

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY

Approved by the General Assembly on September 7th, 1990.
Confirmed by the Holy See on December 3rd, 1990

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Read the following General Principle

1. God loves and saves us.

The Three Divine Persons, contemplating the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions decide to give themselves completely to all men Love and women and liberate them from all their chains. Out of love, the Word became human and was born of Mary, the humble Virgin of Nazareth. Living with the poor and sharing their condition, Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity in our human family. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we respond with gratitude to God for this gift of Jesus in every circumstance of our lives. Therefore we, members of the Christian Life Community, have composed these General Principles to aid us in making our own the choices of Jesus Christ and taking part through Him, with Him, and in Him in this loving initiative which expresses God's promise of faithfulness forever

Read the following Scripture Passage John 14: 15-21

John 14

15 "" If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 16 ""I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. 18 ""I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 "" After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. 20 "" In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. 21 "" He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

Reflect on the following questions

What are "the options of Jesus" that are most important in my life?

How have I grown in relationship with the Trinity?

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2. Guided by the Spirit.

Because our Community is a way of Christian Guided life, these Principles are to be interpreted not so much by the letter of this text as by the spirit of the Gospel and the interior law of love. This law of love, which the Spirit inscribes in our hearts, expresses itself anew in each situation of our daily lives. This Spirit-inspired love respects the uniqueness of each personal vocation and enables us to be open and free, always at the disposal of God. It challenges us to see our responsibilities and constantly to seek answers to the needs of our times, to work together with the entire People of God and all people of good will to seek progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and dignity for all.

Read the following Scripture Passage 1 Samuel 3: 1-10

1 Samuel 3

1 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD before Eli. And word from the LORD was rare in those days, visions were infrequent. 2 It happened at that time as Eli was lying down in his place (now his eyesight had begun to grow dim and he could not see well), 3 and the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD where the ark of God was, 4 that the LORD called Samuel; and he said, "" Here I am." 5 Then he ran to Eli and said, ""Here I am, for you called me." But he said, ""I did not call, lie down again." So he went and lay down. 6 The LORD called yet again, ""Samuel!" So Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, ""Here I am, for you called me." But he answered, ""I did not call, my son, lie down again." 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor had the word of the LORD yet been revealed to him. 8 So the LORD called Samuel again for the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, ""Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli discerned that the LORD was calling the boy. 9 And Eli said to Samuel, ""Go lie down, and it shall be if He calls you, that you shall say, "Speak, LORD, for Your servant is listening." So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10 Then the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, ""Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, ""Speak, for Your servant is listening."

Reflect on the following questions

How have I grown in the living of my faith from obeying rules to responding in love according to the individual situation?

How do I seek "the answers to the needs of our times"?

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3. A history of grace.

The Christian Life Community is a world association whose executive center is presently in History Rome. It is a continuation of the Sodalties of Our Lady, started by Jean Leunis, S.J., and first officially approved by Pope Gregory XIII's bull, Omnipotentis Dei, of December 5, 1584. Prior to these Sodalties of Our Lady we find our origin in those groups of lay people that developed in different parts of the world both before and after 1540 through the initiative of St. Ignatius Loyola and his companions. We live this way of Christian life in joyful communion with all those who have preceded us, grateful for their efforts and apostolic accomplishments. In love and prayer we join those many men and women of our spiritual tradition who have been proposed to us by the Church as friends and valid intercessors who help us to fulfill our mission.

Read the following Scripture Passage Revelations 19: 1, 5-9

Revelations 19

1 After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "" Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; 5 And a voice came from the throne, saying, "" Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great." 6 Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "" Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. 7 ""Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "" Write, " Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.""

Reflect on the following questions

How have I drawn inspiration from other CLC members?

How have I recognised God's action/grace in my life?

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4. Purpose.

Our Community is made up of Christians: men and women, adults and youth, of all social conditions who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with Him for the building of the Kingdom, who have recognized Christian Life Community as their particular vocation with the Church. We propose to commit ourselves as Christians in bearing witness to those human and Gospel values within the church and society which affect the dignity of the person, the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation. We are especially aware of the pressing need to work for justice through a preferential option for the poor and a simple life style which expresses our freedom and solidarity with them. To prepare ourselves more effectively for apostolic witness and service in our daily environment, we assemble in community those who feel a more urgent need to unite their human life in all its dimensions with the fullness of their Christian faith. Responding to the call of Christ and following our charism, we seek to achieve this unity of life in the world in which we live.

Read the following Scripture Passage Matthew 25: 34-40

Matthew 25

34 ""Then the King will say to those on His right, "Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 "For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' 37 ""Then the righteous will answer Him, "Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? 38 "And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39 "When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 "" The King will answer and say to them, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

Reflect on the following questions

What impact has CLC had on your life?

Has CLC given you a sense of greater unity of your ordinary life and your Christian faith?

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5. Sources

The spirituality of our Community is centered on Christ and on participation in the Paschal Mystery. Our spirituality draws its life from the Sacred Scriptures, the liturgy, the doctrinal development of the Church, and the revelation of God's Will through the events of our times. Within the context of these universal sources, we hold the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius as the specific source and the characteristic instrument of our spirituality. Our vocation calls us to live this spirituality, which opens and disposes us to whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily life. We recognize particularly the necessity of prayer and discernment, personal and communal, of the daily examination of consciousness and of spiritual guidance as important means for seeking and finding God in all things.

