



CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY
COMMUNAUTÉ DE VIE CHRÉTIENNE
COMUNIDAD DE VIDA CRISTIANA

Quito Ecuador. June 2016

President's Letter No. 3 to the CLC World Community. 2016

Attracted by the dazzling landscape of color and light that opened up before their eyes, a man and woman decided to journey in search of the horizon. They walked and walked, and as they moved forward, the horizon receded away from them. They decided to go quicker, not stopping for a moment, ignoring the cries of tiredness, hunger, thirst, but it was all for nothing, the quicker they went with redoubled efforts, the more the horizon remained just as distant and unattainable.

*Tired and disappointed, their feet shattered from all the walking and on the verge of realizing that they had exhausted themselves all for nothing, they felt defeated: What good is the horizon, if we can never reach it? Then, they heard a voice saying to them: "To continue walking."
(a tale by Eduardo Galeano)*

As members of CLC we are walkers, on a road that surpasses our limitations and our own strengths. Our journey is to follow Christ in the midst of our everyday reality, attentive to the very urgent cries of the most marginalized.

CLC as a body on the way, journeying with eyes fixed on the horizon of the Kingdom

We've all experienced that feeling of embarking on the road to reach a desired destination, and have experienced the difficulties that arise in any process of leaving one place to get to another. I invite everyone to recall the emotions experienced in one of those occasions at the start of a journey. It could be because of a particular worry, or because of the urgency to move, or the need to get to a different place. Sometimes we can prepare properly for such journey, and other times the need to take the road arrives unexpectedly. But it is an undeniable fact that our life implies so many times of setting off, with or without certainty, with or without preparation, and in order to reach the desired destination.

In fact, ours is a spirituality deeply rooted in the sense of pilgrimage as our teacher Ignatius of Loyola realized many times in his life. Seeking to find God's deep call for him, he frequently experienced the need to set out. These journeys were not always easy, in fact often he encountered great difficulties; at other times he lacked the strength and health to follow the path. Moreover, especially in the early days of his spiritual journey, he started on his way without much clarity of the destination and thought to give up on the way. And thought to waver during the march.

His life is characterized by the need to always be on his way, never staying put. Gradually God Himself revealed to him the particular path to follow, and from a walker with little clarity, he became a pilgrim for God. Ignatius realized that his journey was linked to that of many other men and women before him, and made way for many more after him, to follow the Christ incarnate, who died and rose from death while among us. The same Jesus who continues to walk along with us and who shows himself in the real faces we meet each day, especially those of the small and poor.

CLC imbibes from that same pilgrim spirituality, and assumes that its mission is to always be on

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the move, open to the newness of the Spirit, with a thirst to discover and collaborate in the construction of the kingdom:

"As members of the pilgrim People of God, we have received from Christ the mission of being his witnesses before all people by our attitudes, words and actions, becoming identified with his mission of bringing the good news to the poor... Our life is essentially apostolic." (GP 8)

We can say that the only way to understand our vocation is to see it as a process that transforms and recognizes, through a personal and communitarian discernment, the newness of the kingdom for our mission. It invites us not to remain closed on ourselves and in our security, and calls us to an external and internal pilgrimage in search of the *Magis*. Any CLC member or community that remains static, will be in danger of losing sight of the horizon of our specific vocation. In particular, I ask everyone to reflect on this paragraph 8 of the General principles to examine how faithful we have been to that call to be followers on the journey.

An examination of conscience halfway from our last Assembly in Lebanon to the next

All this preamble in my letter to the community is to recognize that we are children of a dynamic spirituality, on the move, which risks to go beyond itself in the light of the journeying of Ignatius and many more. All this to recognize the Christ who is present to us on the road, and on its margins, as he did for the disciples of Emmaus at a crucial moment of making a choice between remaining sheltered in the safety of the small group fearing the singling out and persecution, and heeding the call of Christ to come out of themselves and to recognize Him as risen and alive in reality, and in the faces of those who have been abandoned by the side of the road.

Today, at this halfway point just over two and a half years since the Assembly of Lebanon 2013 (trying to respond faithfully to its mandate), and just under two and a half years from the next World Assembly 2018, I want to invite everyone to ask sincerely: *what have I done for Christ as part of the calling of our journey as CLC, and in the light of the mandate of our last Assembly?* Having answered that question, then to take up with hope the other disturbing question about the commitments and changes to make to embrace the future: *what must I do for Christ in the coming years to be faithful to the call of the Spirit that we have received as a community?*

