

Spirit Express

South Australia

August 2014



Christian Life Community Australia

World CLC Day



The 29th March was an opportunity to share information and build community for 19 of our CLC members. The afternoon began at Loyola Spirituality Centre where a number of people presented material on different aspects of CLC life. The day began with prayer and a check in. Helen Cantwell showed photos of Jeff and her journey to Lebanon where they went as visitors for the World CLC Assembly.

This was followed by information shared by Louise Howell on the National Gathering, with particular mention of the first Australian Commitment Ceremony. Jocelyne and Rob spoke as Givers and Receivers of the FSE which gave great insight into the 'specialness' of this FSE retreat opportunity.

Time was then given for reflection on Hopes and Dreams and this was followed by an Evaluation. Other

members joined us for the Eucharist at the 6pm Parish Mass. Following this, a number of us headed off a local Thai Restaurant to enjoy food and friendship. It was a happy day and one of celebration for what CLC means to us in our lives.



What has serving on SAEXCO meant to me?

When I was asked to serve on the SA EXCO as chairperson I was somewhat reluctant but also had awareness that it was an okay time for me to take responsibility of the leadership of our South Australian Region. Taking my turn and giving something back to the organisation of CLC seemed only fair considering the gift that CLC has been to my life over many years. Now as I review the last 3 years as chairperson I am reminded of the three integral aspects of CLC: spirituality, community and mission. Serving on SAEXCO has given me a deeper understanding of each.

Spirituality: Embedding Ignatian Spirituality and noticing the presence

of God in all aspects of life is gift. The gift of awareness, understanding and action leading to love is something I desire. Working with other people who have the same desire and a shared understanding of the importance of prayer and listening with reverence is life giving.

Community: It has been a privilege to gather bi-monthly with a small group of CLC members serving on SAEXCO and sharing the CLC process in an effort to promote and nourish our SA CLC Region. Being part of SAEXCO has given me a greater sense of community at different levels: the wonderful gift of each small group, the gift of coming together at various Regional gatherings (Guide Training, World CLC Day, Sevenhill Pilgrimage, Retreats, End of Year Gathering) and the gift of being part of National Gatherings and Assemblies. During my 3 years as Chairperson I have cherished the contact with so many wonderful people who are part of this worldwide CLC body.

Mission: How can I best serve the Lord at this particular time in my life? Where am I called to live love for the greater good? I have felt called to take my turn in serving the SAEXCO team as chairperson for these 3 years. It has been a privilege and honour to be able to lead our team but it is time for change. I look forward to working with others on the team should I be re-

elected as an ordinary member.

Judy Foster

Belonging to something bigger

I joined EXCO having been enthused by Chris Hogan's talk about CLC in the world. It has been seven years now; four as Chair. What I gained from this experience is a unique way of looking at our movement. No longer just part of a small group, I could see all the groups in SA, their guides, their joys and problems. I could see and feel part of the movement in all the different states and put a face to the EXCO members during the assemblies. I could name the countries where CLC exists and meet some of their representatives.

It has been a joy to be creative as part of a collaborative group in energising the movement, launching Spirit Express, initiating retreats for members at Sevenhill and guides retreats in Middleton. It was a way of giving back all the gifts I had received over the years. We saw some older groups fold and some new groups emerge. More recently, the First Spiritual Exercises seem to have given us a new opportunity of exposing people to Ignatian Spirituality and drawing them to existing groups. I have personally felt a great sense of responsibility for CLC in SA and will always do so. My sense of belonging to this world community has developed alongside the commitment to it.

Now is the time for Rob and I to follow our calling in growing the spirituality and formation in the Fleurieu Peninsular through the formation of more CLC groups and giving the FSE's as part of our roles on the Parish Council in Victor Harbor.

Our current Victor Harbor CLC group – **The Encounters** – has nine members.



Jocelyne Randabel-Williamson

Serving on the SAEXCO

Being a part of the SAEXCO over the past 3 years has brought me many blessings. The first that comes to mind is the privilege of being in the presence of a loving, discerning group that comes together prayerfully with trust that the Holy Spirit will lead them to make good decisions for the CLC community. It is rewarding to plan and work to nourish and grow this Ignatian inspired community.

