay community and a specific charism within the Church (and not just their own apostolic project)
3. From the first steps until now an important number of CLC-members giving time, energy, money to CLC promotion which allowed us to develop many instruments of CLC formation and a diversity of CLC service within the Church and society.
4. The chance to have and even enlarge a national CLC secretariate with a team of CLC-workers and a lot of volunteers, both on national and diocesan level.
5. The moral and financial support from our Bishop's Conference, especially for the large pastoral service we can offer to the Church in our country, especially in making available a whole range of different forms of Spiritual Exercises – from initiation events and Spiritual Exercises in daily life to eight days of individually guided retreats – or in the areas to share our experiences in community building, in group guidance and communal discernment to parish councils or other communities.

Special Moments of grace as a national community

1. Among the World Assemblies the following ones had a crucial impact on our growth as national community:
 - Roma 67 which – by giving us the General Principles and the new name – launched the renewal of Marian Congregations into CLC and planted the seed of CLC into new grounds
 - Augsburg 73 when we were given the challenge to host the meeting and our groups had the tremendous chance to make friends with CLCers from all over the world and when the partnership with CLC Philippines, South Africa and Argentina was started as well as the series of formation courses was launched which since then has shaped CLC not just in Germany itself but in the whole German-speaking region.
 - Manila 76 offering the chance of insertion in the world of the poor, of stronger sensibilization for social and political responsibilities and involvement.
 - Providence 82 with the definite step to move towards fully becoming one world community and to move towards one community on all levels of CLC life.

- Of great importance was the World Assembly of Guadalajara 90 because it inaugurated a long and partly difficult yet fruitful process of discussing our understanding of CLC-membership and CLC-commitment.
 - Finally Nairobi 2003 and lately Fatima 2008 set us on the road of living more than before as apostolic community and stretching out to serve as apostolic body that faces the challenge of responding even to the prophetic dimension of our charism.
2. A very special grace given to our country and to us as national community was the miracle of the breaking down of the wall that had separated our country for 28 years, and of the reunification that for CLC, after years of hidden communication and underground meetings, opened the way to finally becoming one community

As we move on we do trust that the Lord in his faithfulness and generosity will continue to lead us onwards by his grace – and that the graces we owe to the whole WCLC will never fail and that they will inspire us to respond to them by our own commitment and faithfulness.

CLC Hungary

History of grace of CLC-Hungary (KÉK)

1980s First contact with GCL, the German CLC

1989 First short spiritual exercises held by Sr. Irene Luster Haggenev

1990 Hungary was guest at World Assembly in Mexico

2 short spiritual exercises held by Sr. Irene Luster Haggenev and Fr. Alois Berger SJ. This was the starting point of a series of spiritual exercises since then regularly held in Hungary.

1991 Creation of 2 CLC groups (Budapest–Castle, Miskolc)

1992-93 Course of one and a half year long for training of leaders of spiritual exercises. New leaders hold every day spiritual exercises in Advent and Lent in different towns and villages of Hungary. As fruits of spiritual exercises new groups have been created (Budapest, Vecsés).

1994 Participation at World Assembly in Hong-Kong. Since then we regularly celebrate CLC World day every year.

At Christmas of 1994 first release of CLC periodical, “Pilgrimage”. Since then it has been published three times a year.

1995-96 Second course for training leaders of spiritual exercises.

Setting up promotion team of 7 persons.

Ecclesiastical assistant is a German Jesuit, P. Alois Berger SJ.

Once a month common CLC holy mass, since then it has been continued.

1997 P. Alois Berger SJ went back to Germany, a Hungarian Jesuit P. László Marosfalvy SJ has been responsible for CLC without official assignment.

Setting up leadership team of 5 persons.

General Principles and Norms have been translated into Hungarian. Groups studied them.

1998-2000 Course for CLC members to deepen in CLC spirituality and CLC life style.

Creation of new groups (Budapest).

2004 P. Szabolcs Sajgó SJ has been assigned Ecclesiastical Assistant.

Our Charisma has been translated into Hungarian and we together studied it at CLC meetings.

Renewed Hungarian Jesuit Order created 2 new youth groups in Budapest and 1 group in Szeged.

2005 Course for training group guides “Salt in group” (one year long).

Visit of Inge Höpfl to Hungary, German GCL has become the official “patron” of KÉK, CLC Hungary.

Works at parishes, weekend for married couples, Regnum Marianum, Caritas etc.

2006 Election of new Executive Council of 5 persons for 3 years.

In October Hungarian CLC day on social mission.

2007 German-Hungarian summer holiday of one week in Dobogókő, Hungary (50 persons).

Working out National Statutes.

From the 1st of November Szabolcs Sajgó SJ went to Canada for a new mission. We are looking for a new ecclesiastical assistant.

2008 In January we applied to World ExCo for accepting KÉK as national community.

Nowadays there are 8 adults groups and 2 youth groups.

KÉK has regular contact with some Hungarians in Romania. KÉK gives spiritual exercises every year there.

CLC (KÉK) periodical: Pilgrimage (3 times a year)

Main apostolates:

- giving spiritual exercises,
- organizing programme of the day of Saint Ignatius Loyola

Single action was in the frame of “City mission” in Budapest (September 2007): youth group organised a contemplative walk associated with Jesuit programmes.

Many individual apostolates: works at parishes, Caritas, week-end for married couples, Hospice service, care of homeless people, family therapy, social workers, spiritual care of elderly people, preparation of godparents, visiting burnt children in hospital etc.