In nearly 50 years of CLC journeying as a community, and for about 450 years as lay Ignatian communities, God has blessed us with many and unmerited gifts. Christ has been revealed to us more and more clearly inviting us to respond to his call today with the best of our own gifts typical of our spirituality. In our "feeling with the Church" we have lived the hope and the transition from the Second Vatican Council to which we have responded wanting to be in tune with the signs of the times. And today, to embrace the calls of Pope Francis we are asked to go beyond ourselves and to go further offering the best of our spirituality for the Church and the world today. The Pope asks us, in the context of the Jubilee of mercy, that we listen to these cries seriously and that as a community move forward:

"Let us open our eyes to see the miseries of the world, the wounds of so many brothers and sisters deprived of dignity, and let us feel moved to hear their cry for help. Let our hands shake their hands, and let us draw them near to feel the warmth of our presence, of our friendship and fraternity. Their call for help become ours and together we can smash the barrier of indifference that often reigns in a calmness that hides the hypocrisy and selfishness "
(Misericordiae Vultus No.15).

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CLC journeys through a personal and communal commitment ... and it can go further

I want in this letter to thank you for the answers to my previous one in 2015 in which, on behalf of the World ExCo, I asked you to share with us the various expressions of our concrete commitment to the four frontiers identified in Lebanon 2013 (Globalization and Poverty; Family; Ecology; and Youth) through the survey about frontiers. It has given us profound joy and a great happiness, to discover the great diversity of expressions of our vocation in the service of life in different areas of our mission frontiers. We knew the great strength of our community and its deep commitment, but to witness to the transforming power of our CLC evident in the responses received, was a very beautiful sign of our vocation for the kingdom. God has given us a lot, and for that reason asks us to respond the same way in the midst of a broken and hopeful world yearning to receive credible signs of life.

We invite everybody to read the highlights¹ of the survey on the frontiers on the following link: (<https://goo.gl/PvyAf0>), and in the coming months we hope to prepare a report that will enable everyone to see the wealth that exists, the profound possibilities that we still do not do and which we know we can and must still address.

On the other hand, the concern is that we have received answers to this survey from only half of the national communities (we need the answer from the other half), and therefore I strongly appeal to others to respond so that we have a wider and more rounded view of our rich reality. I recognize the struggles that many communities go through, and that we are in much varied stages in our apostolic responses and needs. I ask you to share with us your *questions, trials and errors, areas for support, and learnings* with regard to the frontiers. I do not ask for perfect testimonials, but rather, a sincere examination on a communal level². This will enable us to deepen the various areas of mission where we more work is needed, recognize where we are more empowered, and especially look at how we can make our own this call as a world apostolic body through the use of this information in regions, international commissions, and for each national community.

Choice of host for our 2018 World Assembly

We also want to share with you the wealth of discernment which we, as World Executive Council, have undertaken for nearly a year to consider the choice of venue for our next World Assembly. First I must say that EXCO has found the source of its group strength in the seriousness, depth and transparency with which we have been engaged in the enacting of a true discerning in community. We have our limitations and our strengths, but the insight to decision-making processes has been challenging our greatest strength. I thank God for recognizing Him in this procedure, one typical for all CLC.

Among those who have indicated that they were considering being candidates to host the 2018 World Assembly, three confirmed their readiness to host this important event. The three official expressions therefore came from: Argentina-Uruguay-Paraguay (joint application of 3 countries), Francophone Canada, and France.

¹ If you wish to have a copy of the original submissions for specific national communities, you may contact the World Secretariat: exsec@cvx-clc.net .

² Please email your responses to mauriciol@cvx-clc.net, CC exsec@cvx-clc.net



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After several on-line meetings, taking into account all the necessary information, and allowing for a profound space of prayer and discernment before and during the meeting of the EXCO of April 2016, where we had several rounds of sharing the proposals, listening to questions, doubts and concerns, including practical aspects, and much personal and community prayer, we felt the strong movement to select Argentina-Uruguay-Paraguay as the seat of our next World Assembly.

We deeply appreciate the generosity and graciousness of National Communities of France and Canada Francophone, God knows how much we appreciate the testimony of their communities and the richness of their proposals, but after several discussions and community discernment we felt a very strong desire to ask you to join us and all of us recognize ourselves as one body represented by Argentina-Uruguay-Paraguay. The **2018 World Assembly will be in Buenos Aires** which will allow us to drink from the well of spirituality in the same place where Pope Francis himself drank, experience contact with the suffering realities of the area, and experience the welcome of 3 national communities that came together specifically for this mission.

For now we share this good news. We ask you to join us in prayer of thanks for the two communities of France and Canada Francophone for their invitations, and for Argentina-Uruguay-Paraguay to feel the full empowerment of the community in the intense preparation necessary to organize the coming World Assembly.

Brothers and sisters in the vocation for the Kingdom,

Mauricio López Oropeza
President , World CLC