Another blessing has been an opportunity to get to know more CLCers both in our region and in Australia. Visiting other groups offers a sacred window into the hearts of other CLC members in our region. Attending a National Assembly is a wonderful way to see the bigger picture of where we fit and how we operate in the global CLC Community. Thank you for the trust you have put in us. I look forward to continuing to serve on the SAEXCO and encourage others to join in this worthwhile and spirit-led ministry.

Paris Huffman

What has serving on SAEXCO meant to me?

Serving on SAEXCO has allowed me to work with, appreciate and develop friendships with some wonderfully gifted and committed people and has kept me closely involved in our CLC communal life. Hopefully I have helped to bring opportunities for

growth and fellowship to all of us in CLCSA.

I have come to believe that my role in life is to be an instrument at the service of Christ to bring about his kingdom and that this will be done in a very small way, slowly, patiently and laboriously, co-operating with many others and producing fruit that I may never see. However I think we get many fleeting glimpses of the kingdom along our way and there a few little oases where we can almost believe that the kingdom has come. This is a short meditation that came to me during our CLC retreat at Sevenhill last year.

Thy Kingdom Come: a retreat at Sevenhill

I sit day-dreaming, gazing out my attic window at the pruned vines, the strong parallel lines of the cross-wires and the twisting branches making a lacy overlay on the fresh green-grass carpet beneath. The bushy grey-green olives line the track to the little bridge over the creek where the rushes grow – rustling brown and dry now in winter. The tips of the noble peppercorns sway in the wind and the feathery leaves flutter wildly like a thousand flags. Elegant brown wattlebirds with white fantails swing on these fronds as they rest a moment before flying off. A brightly coloured parakeet swoops through a small flock of pink and grey cockatoos perched on the vines. One rosy-breasted pair sits close grooming themselves and each other. Protectively around all, the thrusting branches and angled trunks of the gums stand tall in the native bush – muted and subtle in colour.

All is at peace – the silence broken only by bird cries and the sighing wind. Here in the realm of Sevenhill the kingdom of God has come. Here everything is in harmony – God, creation and man's work. The earth is tended, the produce honoured, the

wine fit for any king. The relationships in this ancient house are of love, respect, companionship and mutual service. And as I dream, I see King Jesus walk on sandalled feet along the track between olive and vine up the hill to his humble grotto-castle in this his kingdom.

Louise Howell

Why I have been on SAEXCO?

As a young woman, I began my association with a small group in South Australia, which accepted responsibility for the state community. I don't remember elections. I would say that I was asked to meet to plan an occasion to which the state community would be invited and I said "yes". I remember the sense of privilege, responsibility, achievement, delight and satisfaction with my own learning.

I realise, now that I reflect on that experience, that it was the style of my association with CLC that allowed me to get as much as I did out of working in an Aboriginal Community in the far north-west of South Australia. I returned 14 years ago, again, to be invited to join the small group which had begun to be called EXCO.

Unfortunately, CLC began to identify itself as 'old' and exhausted and unable to identify leadership and a way forward. Twelve years later, we are beginning to appreciate that the Spirit isn't bound by anything whatsoever except our unwillingness to walk through the door once the tongues of fire have done their job. So we have, again, a vibrant small group ready to support our state community to invite, at every opportunity, whenever we become aware.

Now I am privileged to leave the EXCO small group and become more engaged in providing for more to

experience the dynamism of the small group which meets to encounter Jesus. The beauty of human contact is that every meeting is new, however long we have known each other.

Communion is a wonderful gift to share with the many who don't know that it is life which Jesus offered, and through us, continues to offer.

Helen Cantwell

Australian Beginnings in CLC: Terry Nicholas' Story

In the 70s, when Maxine Hogan went to Manila, Philippines, was the year I started in CLC. Maxine held an information evening in their home.

About 8 couples formed that original group, among them, Maxine and Jim Hogan; Anne and Martin Dodson; Bob and myself; Reg and Pat Pak Poy; Diana Herd; Ted and Dawn Cleary. Jim McInerny SJ was one who came regularly until he was moved interstate. It made an enormous difference to couples. And the Jesuits, out of their experience were able to say to us "You're not community yet".

Bob and I began in Charismatic Renewal as part of Catholic life in the 60s. The 'Life in the Spirit Courses' and the experience of being "loved unconditionally by God" made a huge difference to our Catholicity - our religious life. We were "workers for God". Bob was in Darwin when it was invaded, was injured, and was sent to Townsville. Bob was deeply affected. When we realised that we were such a fertile couple (we have fourteen children) we offered that in response to the tragic loss of life from the Second World War, particularly the experience of Australian soldiers, prisoners from Ambon.