CLC Ireland

Graced History of Christian Life Communities in Ireland

The graces we received down through the years in Ireland were many.

In community, a sense of being listened to with great openness, trust, and confidentiality, supporting each other through the ups and down of daily life.

As we gradually grew in awareness of God's overwhelming love for each one of us, we found our God in all things.

The daily exam was and is much appreciated and used.

After careful discernment many groups around the country made a formal and mature commitment to this way of life.

There is a great generosity of spirit among our members, leading to service at all levels.

We have a good relationship with our neighbours in England and Wales, and in particular since Hong Kong '94 we have enjoyed attendance at their national assemblies and they have attended ours when possible.

Our high points during the years have been and still are our Ignatian directed retreats, attending community building weekends and days, both locally and nationally. We have been represented at every World/European assembly since 1968 which has engendered a sense of belonging to a wider family.

Visits from our ecclesiastical assistants during the years have been inspirational and are eagerly looked forward to.

We are very blessed in our current ecclesiastical assistant Fr. Michael Gallagher, S.J. who has brought to us a wide and long experience of Ignatian Spirituality, and his commitment effort and support to us has been a great blessing.

Our low points during the years has been the pain experienced at losing members through illness, death and other reasons, and a frustration in our efforts to attract new members.

Although we are small in numbers we look forward with the help of God's grace, to further sharing of this great gift of C.L.C. which has been given to us.

CLC Luxembourg

A History of Graces Lived by CLC in Luxembourg since 1974

The beginnings of CLC in Luxembourg go back to a seminal experience by some members (all lady-teachers) of the Marian Congregation (MA) who, during the World Assemblies of Augsburg (1973) and Manila (1976), had the chance to live intensive moments of prayer and personal and communal formation amidst the poor. Filled with enthusiasm by these experiences and supported by members from CLC DE (1974), the leaders of the Marian Congregation encouraged the members wishing to live according to the CLC way, to meet in local groups and to attend formation sessions, meetings of World CLC and to do the Spiritual Exercises. In the 1980s, several new local groups, consisting of couples and celibate people from various professional backgrounds, were born.

Since the 1990s, the topics and orientations of the world community have marked the activities of our national community and our local groups more deeply. This was particularly the case for the process of revision of the **General Principles** (GPs) and their implementation in the wake of Guadalajara (1990). Hongkong (1994) helped us sense a vigorous call to conversion and mission by Christ “into a world marked by division and suffering”. After that, our community has been able to benefit greatly from the **formation** proposals offered by CLC in neighbouring countries (Germany, France, French-speaking Belgium). Their pedagogical tools helped us create an art of living according to the GPs. At the same time, our **attention to the poor** (nearby and abroad) has been constantly challenged.

The World Assembly of Ithaiçi (1998) confirmed our desire to deepen our experience of the Spiritual Exercises in order to discern more clearly a Christian mission in our daily lives, be it in our families, our jobs, our lives in society or in the Church and to discover the presence of the Holy Spirit at work in the world.

Taking the discernment of Ithaiçi to heart while looking at the social reality in Luxembourg, we have been brought to assist and to accompany asylum seekers and to advocate their rights. Predominantly, these refugees come from former Yugoslavia, which was maimed in a brutal, ethnic/religious civil war between 1991 and 1999 with only occasional periods of relenting. Due to various steps, reflection meetings and action and also in answer to a discernment on the level of the Eurolinks, we founded a **working group “Forced Migration”**. Up to now, its task has been:

- to assist those whose request for asylum has been nonsuited and to all who have difficulties in integrating in our society
- to support the discernment of voluntary workers (members of CLC and others) who help foreigners
- to sensitise the members of the Ignatian family... by meetings or by public advocacy.

To denote its link with the Jesuits clearly, the group was named “Ignatian Group on Migration” (French abbreviation: GIM) in 2007.

The World Assembly of Nairobi (2003) has confirmed our efforts and our desire to foster the awareness of being part of an “apostolic body” among our members:

- to dare to discern personal decisions together, *in the local group*. In this process –which we feel needs to be deepened - the pedagogical tools of CLC in our neighbouring countries have been of invaluable help and we are profoundly grateful to our brothers and sisters
- to express the experience of an apostolic body (beyond the local group) by *national meetings* of sharing, formation, celebration, relaxation.... At this point, let us mention some types of meetings specifically designed to enable the participants to experience the dynamics of discernment, mission, support and evaluation:
 - * three meetings per year of the national ExCo and the co-ordinators of local groups (often joined by the group guides), during which the moments of shared examen, discernment and support are very much appreciated in general
 - * regular meetings with our formation team, the working group “Forced Migration”, and the editing group of our CLC journal “CVX-INTERN”.

Following Nairobi (2003), a **formation team** was created in 2004 with the aim of

- devising offers of formation and spiritual experience (examen, sharing in groups, types of prayer);
- proposing these formations to our CLC members, but also, in an accessible form, to non-members (parishes, young adults);
- organising meetings of reflection and discernment on a lifestyle characterised by spiritual dynamism in our secular culture, and on the transmission of values and faith to our children
- co-operating (on the basis of our specific CLC identity) in non-CLC offers of formation for adults and pastoral offers.

On the occasion of World Youth Day (2005) in Cologne, the German Ignatian Network had suggested organising specific youth propositions called “Ignatian Experiments” for young participants of WYD who felt attracted by Ignatian spirituality. The Ignatian family in Luxembourg joined this initiative to implement the **project “Magis”**. This project enabled 220 young people (from France, Poland, Spain, Italy and Taiwan) to experience 4 days of pilgrimage and communal spiritual exercises in groups of 30 people, by meeting refugees, elderly or disabled people, by confronting the scars of a troubled past (WWII)... “Magis” remains for us a milestone, an apostolic experience of outstanding beauty, because it was discerned, decided, implemented and evaluated by almost the entirety of our members in CLC Luxembourg!

