



Christian Life Community
Australia

*Preparation
for
Permanent
Commitment
2014*



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Meeting 1

The History of My CLC Vocation

Prior to the Meeting:

Prayer: Mt 10, 1-15: election of the disciples sent as apostles

Reflection: Pages 4 – 6

At Meeting:

Prayer: Mt 10, 1-15: election of the disciples sent as apostles

Questions for Sharing:

1. What does the experience of Ignatius' conversion stir in me?
2. Going through the memories of the history of God in my life, how have I lived this "spiritual awakening"? In what circumstances, and through whom, have I felt personally touched by God?
3. What role had CLC in my interior process of conversion and in the discovery of God?
4. What does the story of the way the Lord went on "sculpting" the features of Ignatius' vocation awaken in me?
5. What challenges of purification of faith have defined my interior certainty of having been called to collaborate with the Lord under His Standard?
6. How do I feel CLC helped in the calling and clarification of my vocation as a Christian?
7. What fruits and graces am I discovering in this time of common journey with other CLC companions?
8. How have I turned my vocation into apostolic mission?
9. How do I recognize the mediating role of CLC?
10. What does it mean for me to live in apostolic discernment? How have I lived the Ignatian ideal of being contemplative in action?

Notes:

PROPOSAL I: THE HISTORY OF MY CLC VOCATION

At the beginning of the final stage of the process of discernment for the Permanent Commitment, enlightened by faith, we are invited to revisit the memories of our interior path of progressive discovery of CLC as the specific mode to which we have been, and are, called to live our lay Christian state.

Being the Spiritual Exercises “the specific source and the characteristic instrument of our spirituality” (GP 5), this heritage profoundly moulds our spiritual itinerary.

We propose ourselves to read our vocation to the CLC – initial adherence and progressive identification with its charism – using as reference Ignatius of Loyola and the way he was guided by the Lord in his conversion, in the clarification of his vocation and in the missionary profile of the community formed by the first Jesuits.

A) Change of direction. God enters the life of Ignatius and calls forth his profound conversion

The spiritual awakening of Ignatius, at the age of 26, and the first interior insights about the way God is communicating with him happen in the shadow of the battle incident that forced him to confront his interior world, starting to comprehend the experience of the spontaneous movements of his thoughts and affections, and its consequences on the dispositions of the soul. The spiritual readings set this process in motion and turned Ignatius into a new man.

This succession of thoughts occupied him for a long while, those about God alternating with those about the world. But in these thoughts there was this difference. When he thought of worldly things it gave him great pleasure, but afterward he found himself dry and sad. But when he thought of journeying to Jerusalem, and of living only on herbs, and practicing austerities, he found pleasure not only while thinking of them, but also when he had ceased. This difference he did not notice or value, until one day the eyes of his soul were opened and he began to inquire the reason of the difference. He learned by experience that one train of thought left him sad, the other joyful. (...) gradually he recognized the different spirits by which he was moved, one, the spirit of God, the other, the devil (Autobiography, 8)

The experience of God stirs in Ignatius a great desire of detachment and total emptying of himself. After he had recovered his health, on his way to Montserrat (17-18), he ‘sacramentalizes’ his conversion according to costume proper to the ideals of Chivalry. He will continue to be a ‘knight’, but in a radically different way. The Lord counts on him as he is, and starting from what he is. Ignatius is now donning the “armour of Christ” (Eph 6, 11). Thus, he “resolved to prepare himself for a noble knighthood by passing a night in vigil before an altar of Our Lady at Montserrat. He would observe all the formalities of this ceremony, neither sitting nor lying down, but alternately standing and kneeling, and there he would lay aside his worldly dignities to assume the arms of Christ.” (17)

At Manresa, he confronts probation and temptation. It is a time of struggle, of crisis and learning. “There flashed upon his mind the idea of the difficulty that attended the kind of life he had begun, and he felt as if he heard someone whispering to him, ‘How can you keep up for seventy years of your life these practices which you have begun?’ Knowing that this thought was a temptation of the evil one, he expelled it by this answer: ‘Can you, wretched one, promise me one hour of life?’ In this manner he overcame the temptation, and his soul was restored to peace.” (20)

He feels himself confirmed in his purposes, and realized that “At that period God dealt with him as a teacher instructing a pupil.” (27)

Points for meditation

1. What does the experience of Ignatius’ conversion stir in me?
2. Going through the memories of the history of God in my life, how have I lived this “spiritual awakening”? In what circumstances, and through whom, have I felt personally touched by God?
3. What role had CLC in my interior process of conversion and in the discovery of God?

