

# Spirit Express

South Australia

December 2015



## Christian Life Community Australia

### SA CLC End of Year Report – 2015



2015 has been a year of growth and change for Christian Life Community in South Australia.

There have been joys, challenges and sorrows. We lament the passing of Merle Morris who belonged to the Emmaus Group. We are grateful for her loving presence amongst us. No doubt she will be catching up with Terri Nicholas, also from Emmaus, who died last year. The MacKillop Group lost their dear member, Pat O'Connor, this year, too. She is fondly missed.

While most of us have experienced the familiar rhythms of our fortnightly group meetings, the celebration of the World CLC Day, Guides training, the CLC Sevenhill Retreat and now our annual End of Year Gathering... within these

familiar events there has been a spirit filled up-swelling of spiritual enrichment taking place.

You may have sensed it in your World CLC Day reflections on Wisdom Language this year. You may have felt it when your guides shared with you the DSSE (Discern, Send, Support, Evaluate) process they explored in their training sessions. You may have realized it on receiving one of the First Spiritual Exercises. You may have experienced the wit, wisdom and whimsy of Fr Patrick O'Sullivan at the CLC Sevenhill Retreat. There is a deepening appreciation for the wonderful gifts that Ignatian spirituality has endowed us with. With our maturing appreciation of the treasures we have to offer there has been a wonderful sharing of these riches.

**In SPIRITUALITY** there has been a significant growth in CLC membership - 2015 welcomed 11 new members in 2 new groups. 40 people have begun their pre CLC journey in SA. Rob and Jocelyne Randabel-Williamson are guiding 4 new pre CLC groups in their Fleurieu region. A pre CLC group has begun in rural Murray Bridge following Tertian FSE retreats.

Several people have been placed in existing groups following their

First Spiritual Exercise retreats or other workshops that led them to us.

The national and state teamwork involved in offering the First Spiritual Exercises has been enriching for all concerned. There is a developing appreciation of the ways our Jesuit roots are forming us for mission in our world.

Our Community for MISSION is strengthening as the networking of existing ministries and organizations offer more effective apostolic work.

The new Loyola CIS Planning Team includes 2 Prayer Companion reps (Elaine Traegus and Jan Sabota), an FSE rep from the FSE State Team (Julie Tranfa) and myself (Paris Huffman) as Chair of the SA CLC EXCO team. Together with Wayne and Stephanie Brabin on the CIS guiding team, we are forging networks and communication links that enable us to complement and enhance our common Ignatian outreach into the wider community. We envision the Prayer Companions offering Ignatian prayer experiences to a wide and often rural sector; then following up interest in a deepening spirituality with First Spiritual Exercise tasters and retreats; then offering sustained

spiritual community through Christian Life Community.

The Norwood parish, in conjunction with the Loyola Spirituality Centre and Christian Life Community is offering retreats in daily life featuring the First Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. In 2016 we also plan to offer a series of 'Tasters of the FSE' - ie delectable 2 hr prayer sessions featuring one day's prayer taken from the Exercises.

The CLC FSE National Project fostered dialogue, cooperation, and planning between the various regions and states in Australia, giving us focus and confidence to be CLC givers of the First Spiritual Exercises.

A recent invitation to CLC to begin dialogue with **the New Directions** pastoral planning team in SA has great outreach promise in parishes as well as in other services such as the post correctional release services.

The call of Pope Francis in the *Laudato Si* is awakening in many of us confidence to speak up and act on our convictions around refugee issues and environmental concerns.

Yes, 2015 has been an exciting and promising year for CLC in SA. We thank God for His inspiration, strength and guidance. We look forward to the Holy Spirit guiding us in 2016.

**Paris Huffman.**  
*(Chair SA CLC EXCO team.)*

### **SACLC 2015 Annual Retreat – Sevenhill Centre Of Ignatian Spirituality**

On a sunny but crisp late Autumn Friday twenty three CLC souls travelled 140 kilometres north of Adelaide to the glorious Sevenhill

Centre of Ignatian Spirituality for our annual Retreat.

The canola paddocks we drove through were a vivid burst of acid yellow against the green of other crops and blue sky. Anyone who has been to Sevenhill will understand how privileged we South Australians feel to have this visually beautiful and sacred Jesuit centre "just up the road". We always feel welcomed thanks to the quiet work of all the staff at the centre. They create a very special atmosphere of calm and beauty for us to enjoy.