Our attention to the young generations has often changed in the course of the years. Originating in our difficulties to transmit our faith to our own children or to motivate young people to join a CLC group, our concern has gradually widened to the country in general. It was the creation of the University of Luxembourg, which incited us to discern and to found, in co-operation with other NGOs and the Church, not a university chaplaincy, but a place of service and welcome for young people: a “**Lieu d’Initiatives et de Services des Etudiants au Luxembourg**” (**LISEL**). Its goal is the creation of a permanent structure, which should allow students to realise themselves through social, cultural and spiritual activities. Its plan of action is aligned along the Christian view of mankind, the values of the Gospel and the social work of the Roman Catholic Church.

Several recent concrete manifestations are signs of our belonging to an apostolic body, beyond our national borders: notably the ignatian spiritual offers co-organised with CLC in neighbouring countries (Germany and French-speaking Belgium), the responsibility of co-ordinating the Euroteam (which is assumed by one of our members), the international visits from one or the other members of the World ExCo and the visits of our members to other CLCs. These are graces for which we are indeed deeply grateful!

January 2008

CLC Malta

'Our Graced History' as CLC Malta

Way back in the late seventies, CLC was emerging from the older generation of the Marian Congregations to a less devotional institution with a more youthful membership.

This time of transition saw the transformation of identity (from Marian Congregations to CLC) and the gradual departure of several members from the older generation that found it difficult to integrate. It gave way however, to a growing number of adolescents who were gradually being introduced to the CLC Way of Life which was a very positive result.

In Malta, 'the graced history' of the National Community is clearly marked out by the key experience of the year – the Annual CLC Seminar - which usually identifies the 'pulse' of the N.C. and 'the movements of the Spirit' and attempts to unite the two, in a weekend experience that unites all of its members together. It builds towards the next phase of growth. This journey has been uninterrupted since 1978 to date and each Annual Seminar has been a landmark experience that has left its imprint on the formation and direction of each member, small community and in turn, the NC as a whole. It has provided the opportunity for each CLC member to share a weekend experience with every other CLC'er on the island and to build bridges: stronger inter-community relationships, community twinning, apostolic teams, guides' groups, jesuit collaboration etc.

The journey travelled in these past thirty years has been blessed by the felt presence of the Holy Spirit during this privileged time of grace when the N.C. comes together to listen to God's invitation. Inevitably, it has propelled the search for a more authentic response as a NC, to God's call. Every year it has been our common experience to witness the power and presence of God along this continued process. It has outlined the path that God's hand has had upon our National Community and reaffirmed the openness and level of response to His call.

It would be fair to state that the process itself had several phases of growth that roughly ran through several intervals. The earlier part of our journey (5-6 years) was earmarked by the desire to build strong N.C. foundations that was characterised by the awareness of the three pillars of the CLC Way of Life: Community – Ignatian Spirituality – Mission. They helped to forge the knowledge and identification of our CLC vocation and provided a wealth of information and formation delving into particular aspects of the CLC vocation. This was a time when a number of new young communities were being formed and their participation was vibrant and enthusiastic. The freshness of a stage of discovery is typical to any beginning and this was the beginning of the Maltese NC.

A second batch of Seminars (7yrs) directed the N.C. to venture into a more questioning and discerning role, engaging everyone to enter into a process of communal discernment together as one NC. This was a very ambitious idea but one that was very successful and which led us to reflect on issues and realities facing Malta at that time, with outstanding impact on the life of the NC. It was a time when we considered possible areas of service that we, as CLC'ers may engage into and contribute, in the light of our identity. They were moments of great maturity and challenge, as we sought to fulfil our role as CLC'ers in the Maltese context. Issue groups were created to help people to get mobilised on common projects. These seminars helped to determine the direction of the NC and gave insight into one's personal mission.

As a result of this process we were led to realise that we still needed to confirm our strengths as a lay community and to take on more responsibility, rather than depend on the jesuits. We wanted to recruit new groups ourselves and from different sources even. On the one hand, we had people at the stage of getting married and establishing their families and careers and on the other hand, we had an altogether younger generation desiring to grow and get involved in CLC Mission. This mix of needs and dreams created a healthy tension which was important to deepen and identify the true Ignatian elements conducive to the quality of our mission. It was at this point that we needed to respect the different realities of Adult and Young CLC and distinguish the best way to proceed accordingly. Most of the adults were struggling with time management issues juggling with work and family responsibilities, while we had young communities thirsting to grow and receiving a very negative impression from the

older generation. They would ask: Is CLC something we outgrow? We had people leave CLC because they felt they did not belong any more; because time was too scarce; or because they believed they had outgrown the Community. This was a difficult time for the NC and perhaps because it was sudden, it was not adequately handled perhaps. Our clumsy way of doing things may have left some people feeling hurt, bitter or abandoned. However, it was a time of growth nonetheless, especially for those who remained. We have grown from it.

A third set of Seminars were therefore targeted towards a deepening in authenticity and a facing of the struggles and difficulties that emerged from trying to live our mission in the context of our daily life. We had to take stock: guest speakers addressed the Community; we had formation weekends; we had prayerful discernment as one Body to choose between two or more radical options; we widened our sense of Church and questioned our apostolic mission. Now, we needed to give time to explore new ways of being together and experiment with new concepts like twinning communities to help foster continued growth. This also led to the formulation of new groups made up of members from different communities that had fizzled out. This provided a healthy interaction bringing together a wealth of experience.