B) Discovering his vocation – “helping souls”

The expression “helping souls” reveals the specificity of the way Ignatius feels himself called to follow the Lord – his vocation – and it configures the ideal that will guide all his life. “Besides the seven hours devoted to prayer, he spent a portion of his time in assisting souls who came to him for advice. During the rest of the day he gave his thoughts to God, pondering on what he had read or meditated that day.” (26)

This expression sets also the final point of a time of purification of his image of God, and of acceptance of himself and his history. The overcoming of voluntarism and stoicism, which kept him turned to himself, and the acceptance of himself as a forgiven sinner, docile to the action of God in his life, and opening himself to others.

The mystical experience of Cardoner is a breakthrough of the Spirit that confirms and deepens his experience of God, and becomes a turning point in the apostolic vocation of Ignatius.

One day he went to the Church of St. Paul, situated about a mile from Manresa. Near the road is a stream, on the bank of which he sat, and gazed at the deep waters flowing by. While seated there, the eyes of his soul were opened. He did not have any special vision, but his mind was enlightened on many subjects, spiritual and intellectual. So clear was this knowledge that from that day everything appeared to him in a new light. Such was the abundance of this light in his mind that all the divine helps received, and all the knowledge acquired up to his sixty-second year, were not equal to it. From that day he seemed to be quite another man, and possessed of a new intellect. (30)

This interior illumination unifies and condenses a sequence of spiritual discoveries that took place before and are recounted in the Autobiography: the Trinity (28), Creation, Eucharist, and Humanity of Christ (29).

Since that moment, the apostolic vocation of Ignatius will determine all his steps. The Spiritual Exercises become possible here: the possibility that others take advantage of his own experience “to seek and find the will of God in their lives”.

In spite of all the desires and consolations associated with his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the Lord went on confirming Ignatius in the ministry of helping souls, faithfully accepting whatever the Church may mission him into.

He decided to remain in Jerusalem, in order to visit the holy places often. For this purpose he had taken with him letters of recommendation to the Father Guardian. On presenting them, he said that he intended to remain there to satisfy his own devotion, but said nothing of his purpose of helping others. (45)

Ignatius understands that, in order to help souls, his own will does not suffice. He lacks adequate formation. Therefore, the Pilgrim must get into a new adventure, doing the studies necessary to empower him for a greater apostolic efficacy.

When Ignatius understood that God did not wish him to remain at Jerusalem, he began to consider what he should do. The plan he approved and adopted was to enter upon a course of study in order to be better fitted to save souls. For this purpose he determined to go to Barcelona, and setting out from Venice he travelled toward Genoa. (50)

Points for meditation

1. What does the story of the way the Lord went on “sculpting” the features of Ignatius’ vocation awaken in me?
2. What challenges of purification of faith have defined my interior certainty of having been called to collaborate with the Lord under His Standard?
3. How do I feel CLC helped in the calling and clarification of my vocation as a Christian?
4. What fruits and graces am I discovering in this time of common journey with other CLC companions?

C) The Society of Jesus – formation of an apostolic community

Ignatius, together with other companions who had also made the experience of the Spiritual Exercises and the election, feels the need to express, in a “sacramental”, visible, form his most profound desire: “*By this time all had determined on their future conduct, namely, to go first to Venice, and then to Jerusalem, where they would pass their whole life in helping souls. If, however, they should not be allowed to remain in Jerusalem, they were to return to Rome and offer themselves to the Sovereign Pontiff, Christ’s Vicar, that he might use their aid as he thought would be for God’s glory and the salvation of souls*”. (85)

The pilgrimage to Jerusalem was definitely excluded, but the other provisions of the vow of Montmartre. The companions go into Rome moved by the desire to help souls. The main criterion is the service of the Church: the Pope is the reference and the expression of the mission of the Church.

