



Christian Life Community

Australia

EVALUATING OUR APOSTOLIC MISSION

A Communal Support-Evaluation Process

PREAMBLE

At the World Assembly which was held in Nairobi in 2003, the world community felt confirmed in the call "to become a lay apostolic body that shares responsibility for mission in the Church". As a key for sharing responsibility in mission as an apostolic body, the four-fold process of *Discerning, Sending, Supporting and Evaluating* (DSSE) was named

This important process of DSSE is a cyclic process. This tool can be used to assist you in EVALUATING some area of activity and could lead to a further DISCERNMENT and then being SENT by you group and being SUPPORTED through your regular sharing within your group.

To be intentionally engaged in each other's personal mission can help a CLC group to live more as an apostolic community as envisaged by the world community at Nairobi.

The accompanying material can be used by a CLC group:

- a) To support a member who has discerned a decision for service/apostolic action and to evaluate with him/her the living out of that choice. Any member should be able to ask for this process.
- b) To invite members to reflect on their personal areas of service (even when they have not been 'discerned' or when they have been discerned independently of the group) and to help them grow in their use of the DSSE process



CLC Administration Manager, PO Box 5207, MANLY QLD 4179
Phone: (07) 3893 0958 ♦ Mobile: 0434 223 022 ♦ Fax: (07) 3393 4483 ♦
Email: admin@clcaustralia.org.au Web: www.clcaustralia.org.au

ABN 78 933 416 295 ♦ Inc. Reg No A0029889G (Vic)

Prior to the Meeting

Read the following material and respond to the questions

Pre-Reading

The apostolic life of CLC must be authentically lay

Over the years we have gained greater clarity about the spirituality of CLC as based in the Spiritual Exercise of St Ignatius. However, many still ask: “What is the mission of CLC?” or “What do you do?” At the recent World Assembly the concrete ways in which CLC is a lay apostolic body were explored.

Four different types of mission were discussed:

1. The first and most fundamental call is in Ordinary life – the reality of family, work, studies, civic life. Here the presence of CLC, precisely as CLC, is largely invisible, and yet this level involves 100% of CLC members. Here it is not about doing many things, but about being contemplatively present in one’s daily life.
2. Another way in which CLC members are in Apostolates: - involvement in ministries in one’s extra time and without being paid – e.g. within the parish, within St Vincent de Paul, on School boards, service within CLC itself etc.. About 70% of CLC members are involved in this sort of apostolate. This type of apostolate is not “better than” but rather “another form of mission” and will depend on the person’s circumstances at a particular time.
3. Another type of mission is Institutional presence. CLC has about 40 institutions around the world (eg schools, NGOs, spirituality centres). CLC in some countries have made certain fields of mission a priority for their national community, even though it does not involve a particular institution. For example, Rwanda has a focus on HIV, Spain has a focus on migration etc. Included here are also, youth and the family. This sort of commitment means that CLC members and groups are told, “Whatever you do, do something in this area”. A third element of this ‘institutional’ apostolic work is particular activities or campaigns. For example, after a Truth Commission report was presented in Peru, a network of civilian groups, including CLC, worked at promoting the recommendations of the Commission. About 10% of CLC members are involved in this more ‘institutional’ way.
4. Another type of mission is in International Actions yet involves maybe 1% of CLC. One example was the campaign in relation to education funding in the Dominican Republic. Also, about 6,000 CLC members joined the chain of prayer set up after the tsunami in Japan.

The apostolic work of CLC has different levels of visibility and it can be seen that this is inversely proportional to the number of CLC members involved. Our apostolic activity could be compared to an iceberg. What is most visible, above the water, are the Institutional and International Actions. To some extent our various apostolates in parish or other volunteer capacities has some visibility, but not normally visible precisely as CLC. Yet the largest part of our apostolate is our contemplative presence in daily life, and our ‘normal’ which is the part of the iceberg under the water.

The foundational call of every CLC member is to live their Ignatian lay vocation in daily life.

Focus Questions For Evaluating Our Apostolic Mission

If the process is being used by one individual [see (a) above], the one sharing comes to the meeting having reflected ahead of time using **one or more** of the first 8 questions **plus** question 9 and 10. (If desired, they could send the members of their group a brief half-page recap of what came to them in their reflection via email before coming to the meeting.)