More recently, the thrust of the last Seminars has helped to urge a more open and involving approach in fields of mission and collaboration with the Jesuits. We have learnt to work well with others and we have learnt to grow from our experience together. We have become more sensitive to the issues and plights of those around us who perhaps feel excluded from our society and possibly also the Church. We have attempted to pin-point the obstacles and hindrances blocking us from being more generous and open – more inclusive. We have discovered our truth and it has been a humbling experience to know that we too have weaknesses and we too feel vulnerable. We too need God's redemptive love.

Nonetheless this coming to terms of 'who we are' has projected the NC into a new phase where the older members are now returning with more time on their hands again and an enriched experience to share with others. On the other hand, the younger members are being better formed and are at an advantage, because they have older members for guidance and encouragement.

These last three years have also seen more children integrate into the community, since we have started to offer a weekend experience running parallel to our National Seminar, specifically for them also. This has helped to shape family mission because it is a common theme that can then be lived and manifested as a family unit. These are exciting times!

This privileged moment in the life of CLC Malta augurs well to embark on the journey of Fatima 08: Journeying as an Apostolic Body: our Response to this Grace from God.

CLC Poland

1977 - the formation of CLC in Poland - Warsaw

1982 - the formation of subsequent CLC in Warsaw, Białystok, Lublin

1984 - jesuits meeting concerning the formation of CLC in Poland

1986 - founding of the team of coordinators, the office and the teams: " Spirituality and Mission" and the teams dealing with CLC formation & apostolic activity

1988 - the meeting with General Father Kolvenbach in Warsaw

1991 - the election of the president and vice - president and the teams of coordinators(leaders) and animators(guides) - in the national level - in Poland

1994 - the election of the Executive Council at the General Assembly

1997 - participation in organisation of the First Congress of Catholic Movements in Poland

1997 - the beginning of the organisation of Spiritual Exercises in Life run by local communities in various cities (as a part of preparation for the 2000 Year Jubilee)

1997 -discerning priorities connected with formation & apostolic activity

1999 - extra (ordinary) National Assembly the Statute of CLC - approved; the Executive Council consisting of the president, apostolic activity & formation vice - president, treasurer, three advisers and Audit Committee (5 people) - elected

The special guest: father Salas SJ

2000 - obtaining juridical status according to national law

2000 - Spiritual Exercises "Commitment with the community" concerning

2000 - European CLC Meeting in Warsaw - Falenica

2001 - the recognition of CLC by the Conference of the Polish Episkopate

2001 - the first meeting of people involved in life - long commitment

2003 - National Assembly - the election of the Executive Council & the Audit Committee

2005 - the second meeting of people involent in life - long commitment

2007 - National Assembly - the election of new Executive Council & Audit Committee

CLC Portugal

La historia llena de gracia de la CVX-P

El día 25 de marzo de 1968, el Papa Pablo VI confirma los “Principios Generales” de la “Federación Mundial de las Comunidades de Vida Cristiana”.

En Portugal, donde existían las Congregaciones Marianas (CC.MM.) desde 1583, los cambios que se concretan a partir de 1964 se entienden inicialmente como amenaza a la identidad de las congregaciones¹, manteniéndose así al margen de su renovación y de los primeros pasos de la CVX a escala mundial, hasta que, en 1974, el P. António Lopes, asistente de la C.M. de los alumnos veteranos del “Colegio das Caldinhas” (Santo Tirso), desafió al P. José Manuel Rocha e Melo y al matrimonio Trigo da Roza a participar en un curso de formación S. Flour (Francia) en el contexto de la renovación de las CC.MM. (que ya se llamaban CVX). Así comenzó nuestro primer contacto con el movimiento de renovación de las CC.MM., que ya tenía, a escala internacional, un órgano oficial - la *Progressio* : *International Review of the Christian Life Communities (formerly Sodalities of Our Lady)*.

En noviembre de 1975, el P. José Manuel Rocha e Melo y Manuela Trigo da Roza arrancan con un primer grupo de adultos constituido por 4 matrimonios y 4 personas solteras, identificándose como “*Grupos de Vida Cristiana*: grupos de oración (personal y comunitaria) y para compartir cuya espiritualidad se asienta en los EE.EE. Estos grupos pueden estar formados por personas casadas, solteras, jóvenes o mayores, en número variable, pero pequeño, con una pedagogía propia que sigue fundamentalmente las diferentes etapas de los E.E.”² Después de algún tiempo de experiencia, este grupo dio origen a la primera CVX en Portugal.

En 1976, el P. Vasco Pinto de Magalhães, recién llegado de Roma, participa en la Asamblea Mundial de las CVX en Manila, donde se realiza la experiencia de ejercicios espirituales individualizados. También comprueba que los miembros CVX de Manila están muy introducidos en los barrios marginales, fruto de una opción apostólica por los más pobres. Trae de Manila el “**Survey**” (documento base de formación CVX).

La experiencia vivida y compartida con sus compañeros de Coimbra, los padres António Vaz Pinto y Alberto Brito, los lleva a la conclusión de que “todo aquello” corresponde bastante con lo que buscaban para una pastoral con los universitarios de Coimbra y que coincide con lo que el P. Arrupe les había dicho: “la mejor forma de trabajar con los laicos es utilizando los ejercicios espirituales.” Nacen así las primeras CVX de jóvenes universitarios, muy centradas en la experiencia de los EE.EE.