“They set out on their way to Rome, divided into three or four parties. On the journey Ignatius experienced singular visitations from God. After his reception of the priesthood, he had resolved to put off the offering of his first Mass for one year, in order to prepare himself better, and to ask the Most Blessed Virgin to place him near her Son. One day, when he was a few miles from Rome, he entered a church to pray, and there felt his soul so moved and changed, and saw so clearly that God the Father placed him with Christ His Son, that he did not dare to doubt it.” (96)

Other sources report that the “message” he received in the vision of La Storta was the image of Jesus, carrying the cross, that aid to him: “I want you to serve us”. Fr. Lainez refers to this vision in the following way:

“Ignatius told me that it seemed to him that God the Father imprinted in his heart these words: ‘In Rome I will be favourable to you’ (...) Then, another time he said that he seemed to see Christ with the cross on his back and the Eternal Father next to Him telling him: ‘I want to take this one as your server’. And Jesus took him and said: ‘I want you to serve us’. With this, gaining great devotion to the name of Jesus, he wanted the Congregation to be called Society of Jesus. This name, thus, received confirmation from heaven.” (96, n. 30)

In its spiritual maturity, Ignatius offered to the service of the Church everything that had been useful to him as source of inspiration: the Exercises, election, discernment and understanding of the motions. In his "spiritual anatomy" stick out is attitude of contemplative in action, seeking and finding God in all things.

"That same day, before supper, he called me looking like a person more silent than usually and made a kind of oath which substantially wanted to show the intention and simplicity with which he had told me these things, saying that he was certain that he was not telling anything unwarranted. And that he had committed many offenses against God Our Lord after he had begun to serve Him, but had never consented to mortal sin. Moreover, he had always grown in devotion, that is, in easiness in finding God, and now more than ever in his life. Always, at any time he wanted to find God, he found Him." (99)

Points for meditation

"Permanent Commitment follows from the CLC way of life, and is in harmony with the trustful surrender of the Contemplation for attaining Love. Commitment is the "Take, Lord and receive..." as a response to the commitment of God who 1) has given me so much; 2) dwells in me, giving me existence and meaning; 3) labours and works for me; 4) seeing how all good things and gifts descend from above... just as the rays come down from the sun, or the rains from their source, so too from God comes power, goodness, justice, mercy and the necessary desire to live out our commitment (The CLC Charism, 191).

1. How have I turned my vocation into apostolic mission?
2. How do I recognize the mediating role of CLC?
3. What does it mean for me to live in apostolic discernment? How have I lived the Ignatian ideal of being contemplative in action?

Meeting 2

Mission in CLC

Prior to the Meeting:

Prayer: Lk 9, 10-17: multiplication of the loaves; collaboration with Jesus in the service of others

Reflection: Pages 8 – 9

At Meeting:

Prayer: Lk 9, 10-17: multiplication of the loaves; collaboration with Jesus in the service of others

Questions for Sharing:

1. *“To believe in Jesus, therefore, means (...) to live a life of faith, which promotes justice and takes an option for the poor. A simple lifestyle safeguards our apostolic freedom, expresses our solidarity with the poor and makes our faith credible”. “the service to which CLC is called to give priority, in the light of its preferential option for the poor, is the promotion of justice”*

- How has the following of Jesus more closely been translated into my actions and decisions?
- In what degree do I identify myself with the election made by CLC of promotion of justice as a priority field of mission?

2. *“The initial vocation to follow Jesus will unfold in specific activities. But, for these activities to become mission, it is necessary that the community assume the call, help to discern and, finally, send each one on mission”.*

- What role has my local, regional and national community had in this process?
- How do I see this “de-individualization” of mission?

3. *“The common mission of CLC is the mission, which Christ entrusted to CLC as a Church association. This mission is the response, which CLC feels called to give to the great needs and aspirations of today. (...) The common mission is made concrete by identifying apostolic priorities and lines of action.”*

- What experience do I have of the three levels of involvement (individual, group and common) in the mission of the Church?
- How have I, in my CLC journey, identified the priorities and the apostolic lines of action?

