



# Christian Life Community

Australia

## THE WORLD AND AUSTRALIAN COMMON MISSION/APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY

### Context of our Common Mission/Apostolic Journey

“The way of life of Christian Life Community commits its members, with the help of the community, to strive for a continuing personal and social growth, which is spiritual, human and apostolic.....”(General Principles 12a)

Since the Christian Life Community aims to work with Christ for the advancement of God’s reign, all individual members are called to an active participation in the vast field of apostolic service. Apostolic discernment, both individual and communal, is the ordinary way of discovering how best to bring Christ’s presence, concretely to our world. Our broad and demanding mission requires of each member a willingness to participate in social and political life and to develop human qualities and professional skills in order to become more competent workers and convincing witnesses.....” (General Principles 12b)

There are a number of factors which influence the Common Mission/ Apostolic Call for the Australian CLC community. Some of the more direct influences are: World General Assemblies of CLC, National Australian Assemblies, National Gatherings, prayer, discernment with and between CLC members.

**The journey of discerning our CLC Australian Common Mission/Apostolic Priorities is an evolving process. The following document outlines different stages of our CLC Australian Common Mission/Apostolic Priorities since 1998.**

### 1998

CLC’s World Common Mission was discerned at the **World Assembly in Itaiçi in Brazil in 1998**, following prayer and reflection on the contributions from all national CLC communities. Three main points emerged:

- To bring the freeing power of Christ to our social reality.
- To find Christ in all our varied cultures and to let His grace illuminate all that needs transformation.
- To live Christ so as to bring Him to every aspect of our daily life in the world.

### 1999

Following on from the **CLC National Gathering in Melbourne in 1999**, the following statement was prepared:



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## THE COMMON MISSION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA

*We are a community in the Ignatian spiritual tradition. In the Spiritual Exercises we come to a profound trust in the love of God, who calls us in spite of our weakness and sends us on mission. With the Trinity we look upon our world and find ourselves drawn to be part of God's own response to the world in Jesus Christ.*

*After a process of discernment, both locally and in communion with the Thirteenth World Assembly Brazil 1998, we have striven in our National Gathering (1999) to express the mission we sense is given us by the Father in union with his Son: In discerning and reviewing our apostolic life at personal and communal levels, members of the Christian Life Community in Australia will give special consideration to the following areas of concern.*

*Grounded in our relationship with Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves to:*

- *standing with the poor and marginalized through a faith that does justice;*
- *promoting authentic relationships with one another, within families, in the workplace, in public life and in the Church;*
- *listening to young people, respecting their experience and finding ways to accompany them on their faith journey;*
- *developing and offering programs of formation to lay people;*
- *honouring the uniqueness of the varied cultures of our country;*
- *living in God's creation in a way that respects and protects it.*

*In order to be more effective in our service in these areas we wish to collaborate with others.*

*We will develop the means for mission identified by the World Assembly: the Spiritual Exercises and formation for mission. In doing this we will, however, be conscious of the Assembly's caution that: "action should not wait on full formation." From the very beginning we "learn to be contemplatives in action ...to foster a model of experience – reflection – action in our formation program".*

*We will develop what we believe to be one of our most valuable contributions: the process of discernment and those listening and dialogue skills that we learn in our community. We will draw on them in resolving conflicts and taking good decisions at all levels of life.*

*Approved and adopted by 130 members at the National CLC Gathering held in Melbourne 1999.*

### **2003**

The next **World Assembly was held in Nairobi in 2003** with its theme "*Sent by Christ, Members of One Body*". At this Assembly 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.

The DSSE process was described in this way: In community, we *discern* the calls we receive. As lay people these calls often come from areas we are involved in and where we become aware of needs, such as our family life, the environment, unjust

social structures, parish life, youth, or our professional lives, to name a few. It is the community that *sends* us to live the discerned apostolic service. The community also continues to *support* us in following through on our call. After finalizing the service or, after a certain period of time, the community *evaluates* the mission with the person or the group sent. Thus, even an individual service becomes a "common mission", as the whole community shares responsibility for it.

### **2008 - 2012**

**In January 2008 an Australian National Gathering was held in Melbourne and was followed immediately by a National Assembly.** The theme was "*Collaborating in Christ's Mission*". At the culmination of five days of prayer, reflection, and dialogue which incorporated feedback received from our national community, we discerned that the areas of "our common mission" specific to Australia for the next four years would be:

- *Growth and Visibility*
- *Formation for Mission*
- *Ecology and Justice*
- *Leadership*
- *Communication and Administration*

It was around those areas that activities for the next four years until the National Assembly in 2012 were planned.