La necesidad de formación de animadores laicos trae consigo, a partir de 1979, los **Cursos de animadores de Soutelo**. Estos cursos anuales, organizados en 8 días de EE.EE., seguidos de 8 (el primer año 15) días de formación, fueron un importante marco impulsador del crecimiento y fortalecimiento de las CVX en Portugal.

En el año 1979, en la VIII Asamblea General, en Roma, se propone a Portugal para su afiliación a la entonces Federación Mundial, pero su integración se confirma oficialmente en la Asamblea General de Providence, en 1982. “A CVX dá as boas vindas a Portugal e ao Canadá Anglófono”³

Los grupos CVX van proliferando, sobre todo en Lisboa y Coimbra, comenzando a sentirse la necesidad de invertir más en las estructuras. En 1983 se elaboran los primeros **Estatutos de la Federación Portuguesa**, los textos base de los cursos de Soutelo dan origen al **Libro CVX** y, en 1984, se celebran elecciones para la primera **Dirección Nacional**.

La **1ª Asamblea Nacional** se celebra en 1986 en Fátima, bajo el tema: “**Identidad y misión de las CVX**”, reflexionándose esencialmente sobre la cuestión de la identidad CVX.

La expansión de la CVX y la aparición de nuevos grupos en Braga, Oporto, Covilhã y Évora, trajo consigo la necesidad de creación de estructuras “intermedias” a escala regional (Equipos Regionales) para que fuese posible acompañar mejor a los diferentes grupos CVX que iban naciendo. Y, en octubre de 1989, en una reunión conjunta de los Equipos Nacional y Regionales, se aprobó una modificación de

¹ Boletín Oficial de las CC.MM. portuguesas, *Magnificat*, nov./dic. de 1965.

² Boletín de los Jesuitas, edición del 12-10-1976

³ *Progressio*, 1982 n.º 1-2

los estatutos con la cual se consagró la creación de la **Asamblea de Responsables**, constituida por los Equipos Nacional y Regionales, con los respectivos Asistentes Eclesiásticos. Esta asamblea es, todavía hoy, garante de unidad en la diversidad de los diferentes contextos y fuente de gran y recíproco enriquecimiento.

También en lo que se refiere a la conexión con la comunidad mundial, se fueron estableciendo las relaciones e intercambios. Portugal nunca más dejó de estar presente en los grandes acontecimientos de la CVX a escala internacional.

La Asamblea Mundial de Guadalajara'90 en la que se revisaron los **Principios Generales**, generó una etapa de reflexión más profunda sobre las dimensiones específicas de nuestro carisma CVX.

E... inevitablemente la dimensión de misión que, desde siempre, se anunciaba en las diferentes asambleas mundiales y nacionales, sobre todo a partir de la Asamblea Mundial de Hong Kong'94, comenzó a ganar algunos perfiles más definidos.

El llamado “Pacto de Hong Kong” firmado entre las Comunidades Nacionales del Sur de Europa (Italia, España y Portugal) y en la que los “signatarios” se comprometían a estrechar lazos de cooperación en los ámbitos de la formación y de la misión, fue un marco importante para la investigación de algunas nuevas perspectivas. Hubo algunos encuentros importantes en ese sentido y el de enero de 1995, en Madrid, que contó con la presencia del Presidente de la CVX Mundial, José María Riera, y del vice-asistente P. Julián Elizalde, fue de una enorme riqueza para todos.

La preparación del documento **Nuestro Carisma** proporcionó, a la vez, muchos momentos de estudio, oración y reflexión, en una palabra, de **Gracia**, que no pueden dejar de señalarse. El deseo de ofrecer una contribución seria y empeñada demostró ser fuente de enriquecimiento y alegría.

Como consecuencia se creó el primer **Equipo de Formación** y nace el primer **Plan de Formación** de la CVX-P, importante instrumento de formación y crecimiento de los grupos, que se fue perfeccionando y enriqueciendo a lo largo de los años.

Otros marcos importantes para el crecimiento de la CVX-P fueron los encuentros Jesuitas/CVX. El primero en el que participaron miembros de la CVX-P, tuvo lugar en Madrid, organizado por la CVX-E. La armonía que ya entonces reinaba entre las dos comunidades ibéricas fue floreciendo cada vez más. El segundo, en Soutelo, con la participación de la Vicepresidenta mundial, Maria Clara Binggemer y del Vice-asistente P. Julián Elizalde, transcurrió en muy buen ambiente.

Itaici'98 fue otra Asamblea Mundial que nos marcó mucho a todos nosotros, desde la forma, verdaderamente destacable, en la que los delegados de la comunidad portuguesa fueron acogidos y permanentemente acompañados, y que generó relaciones fraternas verdaderamente sólidas, hasta la dinámica que generó la propia asamblea, sobre todo a través del documento final: **Nuestra misión común**.

La Asamblea Nacional siguiente, bajo el lema “**CVX-P: ¿cuáles son las prioridades apostólicas después de Itaici?**”, fue abriendo caminos para que la dimensión apostólica fuese siendo cada vez más importante en nuestras comunidades y para que se fueran definiendo algunos campos prioritarios de misión tanto a escala individual, como comunitaria.

El desafío de pasar de una comunidad de apóstoles a una comunidad apostólica, lanzado en la Asamblea Nacional de 2003, bajo el lema: **Emprendedores de la Fe, Justicia y Cultura**, se fue asimilando progresivamente, sobre todo, después de las **Recomendaciones de la Asamblea Mundial de Nairobi a la CVX**. En esa línea tuvieron especial importancia algunos momentos de reflexión en el ámbito luso, como las **Jornadas CVX** y, de modo especial, las **Reuniones Generales de de Animadores**.

