



Christian Life Community Australia



IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY IN ACTION

18 July: Fr Luke Rodrigues SJ, Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant to World CLC, spoke to a gathering of about 50 people in the Norwood Parish Hall. The audience consisted of CLC members and people from the wider Catholic community. The topic 'Ignatian Spirituality in Action' provides an ongoing challenge to listen to our deepest desires in order to better live God's love in the world. Fr Luke's passion for Ignatian Spirituality gave energy and zest to his talk, which provided many insights for us to take away and reflect upon. This article briefly shares some points gleaned from his talk.

Ignatian Spirituality is only one of many ways to live our faith. It offers a unique opportunity to

live as 'contemplatives in action'. It becomes a way of life.

- Ignatian Spirituality builds skills which help deepen our awareness of God in the ordinary events of our lives.
- Ignatian Spirituality helps us recognise God in all things and to grow in our awareness of God's presence in each encounter.

Fr Luke shared this story, which highlights the importance of repetitive preparation in order to be alert to God's presence in our lives.

"A young priest asked a wise monk, 'How do I have an experience of God?'

The wise monk replied with a question, 'How can you make the sun rise?' The priest responded by saying 'I can't, it just happens. I can do nothing!'"

We can do nothing to make ourselves have an experience of

God but we can prepare ourselves so that we are awake when the sun rises. If we are alert and receptive to God through our preparation of prayer, we are more likely to recognise an encounter with God when it arrives!

- Faith and grace are gift. Constant repetition and preparation leads to deeper union with God. God is fond of me and calls me to grow more fully into the unique person I am (to grow into my image and likeness of God).
- The Awareness Examen is an essential Ignatian tool. It deepens our awareness of where we are growing in faith, hope and love so that we become more fully the 'God' within. Where was the Father fond of me today? Where have I not shown others their specialness?
- **Lay mission** can be lived out at three different levels, which can operate separately or be integrated.
 1. Being a witness to Christ in our daily life in our work, family, local community.

This may be our primary mission in life.

2. Apostolic Work – mission that takes us outside of our everyday life – an extra.
3. Mission as a group – a common project for a social justice issue.

This summary obviously does not cover all aspects of Fr Luke's talk, but will hopefully resonate with a chord of familiarity to things heard before and called to mind again.

Written by Judy Foster

The Assembly and Mission

Reflecting on the Assembly, I realised how I had experienced the three pillars as a living reality. The easy, friendly, comfortable relationship we shared was true community. This was the direct consequence of the common life of Ignatian Spirituality that we all live. It was in this context that the desire to work for Jesus to bring about the Kingdom was so clearly expressed – a desire for mission. Of course, all members are living this in their daily lives and through extra work in parish and local communities, but this desire was for a specific CLC work that we could all own – to share our treasure of Ignatian Spirituality as widely as possible.

Michael Hanson has recently written a version of the first exercises of St Ignatius which is particularly “user friendly” and can be given by anyone who has

experienced them. They can be given as a whole, or one of the four modules. even single meditations can be used alone. Some of us experienced some of these at our last Seven Hill retreat.

It was felt at the Assembly that this provided the perfect opportunity for CLC to use the Spiritual Exercises for the nourishment of our CLC groups, for offering Ignatian Spirituality to parishes and other groups, for attracting new members to CLC and even for reaching out to places where CLC has not yet gone such as prisons, Hutt St Day Centre, The Otherway Centre etc. Of course, not all members would be able to be directly involved. Nevertheless, this is an apostolic work that would engage the interest and prayers of all CLC'ers. We are awaiting the publishing of Michael Hanson's work and the experiences of a retreat team currently giving

these exercises to North Sydney parishes, for guidance as to how and where we might take this initiative in South Australia.