Notes:

PROPOSAL II: MISSION IN CLC

The CLC mission field

92 Given the lay character of the CLC vocation and given today's world situation, marked by serious structural injustice and by the marginalization of a large part of the human family which lives in poverty and misery, the service to which CLC is called to give priority, in the light of its preferential option for the poor, is the *promotion of justice*.

(...)

94 Work for justice takes different forms according to regional and cultural circumstances, and different socio-political situations. However, this priority must show itself in our style and standard of living. In the Spiritual Exercises, we ask for the grace to follow Jesus, poor and humble, and our hope is to obtain this grace from the Lord. To *believe* in Jesus, therefore, means to follow Him more closely; to share His poverty means to live a life of faith, which promotes justice and takes an option for the poor. A simple lifestyle safeguards our apostolic freedom, expresses our solidarity with the poor and makes our faith credible. This option cannot remain theoretical. Ignatius, speaking of poverty, asks of Jesuits that "*...all should when occasions arise, feel some effects of it*".

(...)

96 As community, CLC receives a specific charism (Ignatian) at the service of the Church's mission. It is expressed by the sending of its members on mission, the fruit of communal apostolic discernment, on specific forms of apostolate. It will not always be easy to do so, but one thing is certain: those who have opted for the Ignatian charism are, above all, apostles on the Church's mission and therefore they are sent by the community which shares their specific vocation. It is their right to know that the community explicitly sends them and at the same time accompanies both the apostolic discernment and the mission as it unfolds.

Individual mission

98 (...) The initial vocation to follow Jesus will unfold in specific activities. But, for these activities to become mission, it is necessary that the community assume the call, help to discern and, finally, send each one on mission. In this sense perhaps, it would be more correct to speak of *personal involvement in the Church's mission*.

Group mission

100 Action can be not only on a personal level, but also on the group level according to circumstances and in response to the needs perceived by the members of the community. These apostolic actions are also the expression of the personal vocation each one has received from the Lord. In this case, the community, in one way or another will tend to translate the action, which it assumes and discerns, into mission. Therefore, we can speak of *group involvement in the mission of the Church*. Working as a team, with the grace of God, will have greater apostolic efficiency

Common mission

102 The common mission of CLC is the mission, which Christ entrusted to CLC as a Church association. This mission is the response, which CLC feels called to give to the great needs and aspirations of today. It is its way of announcing the Good News of God's love in this present historical time. The common mission is made concrete by identifying apostolic priorities and lines of action.

103 It does not mean that all CLC members must do the same thing. It is mission that is common: the tasks are different. This is not only because of the origin of mission, but also because of its direction. All of us, each in his/her own way, stand for the same values, follow the same aims and have the same priorities. We can speak of *common involvement in the Church's mission*.

(...)

144 Even when apostolic service is offered on an individual basis, the service is always part of the mission received in CLC. Mission is always communal.

Community as mediation in the sending conferred by the Church

145 It is the *being sent by the Church* that gives a sense of mission to the apostolic tasks and humanitarian services of the members of CLC. The world community, integrated in the life and the mission of the Church, is the fundamental mediator of our mission. We receive this mission in our local and national community.

(...)

148 Apostolic communal discernment is a way of implementing what Vatican II called *discerning the signs of the times*, and involves the following stages:

- the community is *attentive to and capable of opening* itself to others, to hearing their deepest desires and recognising their most pressing needs in order to discover the most urgent and universal tasks which should be undertaken, and to offer more efficient, radical and global solutions to these problems.
- the community *prays for the grace of availability*. (...) This personal prayer is shared with the group.
- the community that *deliberates, sends and confirms our mission* is able to make decisions, to make choices and assume apostolic tasks in which, one way or another, all the group members are engaged.

(...)

161 b. Participation in the life of the Church

The CLC does not exist in isolation from the rest of the Christian community (parish, diocese, national and universal Church). It is, on the contrary, an integral part of this community and this finds its expression:

- in a liturgical and sacramental life, which, centred on the Eucharist, is "a concrete experience of unity in love and action".
- in the ordinary life of the Church, by participating in Church activities and identifying, effectively and lovingly, with her needs and problems, and supporting her progress.