La Asamblea Nacional de 2007, bajo el lema “**Muchos miembros, un sólo cuerpo**”, no sólo fue un importante momento de unión y de análisis de lo que somos como comunidad nacional, sino un verdadero momento de Gracia que abrió puertas y lanzó desafíos concretos en el sentido de crecer como cuerpo apostólico y encontrar procesos y estructuras que nos hagan más eficientes en nuestra misión como comunidad. “Nuestra reflexión nos condujo a explicitar la secuencia “discernir-enviar-apoyar-evaluar” como un **Círculo Apostólico**, donde cada fase conduce a la otra y cada momento de evaluación abre espacio a un nuevo discernimiento”⁴ y encontrando en ese círculo apostólico, una importante inspiración para el modo de proceder CVX.

⁴ Documento final de la Asamblea Nacional Fátima 2007

CLC Slovenia

»Graced history« of the Slovenian CLC

1. 1976-1978 beginning of a group named KRES (leader: p.Marko I. Rupnik, sj)

The "seeds" of Slovenian CLC began to germinate in the seventies when a group of young people in 1976 started to live Ignatian spirituality. They named the group "Kres" (The Bonfire). The basic "newness" of this group was their living out the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Within a few years many members joined the group.

2. - 1984-1986 collecting information about world CLC, visiting CLC in Austria, Italy

- 1988-1989 communal discernment about joining the WCLC - all members in all groups said 'yes'

- 1990 affiliation to the WCLC (WCLC Assembly in Guadalajara)

In the eighties The Bonfire stepped in contact with European CLC communities. The discernment process whether we should join the World CLC Community started. The members were unanimous on joining the World CLC. Slovenian CLC became part of the World Community at the World Assembly in Mexico (Guadalajara) in 1990.

When we joined CLC a suitable name was needed to be found. Since Slovenia was still a part of former Yugoslavia, the world leadership proposed us to be called CLC Yugoslavia. We on the other hand went into discernment about that and came up with our current name, The Slovenian CLC. This name has given other Slovenians, living across our borders to join us.

3. The Visit of p.Tim Quinlan

In 1988 we received a visit of p. Tim Quinlan, vice- assistant for the World CLC. He was invited on behalf of our national assistant. His answers to our questions helped us greatly in our discernment about the shape and the direction our Community was to take in the future

4. Formation team

As our senior members became more and more committed to their family lives and with new members joining the Community started to search the way in which those different dynamics could coexist together. We found the solution in the pedagogy of Spiritual Exercises. We have distributed or members in three types of groups. The so called 'first groups' were introductory in nature and consisted mainly of members who have not yet gone to retreats. Second groups consisted of members who have done the first and the second week of the Exercises and the third of those who have already made their life's decision. This kind of group formation was to help the group leaders in encouraging and fostering of our Charisma as well as help the members in their spiritual growth with the help of Ignatian resources. A special formation group has been established whose function is to take care of the formation of the Community. It first started working in 1990 and it consisted of 6 members.

Their role has been in fostering the group's spiritual assistance, organizing leadership seminars and functioning as an informant between the Community and its national leadership. It translated some seminal CLC documents in to Slovenian.

In 1991 the first organization of pilgrimage by foot to the church of St.Ignatius of Loyola (1 week of prayer for peace); since then we have organized it every summer

1991 was the year I which we first organized our annual national pilgrimage to the Church in St. Ignatius in Pohorje. It has been a popular event ever since. This year (2008), however, we we shall take another direction; we will make our pilgrimage to St Ignatius in Gorizia in Italy which is right at our national border.

6. 1992 groups from Maribor (Slovenia) and Italy joined Slovenian CLC (from Gorizia, near Slovene-Italian border)

After we had made a pilgrimage, 7 pilgrims from Maribor joined CLC together with a group from Cervignano, Italy. The seven pilgrims formed a new CLC group in Maribor.

7. 1993 first permanent commitment

In November 1993 first members commit themselves to the CLC life and service.

8. Our Bulletin

In 1990 our first monthly bulletin is issued. It started off as few printed pages containing a spiritual thought for the month, provided by the national assistant, and notices about life and events in the Community. In 1995, after the pilgrimage to the Ignatian sites, the first editorial comity was formed which started editing a publication with a new title, Plameni (The Flames). This word brings back the old idea of the Bonfire movement attesting that only flames gathered together are really able to set blaze a real fire. We have found some support for this name also in the Bible.

Today the bulletin is being issued 8 times a year on roughly 30-35 pages.

9. 2006 celebration - 30 years of our history

In 1996 we celebrated the twentieth, and in 2006 the thirtieth anniversary if CLC in Slovenia. At both occasions we published special publications describing the development and the main characteristics of CLC in Slovenia. The thirtieth anniversary was especially celebrating the Lords commitment do us.

10. Slovenian CLC symbol

The main motif of the Slovenian CLC symbol is fire, a bonfire. The symbol is central to the name of the first above-mentioned community (Kres-Bonfire) and represents our awareness of the gifts received by the Spirit. The Community is a space where we start to look at life and God's talents with more responsibility and commitment. In front of the fire is a young branch, a young tree, a young wood. Both the fire and the branch are rising; their tops are not seen. This symbol portrays growth and the mysteries, which faced all of us; it addresses us in our desire to be lifted up to the Lord. The Lord himself, from the time he was lifted from the earth, draws us to himself (John 12:32).