**In August, 2008 the World Assembly was held in Fatima** with the theme "*Journeying as an Apostolic Body*".): The Assembly reflected on our graced CLC history and from this five signs of hope and challenge emerged:

- *Fidelity to the orientations of Nairobi*
- *Unity in diversity*
- *The call to live as a prophetic lay community*
- *Closer identification with Christ's mission to bring the good news to the poor*
- *Widening and deepening networks of collaboration*

The Assembly then made seven recommendations of ways of orienting future action:

1. Further our understanding of the nature of our "apostolic body", realising that the dynamic of DSSE practised on all levels is the means to build the apostolic body
2. Increase our membership in numbers and diversity
3. Evaluate our current approach to CLC commitment
4. Orient formation towards mission and offer the Spiritual Exercises to more people.
5. Clarify the nature of CLC leadership and the characteristic CLC leadership roles
6. Network apostolic action and promote solidarity
7. Recognise financial co-responsibility as a necessary means for becoming an Apostolic Body.

## **2012 - 2016**

**The 2012 the CLC National Assembly, held in Brisbane**, discerned the following list of key priorities for CLC Australia for the next four years:

- To grow membership
- To nourish members
- To offer CLC to young adults
- To outreach to diverse groups
- To have one collective apostolic work
- To network as a national community
- To celebrate 450 years of Ignatian Lay groups
- To make available formal commitment
- To ensure good communication and administration
- To use the First Spiritual Exercises

## **2013**

**In 2013 the World Assembly was held in Lebanon** with the theme: "From Our Roots to the Frontiers". The final recommendations highlighted that:

- to be a lay apostolic body(Nairobi 2003) grounded in Ignatian spirituality is first of all to be lay. This requires a properly lay interpretation and living out of that spirituality.
- as with our spirituality, so with our apostolate – it must be authentically lay. CLC members may be involved in personal apostolates, and CLC as a body may have an institutional presence or engage in international action. But the ground of all these levels of mission is the foundational call of *every* CLC member to live their Ignatian lay vocation in daily life.
- our call to be a prophetic lay community (Fatima 2008) certainly remains valid as an important challenge to greater authenticity for ourselves and others engaged in the faith community... *and that*, ..seeking the way of wisdom may help us to discover a new and simple language of depth with which to dialogue with the people of our day.
- there is no future without collaboration.
- we feel prepared to engage the reality of our contemporary world – to be changed by that reality and to help change it. We do this by bringing both our professional competence and our distinctively Ignatian tools, sharpened for current needs. These include the Spiritual Exercises, the Examen, the DSSE process, discerning analysis, and an ability to listen, speak and act with simplicity and depth. Rooted in these graces of our vocation, we are invited to recognise and be at home at the frontiers, with respect, openness, and a sense of welcome.

The frontiers for the next five years are:

- Family
- Globalization and :Poverty
- Ecology
- Youth

National communities should keep in mind that these ... need to be interpreted and applied in the local, national and regional context.

### **2014**

In January 2014 the National Gathering in Melbourne the eleven priorities discerned at the National Assembly in 2012 were endorsed.

### **2016**

**National Assembly to be held in Sydney**

### **Links between CLC Australia and World CLC:**

As we look at the journey outlined above we can be affirmed as we recognise that the Mission Priorities<sup>1</sup> discerned by our Australian CLC members have been very much in tune with the outcomes from World Assemblies.

These correspondences are a clear sign of the presence of the Spirit guiding our CLC journey in Australia as part of the World CLC as we seek to live more deeply and act more effectively as a lay apostolic body sharing responsibility for mission in the world and in the church.

We are a community in the Ignatian spiritual tradition. In the Spiritual Exercises, we come to a profound trust in the love of God, who calls us in our weakness and sends us on mission. With the Trinity, we look upon our world and find ourselves drawn to be part of God's own response to the world in Jesus Christ.

The Mission of CLC is organic - continuously growing, changing, and developing as a result of our reading the signs of our time and dialoguing at a local, regional, national and world level.

1

These words are interchangeable: Australian common mission/Australian priorities/mission priorities/apostolic action