162 c. Collaboration in the mission of the Church

Having received its mission *in the Church and from the Church*, CLC, in accordance with its directives and its pastoral priorities, brings to the people of God and their pastors the gift of its apostolic service and its rich and original charism in a spirit of discernment and shared responsibility.

From *The CLC Charism*

Points for meditation

1. *"To believe in Jesus, therefore, means (...) to live a life of faith, which promotes justice and takes an option for the poor. A simple lifestyle safeguards our apostolic freedom, expresses our solidarity with the poor and makes our faith credible". "the service to which CLC is called to give priority, in the light of its preferential option for the poor, is the promotion of justice"*

- How has the following of Jesus more closely been translated into my actions and decisions?
- In what degree do I identify myself with the election made by CL of promotion of justice as a priority field of mission?

2. *"The initial vocation to follow Jesus will unfold in specific activities. But, for these activities to become mission, it is necessary that the community assume the call, help to discern and, finally, send each one on mission".*

- What role has my local, regional and national community had in this process?
- How do I see this "de-individualization" of mission?

3. *"The common mission of CLC is the mission, which Christ entrusted to CLC as a Church association. This mission is the response, which CLC feels called to give to the great needs and aspirations of today. (...) The common mission is made concrete by identifying apostolic priorities and lines of action."*

- What experience do I have of the three levels of involvement (individual, group and common) in the mission of the Church?
- How have I, in my CLC journey, identified the priorities and the apostolic lines of action?

Meeting 3

Our Common Mission

Prior to the Meeting:

Prayer: Mt 28, 16-20: the mission of the followers of Jesus, mission of the Church
Reflection: Pages 11-12

At Meeting:

Prayer: Mt 28, 16-20: the mission of the followers of Jesus, mission of the Church

Questions for Sharing:

1. *“Apostolic communal discernment is a way of implementing what Vatican II called discerning the signs of the times, and involves the following stages”*
- That the community be attentive to and capable of opening itself to others
 - That the community pray for the grace of availability
 - That the community deliberate, send and confirm our mission

What new methods and proceedings must I assume so that my community may act evermore in accordance with the four pillars: to discern, to send, to support, to evaluate?

2. What relevance has for me the areas of mission and guidelines of the document Our Common Mission? What weight have they had in my individual and communal discernment and what influence have they exercised on the three levels of involvement in the mission of the Church?

3. May I / is it opportune to make more concrete my / my community’s apostolic project?

AREA	DECISION / OPTION	PRACTICAL MEANS
1. Social Reality		
2. Culture		
3. Daily life		
EVALUATION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When? • How? 		

Notes:

PROPOSAL III: OUR COMMON MISSION

Apostolic discernment as a permanent attitude

122 The CLC General Principles underline the need for apostolic discernment. They also propose a number of criteria, inspired by those drawn up by St Ignatius, for choosing our ministries and specific missions. Everything, which comes to us from Ignatius, in this case apostolic discernment, is marked by the "*magis*" (*the more effective*). His zeal for the greater glory of God enabled him to seek the most effective means for helping others. (...)

124 (...) Ignatius makes a systematic presentation of the criteria for choosing ministries. These criteria can help us in CLC to define our own apostolic mission; for example, that CLC members should be open to what is more *urgent and more universal*. (...)

148 Apostolic communal discernment is a way of implementing what Vatican II called *discerning the signs of the times*, and involves the following stages:

- the community is *attentive to and capable of opening* itself to others, (...) to discover the most urgent and universal tasks which should be undertaken, and to offer more efficient, radical and global solutions to these problems.
- the community *prays for the grace of availability*. (...) This personal prayer is shared with the group.
- the community that *deliberates sends and confirms our mission* is able to make decisions, to make choices and assume apostolic tasks in which, one way or another, all the group members are engaged.

From *The CLC Charism*

The formulation of a Common Mission for the World Community

According to the spirit of GP 8, beyond the individual and personal dimension of mission, which "*is indispensable for extending the Gospel in a lasting and penetrating way among the great diversity of persons, places and situations*" (GP 8a), we are called to "*exercise a corporate or group apostolate in a great variety of forms*" (GP 8b). This form of apostolate is not just a better answer to the complexity of the world in which we live and to the challenges it raises, but also, and more importantly, represents the essence of what means to be Church, that is, to live in communion. This way, CLC becomes more visible, more credible and attractive to others.