CLC Spain

Comunidad de Vida Cristiana de España (CVX-E)

Comité Ejecutivo

Secretariado CVX-E: c/ La Nave, 6, 3ª. 46003 Valencia / tel: 635374722 / secretariado@cvx-e.org 1/2

Historia de Gracia de CVX España

La Historia de Gracia de CVX España comienza con la presencia en las Asambleas Mundiales de Manila '76 y Roma '79 de los jesuitas Joan Martí Tusquets y Javier Leach –por encargo del Provincial de España respectivamente, quienes trajeron de vuelta a España el influjo de un movimiento laico, la Comunidad de Vida Cristiana.

En el año 1983, con la colaboración de la Comunidad Mundial, se realizó en Manresa un curso europeo CVX. La asistencia de un numeroso grupo de españoles, supuso el punto de partida definitivo a la creación de lo que sería más adelante la CVX España. Desde entonces, el Señor nos ha acompañado durante todo este tiempo que podemos calificar como un tiempo de Gracia para todos los que formamos parte de la comunidad.

La Gracia de la vocación CVX.

Tras unos años iniciales de difusión de lo que era CVX, y crecimiento progresivo en el número de comunidades, la segunda mitad de los 90 estuvo marcada por los denominados “procesos de clarificación vocacional” que afectaron a la mayoría de las comunidades locales.

El desencadenante de dichos procesos fue la llamada de CVX a ser una vocación personal y específica dentro de la iglesia. Para muchas personas pertenecer a CVX era la consecuencia natural de haber pasado muchos años en grupos de inspiración ignaciana, nacidos en su mayoría en centros de pastoral de la Compañía de Jesús o bien herederos de las antiguas Congregaciones Marianas. Quienes llevaban años participando de tales dinámicas, fuertemente vinculados por lazos de amistad y de vivencia común de la fe con otros miembros de su grupo, recibieron no sin sorpresa la noticia de que eso no bastaba para estar en CVX. La pertenencia era un asunto individual y no de grupo, como respuesta generosa a la llamada personal del Señor a servirle dentro de un carisma específico de la Iglesia. Estos “procesos de clarificación” dieron como resultado final unas comunidades con una identidad CVX más clara y definida, a expensas de producirse bajas y abandonos que ocasionaron, en algunos casos, situaciones de tensión y sufrimiento.

Un factor fundamental que hizo que el proceso se manifestara con especial fuerza fue el análisis y reflexión por las comunidades, como preparación para la Asamblea de Itaici, del borrador del documento “Nuestro Carisma”, que definía con claridad y con un alto nivel de exigencia las características de la vocación CVX.

Hoy, el Plan de Formación CVX España, basado en el documento “Nuestro Carisma”, ofrece un itinerario de crecimiento y maduración de la vocación CVX que está en plena fase de implantación.

La Gracia de ser una única Comunidad.

El crecimiento de la CVX España, viene marcado por la presencia de gracia de la Comunidad Mundial, con la que ha existido y existe una relación permanente.

A lo largo de este tiempo se han promovido una serie de elementos que van logrando consolidar vínculos personales y espirituales entre las personas de CVX-E y van haciendo de la comunidad una realidad más unida: asambleas, equipos apostólicos nacionales, revista, web “<http://www.cvx-e.org>”, intranet “<http://entrenosotros.cvx-e.org>”, Blog “<http://cvxe.blogspot.com>”, encuentros, Ejercicios Espirituales, cursos, secretariado. Se ha constituido el equipo nacional de comunicación con el objetivo de potenciar el intercambio de informaciones entre los miembros de CVX E. Todas estas acciones o realidades han ayudado a vivir la CVX-E como una comunidad más allá de las comunidades locales.

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Además, la vida de la CVX-E se ha articulado en cada una de las zonas gracias al papel de las coordinadoras de comunidades locales; y el contacto entre éstas y el comité de CVX-E ha ayudado a que la acción de éste sea más eficaz y cercana a las comunidades. El número de personas que asumen o han asumido servicios y responsabilidades es proporcionalmente bastante alto. Estamos trabajando para fortalecer el liderazgo y la autoridad en los diferentes niveles organizativos de la comunidad.

Desde los inicios, la iniciativa y colaboración de la Compañía ha sido factor determinante para con su

ayuda, apoyo y orientación dotar a la CVX de España de los elementos ignacianos que le permitan irse construyendo y ser fiel a su carisma. Las relaciones con la Compañía de Jesús se han cuidado y estructurado. La comunicación a nivel institucional está comenzando a dar sus primeros frutos. Esperamos que esta buena relación nos lleve a dar abundantes frutos apostólicos en mutua colaboración.

Los asistentes son hoy más conscientes de lo que CVX debe ser. Ha habido un proceso de formación y explicitación muy importante que supone que, en general, el asistente ayuda al crecimiento de las comunidades y las personas sin adoptar un papel de liderazgo directivo propio de otras épocas.

La Gracia de ser una comunidad en Misión

La espiritualidad ignaciana es esencialmente apostólica. Si se entra en CVX como respuesta a una llamada personal, se está en CVX para ser apóstoles. Y para serlo no como elementos aislados, sino formando parte de una comunidad apostólica. La explicitación de la vocación apostólica de CVX España se plasmó inicialmente en la realización de los Proyectos Apostólicos Comunitarios (PACs) que han elaborado dos tercios del total de las comunidades locales.