In CLC we acknowledge the importance of the quality of our presence and our valued association with the Jesuits. Perhaps the story of my son, Tom, connects with this. For

8 years of his life in the Society of Jesus, Tom Nicholas SJ lived in a little hovel in Townsville to serve urban Aboriginal needs. From there he went to Kings Cross, Sydney. Since leaving the Society he has worked with mentally ill and alcoholics in Adelaide and has just finished a 3 year term with Caritas in East Timor. Tom's life choices show his great willingness to sacrifice himself for the coming of the kingdom. He is one of those many who enter the religious life who are in need of the perceptive support of the lay community and this is what CLC training in discernment assists us toward.

We'd moved to Athelstone for the education of Johanna and Simon. We'd always been very involved with the schools the children attended. Community is very important. I was without a group for 2 years. Diana Herd had started another group and she invited me to that. I don't go to meetings now as most chairs don't accommodate my bad back to long sitting and there's also travel involved in getting to the meetings. But I will always be a Christian Life Community member: it becomes part of your daily life. When we were younger the small group community was a lot of fun and we've shared important aspects of our lives. Your beginning commitment is to get to the meetings, to be there. Then you broaden into an Ignatian way of life, seeing 'God in all things'. You may not be able to meet, but you remain part of the group.

The process is a wonderful process for anything. All but 2 two of our children had left school when we began in the CLC small group. They joked about the CLC meeting that stillness that settles on the meeting and time sitting round the circle in silence is very foreign to their energy level, while it is fuel for ours. The oldest 4 girls are still faithful. Dan, older than Tom and 4 more girls: none go to Mass but the

3 youngest boys are a bit open to it. They all respect our faith but their spiritual/secular life combination is lived differently. The youngest girl, for instance, teaches at a Steiner school. My vision for CLC is that it will return to serving young people, as we were when we started. Young people now are indifferent to the religious life as we live it. But they are no less spiritual with their own vision for the future.



Terry Nicholas

Being a Giver of the FSE

Why I became a Giver

What does a Giver do

What are the benefits of being a Giver

What have I learnt to date

Why I became a Giver

Ever since I joined CLC about 20yrs ago I constantly asked the question “where does God want me to go and where does he need me to serve Him?”

Last year, due to injury and other factors, Jocelyne asked me to join her in training for the FSE as a Giving Team. I accepted, because I was curious and we couldn't go caravanning. I found the training by Michael Hanson inspiring and challenging. Then we did the first retreat with Rachel as guide and I knew this was where I was meant to be and where God was leading me:

Because:

The retreat experience took my faith journey to a whole new level,

My own life/faith experiences could be helpful to others on their spiritual journey,

I wanted to do more retreats (and we did the third one together while caravanning),

It was like going to a CLC meeting every day (Margaret , one of our first receivers said of it); this is new technology for spirituality.

What does a Giver do?

As a Giver my role is to invite the receivers into the presence of God, invite them to make a sign of humility and reverence, set the sacred space for the exercise and the interior knowledge to be desired and invite them to ask for the grace to be received. I am not just the timekeeper for the process but the holder of that sacred space during the exercise. I model the process and structure of the exercise and explain in simple language concepts such as “movement of the spirit, awareness Examen and discernment”. I try to be a caring and reflective listener of the receivers experiences during the Sacred conversations.

What are the benefits for the Giver?

I experience the retreat again and again at many different levels from the sharing by the receivers. If or when I share my own experiences I see the receivers gain confidence and be comfortable in sharing at a deeper level, which enhances their own journey. I experience the changes the retreat makes to the receiver's life and how much they grow in their journey. I see how each receiver discovers in their own way the Spirit working in their life.

What have I learnt to date?

How much I desire to be a Giver and how much grace I have received from God in the process. Learning to be patient and accept that the Spirit works even if a Receiver does not

share or write in their journal. The challenge of guiding receivers to experience the retreat without them becoming enmeshed in what they may feel is a rigid structure. Accepting that some receivers cannot go to a deeper level, go back to some memories of the past or want to write anything at all.

Some questions for reflection:

Without a CLC background should there be an introductory session/retreat to prepare receivers?

Will receivers want to become CLC members after experiencing the FSE's?



Rob Randabel-Williamson