Independently of the way we exercise this group or corporative apostolate – "*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*" (GP 8b) – the criterion to receive this qualification lies in that we all deliberately want to work/collaborate with others and all those involved live a form of "obedience" adjusted to the lay vocation. This means a fidelity and perseverance lived in the framework of an apostolic body that works as the mediator of the significance and direction of our lives.

Guidelines for the formulation of *Our Common Mission*

The document *Our Common Mission* "is the outcome of the XIII General Assembly of the Christian Life Community in Itaici 1998. (...) This XIII Assembly inscribes itself in the line of all - and especially the last four - World Assemblies. In Loyola 86, it became clear that, as we were a World Community, we were community for mission. In Guadalajara 90, we felt ourselves sent to bear fruit as an apostolic body. In Hong Kong 94, we recognized and integrated the context from and into which we are sent. In Itaici we defined our common mission in the context of our world."

"The process resulted in discovering three areas of mission and a set of necessary means for this mission."

This text "is now offered to all national and local communities, all individual members and Ecclesiastical Assistants of CLC all over the world".

[What follows is a synthesis, but we recommend the reading of the complete CLC document].

I. CHRIST AND SOCIAL REALITY

We want to bring the freeing power of Christ to our social reality.

- To participate in the prophetic standing of the Church, as prophets of hope and justice.
- To make the option for the poor, not as an idea, but by making serious analysis and adopting a responsible and effective attitude towards poverty and its causes.
- To assume the perspective of the poor and to grow in the capacity to meet them and to take part in their struggles
- To examine our lives from the following viewpoints: simple lifestyle, spirit of solidarity, refusal of consumerism, rejection of pride and greed of possession
- To share the experience of the Spiritual Exercises and learn how to contribute with the process of discernment and those listening and dialogue skills that we learn in our community

II. CHRIST AND CULTURE

We want to find Christ in all our varied cultures and to let His grace illuminate all that needs transformation.

- To value the unique character of local cultures, which enriches the individual with particular contributions and with symbolism and creativity.

- To abhor the harm, which the sinfulness of each culture can cause in breaking persons and in splitting community, developing capacities for critical analysis and being countercultural when necessary.
- To seek the positive integration of peoples of different cultures in one world which respects the unique contribution of each one, resisting to the tendencies for uniformity.
- To be mediator of the manifestation of Christ through respect, dialogue and transformation of what is negative, in the multiplication of the good and in caring for the community which asks us to move beyond our narrow horizons.
- To stand up against individualism, marginalization, consumerism, with dialogue and reconciliation, integrating faith and life.
- To apply these practices also within the Church.

III. CHRIST IN DAILY LIFE

We want to live in union with Christ so as to bring him to every aspect of our daily life in the world.

- To value daily life as an opportunity to grow in faith and service.
- To express unconditional support to the human person, creating authentic interpersonal relationships, living a healthy affectivity, welcoming and being appreciative, behaving as agents of inclusion.
- To cultivate family life and the maturity of authentic relationships at home, between parents and children and between the generations.
- To offer the richness of our faith, striving for making the way of Jesus attractive and challenging for young people.
- To value work and the dignity of every collaborator.
- To overcome or reducing distance between our faith commitments and our professional activities and other occupations.

These three areas of mission were illuminated by the spiritual source that feeds us and makes us ready for mission: the Spiritual Exercises that help us to grow in our Christian life. Moreover, we have to attend to our formation for mission, so that our community may become an ever more apt instrument for service.

Points for meditation

1. *“Apostolic communal discernment is a way of implementing what Vatican II called discerning the signs of the times, and involves the following stages”*

- That the community be attentive to and capable of opening itself to others
- That the community pray for the grace of availability
- That the community deliberate, send and confirm our mission

What new methods and proceedings must I assume so that my community may act evermore in accordance with the four pillars: to discern, to send, to support, to evaluate?