Written by Louise Howell

Leadership Course

The “CLC, Leadership and Mission” course at the 2012 National Assembly in Brisbane in July was an informative and thought provoking two days. We reflected on leadership from an organisational perspective in the modern world, and compared its strengths and weaknesses with Ignatius' thoughts and teachings on leadership as Mission. The relevance of Ignatian teachings on leadership were striking.

The process: Martin Scroop, the director of the Loyola Institute, led us. Martin's work at the Centre in Melbourne focuses on faith formation and leadership. In true CLC tradition, much reflective reading was given and



Gathering in the Norwood Parish Hall on a cold evening to listen to Fr Luke Rodrigues SJ speak on 'Ignatian Spirituality in Action'

plenty of time allowed for private reflection between readings. After individual reflection, we shared with one other CLC member rather than with the larger group, and although this was not everyone's preference I thought it was a good way for people to get to know each other at a gentle pace. Martin's style of leadership was a wonderful model and a memorable part of the course – he sent us off to reflect in private with the continual reminder to “go gently with ourselves”. This was an encouraging reminder that we were all on the same CLC journey.

The content: a range of readings provided explanations of current theories of leadership dynamics and compared them with the Ignatian concept of Reflective Leadership. For example, organisational leadership author Robert Greenleaf mentions that “Servant Leadership ... asserts that for servant leaders, leadership is not a rank, privilege or title – it is a responsibility towards service”. Servant Leaders do not ask “what do I want” but “what needs to be done?” Thus, “Servant Leaders are givers, not takers”. This is a familiar way of thinking in Ignatian Spirituality – it is a Spirituality of service.

Further echoes of the CLC way of thinking were from author Chris Lowney in his assertion in his book “Heroic Leadership” that

“we are all leaders and we are leading all of the time whether we do it well or badly ... leadership comes from within and it is as much about who we are as it is about what we do”.

It soon became evident through the readings and discussions that the tools of Ignatian Spirituality are the very tools required for us to become reflective and generous leaders in CLC. The gifts St Ignatius has given us: the consciousness examen, the discernment principles used in individual and group decision making, developing creative detachment, the gift of truly listening to others and the Spiritual Exercises all develop our capacity to “listen to the movements within”. These gifts are invaluable in becoming effective and reflective leaders.

As Lois Campbell asserts in her paper “our framework of Ignatian Spirituality places the focus on each CLC member – not simply a handful who find themselves in formal leadership positions. We must all be leaders”.

Written by June Duffy

Spirituality at the CLC National Assembly – July 2012

Our CLC National Assembly was held at Duchesne College on the University of Queensland campus in mid-July. Duchesne is a Catholic College and it welcomed us onto

its sacred ground in a beautiful setting between the Brisbane River and a peaceful, bird-filled lake. Our bodies were sheltered and well fed and our spirits were nurtured as we lived and prayed together each day ... 30 CLCers from all over Australia ... joined by Fr Luke from Rome, Je Ching from the Philippines and two lovely New Zealanders. Every aspect of the Assembly was imbued with a spiritual dimension. As we met for our first session we gathered facing one another, around a beautiful centrepiece featuring a profusion of native foliage, a candle and an open Bible on a colourful cloth.



We opened in prayer, the first of the daily, thoughtfully and lovingly prepared prayer sessions. In true Ignatian style we were mindful of Christ's presence with us and aware that we were gathered for the purpose of discerning how best to serve Christ in CLC into the future. Each session required the attentive listening we are accustomed to, the prayerful reflection time so important for discernment and the respectful sharing of our discernments. On both Friday and Saturday nights we celebrated Mass together in the chapel on

site, following specially chosen liturgies. After Friday's reports and discernments, Saturday's visioning and refining and Sunday's forward planning and election of the new NEXCO we met in the chapel for the commissioning ceremony, our last formal gathering. We sang and prayed together as we solemnly and joyfully entrusted our new NEXCO team to lead us into the future, secure in God's loving hands.