Read the following Scripture Passage Ephesians 6: 18-20, 23-24

Ephesians 6

18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. 23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love.

Reflect on the following questions

How important is regular prayer and use of the awareness examen to me?

In what ways does Ignatian spirituality help me to be more conscious of the presence of God in my everyday life?

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6. Sense of Church.

Union with Christ leads to union with the Church where Christ here and now continues his mission of salvation. By making ourselves sensitive to the signs of the times and the movements of the Spirit, we will be better able to encounter Christ in all persons and in all situations. Sharing the riches of membership in the Church, we participate in the liturgy meditate, upon the Scriptures, and learn, teach and promote Christian doctrine. We work together with the hierarchy and other ecclesial leaders, motivated by a common concern for the problems and progress of all people and open to the situations in which the Church finds itself today. This sense of the Church impels us to creative and concrete collaboration for the work of advancing the reign of God on earth, and includes a readiness to go and serve where the needs of the Church so demand.

Read the following Scripture Passage Matthew 28: 16-20

Matthew 28

16 But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "" All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "" Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Reflect on the following questions

What part do we (CLC) play in the mission of the Church?

What awareness do I have of union with Christ and the Church when participating in the Liturgy?

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7. Community bonds.

We express the giving of ourselves by a personal commitment to the World Community, through a freely chosen local community. Such a local community, centered in the Eucharist, offers a concrete experience of unity in love and action. In fact, each of our communities is a gathering of people in Christ, a cell of His mystical Body. Our common commitment, our common way of life, and our recognition and love of Mary as our mother bind us together. Our responsibility to develop the bonds of community does not stop with our local community but extends to the National and World Christian Life Community, to the ecclesial communities of which we are part (parish, diocese), to the whole Church and to all people of good will.

Read the following Scripture Passage Acts of the Apostles 4: 32-35

Acts 4

32 And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. 34 For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales 35 and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.

Reflect on the following questions

When I meet CLC members outside of my group do I have a sense of having anything in common with them?

How can I go about developing the bonds of community (at a local, national and international level)?

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8. Apostolic Life.

Christ has sent us on mission as members of the pilgrim People of God to be His witnesses before all people by our attitudes, words and actions. We are to become identified with His mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and to the blind, new sight, setting the downtrodden free and proclaiming the Lord's year of favor. Our life is essentially apostolic. The field of CLC mission knows no limits: it extends both to the Church and the world, in order to bring the Gospel of salvation to all people and to serve individual persons and society by opening hearts to conversion and struggling to change oppressive structures.

- a) Each of us receives from God a call to make Christ and his saving action present to our surroundings. This personal apostolate is indispensable for extending the Gospel in a lasting and penetrating way among the great diversity of persons, places and situations.
- b) At the same time, we exercise a corporate or group apostolate in a great variety of forms, whether through group action initiated or sustained by the Community through suitable structures, or through involvement of members in existing secular and religious organizations and efforts. Through the daily faith-consciousness examen and through personal and communal discernment, we try to give an apostolic sense to even the most humble realities of daily life.
- c) The Community helps us to live this apostolic commitment in its different dimensions, and to be always open to what is more urgent and universal, particularly through the "Review of life" and through personal and communal discernment. We try to give an apostolic sense to even the most humble realities of daily life.
- d) The Community urges us to proclaim the Word of God and to work for the reform of structures in society, participating in efforts to liberate the victims from all sorts of discrimination and especially to abolish differences between rich and poor. We wish to contribute to the evangelization of cultures from within. We desire to do all this in an ecumenical spirit, prepared to collaborate with those initiatives that bring about unity among Christians. Our life finds its permanent inspiration in the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ.

Read the following Scripture Passage Luke 4: 16-22

Luke 4

16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. 17 And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was

written, 18 "" THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, 19 TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." 20 And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, ""Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." 22 And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, "" Is this not Joseph's son?"

Reflect on the following questions

What do I understand by the phrase "my mission of being Christ's witness to all people"?

How does my CLC community help influence my actions through personal and communal discernment?

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9. Union with Mary.

Since the spirituality of our Community is centered on Christ, we see the role of Mary in relation to Christ: she is the model of our own collaboration in Christ's mission. Mary's cooperation with God begins with her "yes" in the mystery of the Annunciation-Incarnation. Her effective service as shown in her visit to Elizabeth and her solidarity with the poor as reflected in the Magnificat, make her our inspiration to act for justice in the world today. Mary's cooperation in her Son's mission, continued all through her life, inspires us to give ourselves totally to God in union with Mary, who by accepting the designs of God became our mother and the mother of all. Thus we confirm our own mission of service to the world received in baptism and confirmation. We honor Mary, the Mother of God, in a special way, and we rely on her intercession in fulfilling our vocation.

Read the following Scripture Passage Luke 1: 26-38

Luke 1

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. 36 "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. 37 "For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 And Mary said, "Behold, the handmaiden of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Reflect on the following questions

In my spirituality do I value the gospel based presentation of Mary?

How can Mary become more relevant in the living out of our CLC way of life?