2. What relevance has for me the areas of mission and guidelines of the document Our Common Mission? What weight have they had in my individual and communal discernment and what influence have they exercised on the three levels of involvement in the mission of the Church?

3. May I / is it opportune to make more concrete my / my community's apostolic project?

AREA	DECISION / OPTION	PRACTICAL MEANS
1. Social Reality		
2. Culture		
3. Daily life		
EVALUATION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When? • How? 		

Meeting 4

Permanent CLC Commitment

Prior to the Meeting:

Prayer: John 21, 15-22: the foundation and support of the sending

Reflection: Pages 14 - 16

At Meeting:

Prayer: John 21, 15-22: the foundation and support of the sending

Questions for Sharing:

1. *"In proclaiming before God and our companions that we have committed ourselves to a spirituality, a way of life and a mission, we are confirming before them our discernment and the gift of ourselves. We proclaim publicly, that the Christian Life Community is the body within which we live the charism that the Spirit of the Lord has given to us."*

- What evidences lead me to say that it is CLC that I may live the charism the holy Spirit has given me?

2. *"Real freedom exists when people are able to direct their lives according to their deepest desires. Thus, they are free inasmuch as they are able to live according to the deep desires the Spirit of the Lord has awakened in their hearts."*

- What role do I recognize to CLC as intermediation of my apostolic discernment? How do I respond to its appeals?

3. *"By doing so [the Commitment] in front of the whole community, they are asking for its help: that the community may accompany them on their journey. The external expression of this internal offering somehow gives it a sacramental character."*

- As I prepare myself to publicly express my Permanent Commitment with CLC, how do I assimilate the "sacramental character" of this act? What does it mean for me?

4. *As I read the Formulae for Permanent Commitment what were my thoughts/feelings?*

Notes:

PROPOSAL IV: PERMANENT CLC COMMITMENT

171 Thus our commitment is to present ourselves freely before the Lord and His people and to give a visible sign of that which we have lived and discerned in our hearts. It is a gesture somewhat similar to a marital engagement. In proclaiming before God and our companions that we have committed ourselves to a spirituality, a way of life and a mission, we are confirming before them our discernment and the gift of ourselves. We proclaim publicly, that the Christian Life Community is the body within which we live the charism that the Spirit of the Lord has given to us.

(...)

190 *Permanent Commitment* corresponds in the vocational process of the CLC member, to the stage of full apostolic life: when personal vocation is lived as apostolic mission. The unfolding and expression of all vocations is mission. Those who make their Permanent Commitment are those members who have completed their vocational discernment and have offered themselves to and embraced the CLC's lifestyle. This stage is necessarily linked to *apostolic discernment*, as an indispensable element for developing mission.

(...)

193 Rather than seeing Permanent Commitment as a risky decision, which limits future freedom, it is important to realise that inner freedom is the foundation of this decision and one of its fruits. Real freedom exists when people are able to direct their lives according to their deepest desires. Thus, they are free inasmuch as they are able to live according to the deep desires the Spirit of the Lord has awakened in their hearts.

(...)

195 For this reason when CLC members reach the conclusion that proclaiming Christ and His Good News to the world around them is what *"I want and desire, and it is my deliberate determination"*, they know that the Lord has guided their steps through a long journey. Freedom to commit themselves does not just mean being ready to choose. It really means giving themselves, surrendering to God, and trusting Him totally..

(...)

197 By bearing witness before the CLC, those making a commitment ask the Lord for the grace that they may give their generous response to His fidelity. By doing so in front of the whole community, they are asking for its help: that the community may accompany them on their journey. The external expression of this internal offering somehow gives it a sacramental character.

198 For the rest of the community, the public celebration of commitment bears a certain sacramental dimension. It is a visible sign of the Spirit at work in each member leading, him or her, to a greater commitment to their mission. It is also a sign building and strengthening the community in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, sent by the Father. With a spirit of faith, the public commitment of a member of the community is an invitation to *"rid ourselves of every burden and persevere"* in the service to the one who has called us into community, *"keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith"*.