If the process is being used as in (b) above

Each person in the group chooses an aspect of their ministry/mission/apostolic activity. As outlined in the Pre-reading material this could be:

- In daily life
- Volunteering in a variety of apostolates
- Institutional presence
- International action

Spend time in prayer with the following questions and take notes:

1. How did God's call come to you regarding this area of service and what helped you discern and choose this action/ministry?
2. What were the hopes (the goals) you had for yourself and those you desired to serve/help in saying yes to this call/this choice?
3. Where do you sense God has been most with you in this way of loving and serving others? How would you describe the quality of God's presence with you? Where have you experienced God's felt-absence in serving this way? Describe your experience.
4. What interior graces/consolations or struggles/desolations have been yours? Has there been a particular pattern to them? What meaning do you give to this awareness?
6. Where do you sense confusion or lack of clarity about what God may be asking of you in this area of service?
7. How are other areas of your life being affected by your commitment to this area of ministry?
8. How do you sense your mission fits with your graced history and your unfolding identity in Christ? What fruitfulness do you see? How do you see your service extending the mission of Christ/the mission of the Church? What feelings surface in you as you ponder this?
9. What area of your serving do you most feel a need to explore with your community in this support-evaluation process? What invites you to say that?
10. Other than this process, is there any other way¹ we, as a community, might be with you or assist you at this time?

Notes from my Reflection

Meeting Process (a)¹

Check in	Share in a word/phrase/image how you feel at this moment.
Quiet time (5 mins)	Music/Relaxation Exercise/Hymn e.g. “Companions on the Journey”
Grace	Holy Trinity, we ask for the gift of prayerful listening and responding to..... Fill us with the mind and heart of Christ during this time.
Scripture (2 mins)	e.g. Luke 10: 1-12, 17-20; Romans 12: 3-8
Phase 1 (10 mins)	The one presenting speaks (about their area of service)
Phase 2 (5 mins)	Clarification (if needed) The guide invites the listeners to ask questions about what has been said that is NOT clear (not the type of questions that will “explore” what has been shared.)
Phase 3 (5 mins)	Contemplative Pause The guide invites the group to a time of quiet inner listening. The group ponders what has been shared asking for the Spirit’s lead around questions to ask or comments to make that might be helpful for the one who has shared their story. The presenter also listens more deeply to his/her own interior thoughts and feelings after having shared.
Phase 4 (15 mins)	Community Response The guide first invites the presenter to share, if they wish, anything significant that emerged during the contemplative pause. If so, all listen ... The guide first invites those who feel drawn to ask a question that might help ‘explore’ the feelings or issues in the presenter’s sharing. All listen to the interchange- perhaps with occasional prayerful pauses – further questions may emerge for the presenter during this time. Then the guide invites those who feel called to offer a comment, an image or a scripture that came to them during the contemplative pause (or in that moment)
	<i>(Not every member of the community needs to engage Phase 4 – only as the Spirit leads. Some may feel called more to a supportive and prayerful intercession during this phase.)</i>
Phase 5 (5 mins)	Presenter’s Response The guide invites the member who shared their experience of apostolic service to express what has been helpful for them in this communal exchange and anything else they might need from the group to move forward.
Evaluation (5 mins)	The guide invites members to name their experience of the process. Conclude with a prayer.

¹

Meeting Process prepared by Pamela Daigle – CLC English Canada

Meeting Process (b)

Check in	Share in a word/phrase/image how you feel at this moment.
Quiet time (5 mins)	Music/Relaxation Exercise/Hymn e.g. "Companions on the Journey"
Grace	That I may become more aware of how I might know, love and serve God better.
Scripture (2 mins)	e.g. Luke 10: 1-12, 17-20; Romans 12: 3-8
Sharing (30 mins)	<i>Share with your companions what you noted from your reflection on an aspect of your service/ministry/mission/apostolic activity.</i>
First Round	Each person names the area on which they reflected and shares what was most significant in their prayer and reflection?
Second Round	What resonated with you as you heard others speak? Where did you experience harmony with the others as they shared? Were there new insights that were given to you and your small group?
Silence (5 mins)	In silence each reflects on the question: "Is there an area/aspect of my service/ministry/mission/apostolic activity that I wish to ask the group to help me explore more fully?"
Response (2 mins)	Each person gives their response to this question. ²
Evaluation (5 mins)	What are you most thankful for, or grateful for, in tonight's meeting? What is it that is hardest for you to be thankful for? Conclude with a prayer

² If a member wishes to depth their individual mission, the Meeting Process (a) could be used.

Alternatively

One process (over three meetings) that the community could use for further reflection is: "Reviewing an area of our Service with and for the Lord". Appendix A

Reviewing an area of our Service with and for the Lord

In 1997 a 6 day course “Sharing in the Lord’s Work: Skills for Discernment” was offered to Australian and international CLC members. The purpose of this course was to form a discerning community in order to evaluate an area of service. Subsequently it was adapted for a weekend course which was conducted in Sydney on several occasions. Each participant reflected on an area of their service and applied each step of the process to his/her activity. However, each person would only share in the group on one occasion. The document used in this weekend can be found at the CLC website.³

The resource outlined here has been further adapted from that material and it is suggested that it is used over three meetings when a person wishes to invite the group to help him/her review in depth an aspect/area of his/her service. The process described has three phases: It looks at

- A. “Them”, those we try to serve or help.
- B. “We”/”Me” in service or activity.
- C. Redrafting/Reformulating that service or activity

Even though all members of the CLC group reflect on the material, it is only the one member who shares their responses in the group while the others by means of contemplative listening and offering comments and questions to the one sharing provide support and assist that member to evaluate the mission they have chosen.