Los Proyectos Apostólicos están representando un generoso esfuerzo por parte de personas y comunidades por definir cuáles son los campos de misión en que debemos comprometernos, con qué objetivos y con qué medios materiales y humanos. Y todo ello debería poder ser permanentemente evaluado. El proceso de elaboración de los PACs resultó fructífero para muchas comunidades, que lo vivieron como una auténtica gracia del Señor. Para otras, sin embargo, ha estado salpicado de dificultades y dudas. Pero en todas las que lo han trabajado ha servido para avanzar en su camino como comunidades apostólicas.

Las diferentes asambleas CVX España han reconocido la importancia del trabajo pastoral con jóvenes y que esta misión tiene que ser una prioridad para CVX. El equipo nacional de misión joven ha comenzado a articular acciones concretas para dar respuesta a esta prioridad apostólica. Esperamos ir dando pasos eficaces para profundizar más decididamente en este ámbito de misión que por ahora sólo se encuentra en una fase inicial de desarrollo.

El trabajo con y por los inmigrantes ha sido uno de los mayores exponentes de la acción apostólica de CVX-E.

El equipo apostólico nacional de inmigración ha sido de los más activos y colabora en la realización de acciones más allá de nuestras fronteras.

La Gracia de sentir la llamada a ser Cuerpo Apostólico para la Misión.

Podemos concluir que el Señor guía a CVX España a descubrir el significado de ser Cuerpo Apostólico y para ayudar a crecer como tal, el comité ejecutivo nacional ha establecido la Comisión Apostólica, con el encargo de ayudar al desarrollo del DEAE en todas nuestras comunidades y grupos locales.

Es evidente que nos falta un largo trecho para llegar a serlo, pero también es evidente que los cimientos que dispusimos y los sucesivos pasos que se han ido dando, nos han ayudado a vislumbrar a lo largo de nuestro caminar, que el Señor nos llama a ser Cuerpo Apostólico de laicos en el mundo de hoy.

Queda la tarea de ir profundizando en esta llamada desde una vivencia siempre mayor de la vocación a la que somos convocados.

CLC Switzerland

History of Grace CLC Switzerland

25-years-jubilee

2007, when World CLC celebrated 40 years since the approval of the General Principles, CLC Switzerland had the joy to thank also for 25 years since the (new) beginning of CLC in our country in 1982. The national EXCO invited to celebrate these two events with a deepening time (with a set of three prepared meetings) in the local groups, and with the jubilee-celebration on September the 15th 2007.

Comparing CLC with a tree, we had a powerful image to guide us through the process. At different places in house and garden of the retreat-center Bruchmatt in Lucerne we shared on the following topics: roots, fruits and flowers.

People have received in CLC much more than can be listed here. Nevertheless let us mention some of the treasures that we shared:

Roots of our CLC-tree:

- longing for life
- each person is special and loved by God
- personal hurts and experiences of limits
- personal relation to God in Jesus Christ
- spirituality of the Exercises, spiritual direction
- the wealth of individual
- strengthen the community and gives it a colourful and manifold face
- people with the same or similar interests
- faithfulness to our roots
- support for our daily life by the community
- support by CLC-communities in other countries.

Such impressive roots can nourish a strong tree which bears fruit. In a next step we collected the fruits which have grown during the last 25 years on our „CLC-Tree.“ Members of CLC, members of the „founding-generation“, CLC-Individuals, CLCers with permanent Commitment, friends and people who are interested in CLC reflected on what treasures they have received through CLC and how they discover fruits of christian faith in their lives. Of the numerous fruits only a few are mentioned here:



Fruits that have grown on our CLC-tree

- community with Jesus Christ with companions on the way.
- To search and find God in our daily lives
- The individual way of each person
- openness towards the situations we encounter in our lives
- sharing of joy and suffering
- People who listen carefully and give inputs
- hope even when we experience setbacks
- growth in inner freedom
- to find members of the CLC-family and feel at home in foreign countries
- To discover the „red thread of confidence“ in God’s leading
- growth with the help of „CLC-nourishment“
- personal and common discernment
- friendship and solidarity in prayer
- Eucharist, community meetings
- Spiritual Exercises in daily life
- Spiritual Exercises for families, family-meeting-days
- partnership with CLC-Congo
- CLC- NGO-Working-Group
- One member of CLC Switzerland, Sonja, initiated an orphanage in Romania and some support her in her mission
- Engagement in the local church

Now a little apple-tree was planted in the garden – hoping that it will grow and bear fruit!

Our desires for CLC in the future we expressed as buds and flowers.

The Eucharist

A beautiful Jewish dance led to the Eucharist – where we celebrated our thankfulness and joy and laid desires for the future as „**buds and flowers**“ in God’s hands. We prayed for searching and young people, that they may discover CLC and that we find a way towards more visibility. We also asked for courage and strength for socio-political engagement, for the grace of living the option for and with the poor as an experience of the reign of God and for growth into credible followers of Christ. We hope – also through inputs from CLC-Congo – that CLC-groups will grow in unity. Intercultural sharing and spirituality may enrich our world. We also prayed for our church and that CLC takes its part in the inner renewal and revival of parishes.

It was a beautiful celebration. United in the world-wide CLC-community we are on the way to Jesus Christ. On this way we encourage each other and receive strength from the same source: Jesus Christ.

Together we join in St. Paul’s words:

We thank God always for you, brothers and sisters

because your faith flourishes even more,

and the love of every one of you for one another grows.

Accordingly, we ourselves boast of you in the churches of God

Regarding your endurance and faith in all your persecutions and the afflictions you endure.

1 Thess 1,3-4