From The CLC Charism

Points for meditation

1. *"In proclaiming before God and our companions that we have committed ourselves to a spirituality, a way of life and a mission, we are confirming before them our discernment and the gift of ourselves. We proclaim publicly, that the Christian Life Community is the body within which we live the charism that the Spirit of the Lord has given to us."*

- What evidences lead me to say that it is CLC that I may live the charism the holy Spirit has given me?

2. *"Real freedom exists when people are able to direct their lives according to their deepest desires. Thus, they are free inasmuch as they are able to live according to the deep desires the Spirit of the Lord has awakened in their hearts."*

- What role do I recognize to CLC as intermediation of my apostolic discernment? How do I respond to its appeals?

3. *"By doing so [the Commitment] in front of the whole community, they are asking for its help: that the community may accompany them on their journey. The external expression of this internal offering somehow gives it a sacramental character."*

- As I prepare myself to publicly express my Permanent Commitment with CLC, how do I assimilate the "sacramental character" of this act? What does it mean for me?

Formulae for Permanent Commitment

There are elements that must obligatorily integrate the formula, because they are essential to the CLC commitment: the acceptance of the *General Principles*, commitment with the CLC way of life, openness to apostolic mission, reference to the World Community, and availability to cooperate in the activities of the Community. But there is also a margin, in the case of the Permanent Commitment, for everyone to personalize the expression of the Commitment one desires to make. In this case, the formula must be previously ratified by the National Executive Council.

Therefore, the formulae we propose are mere examples.

When choosing to write one's own formula, it is necessary, however, to take into account the value of maintaining a certain level of uniformity (the external uniformity was very important to St. Ignatius as an aid to interior union...) and to be careful not make it too lengthy.

Formula A:

Eternal Lord of all things, I _____

Please print your name

desiring to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with him for the building of the Kingdom, have recognized in the Christian Life Community my particular vocation within the Church, accept its General Principles and count entirely on your love and grace, and commit myself to search for and to follow your will, with generous and humble fidelity.

Having the Virgin Mary, mother of the Church and my mother, as life model, I commit myself:

- *To embrace a simple life style, in the following of Jesus poor and humble;*
- *To make the Eucharist, personal prayer, the Spiritual Exercises and discernment the privileged means to "seek and find God in all things and all things in God";*
- *To Thinking with the Church and "mindful of the signs of the times", to endeavour, through my attitudes, words and actions, to proclaim the faith and promote justice, uniting myself, in this way, to Jesus' apostolic mission;*
- *To definitively elect CLC as the place of apostolic mediation, where I will look for, in a primordial way, to discern, to be sent, to find support and to evaluate my mission.*

Thus, I make my Permanent Commitment with the Christian Life Community, through my Local and National communities, striving to contribute, in everything and always, for the greater glory of God, cooperating, within my possibilities, in all its activities.

Assured by Your kindness and love, I ask Jesus and Mary, His mother, to obtain me the grace of fidelity to the commitment I have just assumed.

Date

Individual's Signature

National Executive Council President's Signature

Formula B

I, _____
Please print your name

a member of the Christian Life Community, accepting its General Principles, commit myself in a permanent way to surrender my life to the Lord, with ever greater generosity and to work, in a spirit of service and united to the whole people of God, for justice and peace among all humankind, as a witness to my faith.

I commit myself to assume a simple lifestyle, in the following of Christ poor and humble, to maintain an intense sacramental life, to meditate the Sacred Scripture, to spread the Church's doctrine and to cooperate with his shepherds, to persevere in a life of prayer and to centre myself more and more in Christ, looking for inspiration in St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises and having always present our Lady as a model of all my activities of mission and service.

I commit myself to a definitive personal option for the Christian Life Community as a place of apostolic mediation, where I will look for, with all my availability, to receive my mission, to accept being sent and to find the primary support in discernment and evaluation.

Feeling with the Church, I wish, through this way and with the grace of God and united to Mary, mother of Jesus, to be a faithful witness to the renewing action of the Spirit in the work for the building of the Kingdom, and, united to my community, in whose life I commit myself to participate, to look for the ever greater glory of God.

I ask the Lord and Mary, His mother, to obtain me the grace of fidelity to the commitment I have just assumed.

Date

Individual's Signature

National Executive Council President's Signature