³ The document can be found at the CLC website: www.clcaustralia.org.au Click on “Guides” on the left hand navigation bar on the homepage.

Reviewing an area of our Service with and for the Lord

Prior to Meeting One

Grace: "Lord, may we recognise you in the faces of the people you have sent me to and help me to discover what you want me to do for them."

Scriptural Reference: John 4: 1-41 "The Samaritan Woman."

"...The woman put down her water jar and hurried back to the town to tell the people, 'Come and see a man who has told me everything I ever did; I wonder if he is the Christ?' This brought people out of the town and they started walking towards him....."

The Recipients of my Service: "They"

Reflection:

- ❖ Whom do I serve? Visualize them.
- ❖ What are their stories, their hopes, dreams, joys and sufferings?
- ❖ What is being asked of me *explicitly* by them?
- ❖ What is being asked of me *implicitly* by them?
- ❖ What underlies their *implicit* and *explicit* needs and desires?
- ❖ How is Jesus present in these people? Speak to Him about them.

Write down:

- What you have seen and heard and what you have learned:
 - The profile of the people
 - Their explicit and implicit requests
 - The most pressing need or desire which is fundamental to all the others.

Notes from my Reflection

Reviewing an area of our Service with and for the Lord

Meeting One

Check in Share in a word/phrase/image how you feel at this moment.

Quiet time Music/Relaxation Exercise

(5 mins)

Grace “Lord, may we recognise you in the faces of the people you have sent me to and help me to discover what you want me to do for them.”

Scripture John 4: 1-41 “The Samaritan Woman.”

(2 mins)

“...The woman put down her water jar and hurried back to the town to tell the people, ‘Come and see a man who has told me everything I ever did; I wonder if he is the Christ?’ This brought people out of the town and they started walking towards him.....”

Phase 1 The one presenting speaks about the people he/she serves in the area of service he/she has considered.

(10mins)

Phase 2 Clarification (if needed)

(5 mins)

The guide invites the listeners to ask questions about what has been said that is NOT clear (not the type of questions that will “explore” what has been shared.)

Phase 3 Contemplative Pause

(5 mins)

The guide invites the group to a time of quiet inner listening. The group ponders what has been shared asking for the Spirit’s lead around questions to ask or comments to make that might be helpful for the one who has shared their story. The presenter also listens more deeply to his/her own interior thoughts and feelings after having shared.

Phase 4 Community Response

(15 mins)

The guide first invites the presenter to share, if they wish, anything significant that emerged during the contemplative pause. If so, all listen. The guide **first** invites those who feel drawn to ask a question that might help ‘explore’ the feelings or issues in the presenter’s sharing. All listen to the interchange, perhaps with occasional prayerful pauses – further questions may emerge for the presenter during this time.

Then the guide invites those who feel called to offer a comment, an image or a scripture that came to them during the contemplative pause (or in that moment)

(Not every member of the community needs to engage Phase 4 – only as the Spirit leads. Some may feel called more to a supportive and prayerful intercession during this phase.)

Phase 5 Presenter’s Response

(5 mins)

The guide invites the member who shared their experience of apostolic service to express what has been helpful for them in this communal exchange and anything else they might need from the group to move forward.

Evaluation The guide invites members to name their experience of the process.

(5 mins)

Conclude with a prayer.

Reviewing an area of our Service with and for the Lord

Prior to Meeting Two

Grace: "Lord, may I have compassionate hearts to find out the needs of those to whom you are sending me. May I feel the joy of sharing your work; may my goals and ways be yours."

Scriptural Reference: Luke 10: 25-37 " The Good Samaritan."

"..... A Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him....."

The One/s who offer the Apostolic Service: "Me"/"We"

Reflection:

- ❖ What is my story?
- ❖ What has been my faith journey to this point?
- ❖ What are my talents, qualifications and life-style?
- ❖ How does Jesus challenge me?
- ❖ In this service what priorities have I set up and what difficulties have I encountered?
- ❖ How do I work with a team – my reactions to proposals, my resistance, my own tensions with my companions?
- ❖ How open am I to honest critical evaluation?

Write down:

- What you felt during prayer.
- What insights you gained during prayer.
- What you discovered about yourself.
- What call do you hear from Christ to you personally?