Written by Paris Huffman

Personal Reflection

In July I attended the National Assembly at Duchesne College, which is on the campus of the University of Queensland. The National Assembly is held every four years and is attended by delegates from each state. This year, Fr Luke Rodrigues SJ, World Ecclesial Assistant and Fr Robin Koning SJ, National Ecclesial Assistant graced us with their presence.

Prior to the National Assembly, a Formal Leadership Course was facilitated by Martin Scroope, Director of the Loyola Institute. Topics covered in the course included:

- My Graced History and Process of Growth in CLC
- Deepest Desires
- Ignatian Reflective Leadership CLC EXCO and its Process of Growth
- CLC Desires and Principles

- Collaboration and Mission
- Apostolic Commitment and Discernment.

Leadership (individual and formal) is a call to mission and is not only for a select few but for everyone - we are all leaders and we lead each other in CLC communities. "Living the spiritual exercises, using the awareness examen and discernment both personally and communally provides some of the best preparation for leadership".

The National Assembly discerned key priorities for CLC Australia from 2012-2016 which are:

- Membership**
- Reaching Out**
- Formation**
- National Community**
- 450 Years' Celebration**
- Activities**
- Youth and Young Adults**
- Networking**
- Commitment**
- Outreach and Membership**

These were discerned to be the main priorities and special emphasis will be given to the apostolic work of promoting The First Spiritual Exercises.

Fr Luke Rodrigues said that God is calling CLC to shape the church of the future.

The NEXCO Commissioning Ceremony which was part of the final Mass was prepared by CLC South Australia. The entrance

procession included the carrying of three candles, representing the three pillars of CLC - Spirituality, Community and Mission.

I was indeed fortunate to have been asked to attend the National Assembly and to have had the opportunity to meet so many like-minded companions on the journey and I feel truly blessed by this wonderful experience.

Written by Midge Grifoni



Community at the National Assembly

Between Tuesday July 10 and Sunday 15, 32 representatives of Christian Life Community Australia met to engage the depth and breadth of the Community which would provide for the vision of the years 2012 to 2016.

Thick, heavy, low cloud drizzling rain contrived to confine us to the warmth and comfort of Duchesne College with an occasional break to allow pairs and groups to discover the

beauty and interest of Queensland University Campus.

Having spent the first night deepening in awareness of Jesus' love for us "Just As We Are", next morning the weather provided an opportunity to make our sharing in pairs while walking, readily deepening in relationship as our shared CLC experience profoundly permits us. All reflective groups were of only two or three people for 30 minutes, following about 45 minutes personal reflection.

We were thus moved from gratitude for our personal CLC experience, to that of appreciation of the wealth of our national communal experience, to creative strategies for providing this experience more widely.

The following opportunities brought us to a unique level of cohesion, producing the accord which gave clarity to our decisions for the next four years.

- The presence of New Zealand delegates who came seeking "God fathering" by the Australian Community so that they can prepare to enter the world Community.
- The sense of richness of the joyful, energetic challenges by Fr Luke Rodrigues SJ World Ecclesiastical Assistant and Jeraldine Ching, Coordinator for the Asia Pacific Region
- Daily celebration of Holy Communion reminding us of Jesus' challenges and hopes for us "gathered in his name"
- Communion over meals, provided with the minimum of fuss for our deepest desires at appropriate intervals.
- Saturday night's concert which demonstrated how very talented and funny we are.
- Queensland hosting community's generous, loving attention.

Written by Helen Cantwell

Reminder

End of year dinner and gathering

Saturday, 10 November

Place: St Ignatius parish hall, Norwood

Time: 6 pm.

Mass followed by dinner

BYO food and drinks

We will participate in the mass as a special community.

Guest speaker:

Rachel McLoughlin will speak about the giving of the First Exercises making special reference to the recent experience of NSW where 50 parishioners received the First Exercises.

We would love to see as many as we can to confirm this sense of CLC as a state community.

Jocelyne Randabel-Williamson