Notes from my Reflection

Reviewing an area of our Service with and for the Lord

Meeting Two

- Check in** Share in a word/phrase/image how you feel at this moment.
- Quiet time** Music/Relaxation Exercise
(5 mins)
- Grace** “Lord, may I have compassionate hearts to find out the needs of those to whom you are sending me. May I feel the joy of sharing your work; may my goals and ways be yours.”
- Scripture** Luke 10: 25-37 “The Good Samaritan.”
(2 mins) “..... A Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him.....”
- Phase 1** The one presenting speaks about the what he/she has discovered about (10mins) him/herself in prayer.
- Phase 2** Clarification (if needed)
(5 mins)
The guide invites the listeners to ask questions about what has been said that is NOT clear (not the type of questions that will “explore” what has been shared.)
- Phase 3** Contemplative Pause
(5 mins)
The guide invites the group to a time of quiet inner listening. The group ponders what has been shared asking for the Spirit’s lead around questions to ask or comments to make that might be helpful for the one who has shared their story. The presenter also listens more deeply to his/her own interior thoughts and feelings after having shared.
- Phase 4** Community Response
(15 mins)
The guide first invites the presenter to share, if they wish, anything significant that emerged during the contemplative pause. If so, all listen. The guide **first** invites those who feel drawn to ask a question that might help ‘explore’ the feelings or issues in the presenter’s sharing. All listen to the interchange, perhaps with occasional prayerful pauses – further questions may emerge for the presenter during this time.

Then the guide invites those who feel called to offer a comment, an image or a scripture that came to them during the contemplative pause (or in that moment)
- (Not every member of the community needs to engage Phase 4 – only as the Spirit leads. Some may feel called more to a supportive and prayerful intercession during this phase.)*
- Phase 5** Presenter’s Response
(5 mins)
The guide invites the member who shared their experience of apostolic service to express what has been helpful for them in this communal exchange and anything else they might need from the group to move forward.
- Evaluation** The guide invites members to name their experience of the process.
(5 mins) Conclude with a prayer

Reviewing an area of our Service with and for the Lord

Prior to Meeting Three

Grace: "Lord, may I seek your reign above all; in following you further on the road may I produce more abundant fruit; may I do your will better".

Scriptural Reference: John 15:9-17 "This is my commandment."

"..... You did not choose me, no I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and bear fruit....."

Redrafting/Reformulating My Apostolic Service

Re-call the previous reflections.

- ❖ What are the correspondences between the explicit and implicit requests and the goals I have set?
- ❖ What are the disparities between the explicit and implicit requests and the goals I have set?
- ❖ What is God calling me to change?
- ❖ What is God calling me to keep?

Write down:

- What you felt.
- What worries you.
- What your goals are.
- What you need to do next?

Notes from my Reflection

Reviewing an area of our Service with and for the Lord

Meeting Three

- Check in** Share in a word/phrase/image how you feel at this moment.
- Quiet time** Music/Relaxation Exercise
(5 mins)
- Grace** “Lord, may I seek your reign above all; in following you further on the road may I produce more abundant fruit; may I do your will better”.
- Scripture** John 15:9-17 “This is my commandment.”
(2 mins) “..... You did not choose me, no I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and bear fruit.....”
- Phase 1** The one presenting speaks about any changes that he/she feels called to (10mins)
make as a result of this prayerful process.
- Phase 2** Clarification (if needed)
(5 mins)
The guide invites the listeners to ask questions about what has been said that is NOT clear (not the type of questions that will “explore” what has been shared.)
- Phase 3** Contemplative Pause
(5 mins)
The guide invites the group to a time of quiet inner listening. The group ponders what has been shared asking for the Spirit’s lead around questions to ask or comments to make that might be helpful for the one who has shared their story. The presenter also listens more deeply to his/her own interior thoughts and feelings after having shared.
- Phase 4** Community Response
(15 mins)
The guide first invites the presenter to share, if they wish, anything significant that emerged during the contemplative pause. If so, all listen. The guide **first** invites those who feel drawn to ask a question that might help ‘explore’ the feelings or issues in the presenter’s sharing. All listen to the interchange, perhaps with occasional prayerful pauses – further questions may emerge for the presenter during this time.

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- (Not every member of the community needs to engage Phase 4 – only as the Spirit leads. Some may feel called more to a supportive and prayerful intercession during this phase.)*
- Phase 5** Presenter’s Response
(5 mins)
The guide invites the member who shared their experience of apostolic service to express what has been helpful for them in this communal exchange and anything else they might need from the group to move forward.
- Evaluation** The guide invites members to name their experience of the process.
(5 mins) Conclude with a prayer