This year we were blessed indeed to have Patrick O'Sullivan SJ to lead our Retreat. His presentations were brief, his handouts succinct and thought provoking, and his jokes were many (and funny). Patrick led us into several themes throughout the weekend including reflecting on our friendship with Jesus. We saw that our everyday friendships provide a parallel to our friendship with Him – do we give the relationship the same time, care, listening presence and love we give to our friends? A further theme was the idea of living our whole lives as a prayer – I think several of us were challenged by this. Patrick also led us to re-visit alternative ways of praying and reminded us that our friendship with Jesus can have several "voices" – from direct and personal conversations with Him, to contemplating scenes from scripture, to *Lectio Divina*, to formal or traditional prayer forms, to institutional community prayer and to praying a simple mantra such as the Jesus prayer.

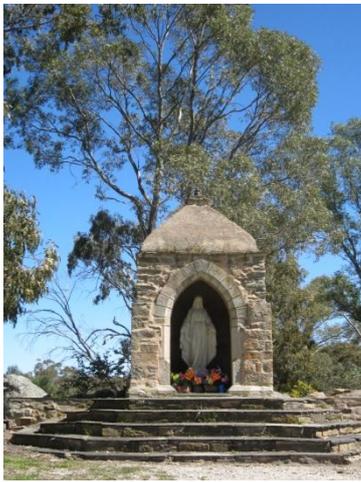
The small group session I was part of began with Patrick's themes and written resources, then moved into a very broad discussion on what might constitute a good death, how to be truly "present" to others,

ending with a debate on who has the best hymns – Protestants or Catholics – and why!

Saturday night dinner was as always simple, plentiful, tasty and beautifully prepared. Afterwards we gathered as a large group to share what was impacting on us through the Retreat so far. Many retreatants commented on how humbled they were at the level of openness and trust present amongst us and how many people were willing to share their vulnerability and fragility with each other. At these times we felt the presence of our Lord very strongly amongst us.



Our final session on Sunday morning brought forth some beautiful reflections on what retreatants would take away from the weekend and where they felt the Holy Spirit was moving them and our CLC community. Some responses were: friendship - what it is in our daily lives and what it can be with Jesus; our relationship with Mary and what we can learn from Patrick's words about Mary conceiving Jesus in her heart before she conceived him in her body and the lesson that what we feel in our hearts is reflected in our body; the deeper connectedness within our CLC family through Jesus and our shared Ignatian spirituality; the freedom to let tears flow in a safe sacred place and the gratitude for Patrick's kernels of wisdom, humour and handouts to jog our failing memories.



To conclude, the Retreat at Sevenhill was a memorable experience for all who attended. Many thanks to those who worked hard to make it happen – in particular to Patrick O’Sullivan for travelling from Melbourne to be with us, to our hardworking SACLC Chairperson Paris Huffman who led us in a prayerful and gentle way, to Brother Ian Cribbe whose behind the scenes attention to detail were again apparent, the kitchen staff whose meals were plentiful and delicious and always on time, and of course being Sevenhill, the “fruit of the vine, work of human hands” which accompanied the meals. We are already looking forward to next year’s Retreat – to any SACLC members who have not experienced it yet – please join us in 2016!

**June Duffy**  
(SACLC EXCO member)

### End Of Year Gathering

CLC’s South Australian End of Year Gathering on 14<sup>th</sup> November was much appreciated and enjoyed by those attending.

A few of us arrived early and helped Paris and Judy set up the hall and prepare drinks and food tables. By 6 pm we were all at Mass in the beautiful St Ignatius church, Norwood, with a few

members delegated to hand out attractive CLC brochures to churchgoers at the three entrances. CLC members were warmly welcomed to the Mass by the Commentator and Priest. At the end of Mass Paris gave a brief talk about Christian Life Community to the congregation.

After Mass, as we entered the hall to sign in we were able to view a slide show, assembled and projected by one of the members, covering both the 2014 and 2015 Sevenhill retreats as well as this year’s World CLC day.

First item on the evening’s agenda was the formal welcome ceremony for New Members, who were presented with beautiful white pillar candles bearing the groups’ names, and a special memento – a laminated card bearing the Daily Awareness Examen on one side, and on the other, the well-known prayer of St Ignatius “Take, Lord, and receive” from the Spiritual exercises.

A big welcome was then given to the new pre-CLC group members who were able to attend. Jocelyne and Rob Randabel-Williamson have been hard at work this year forming new pre-CLC groups in areas from Victor Harbor to Noarlunga, and it was a great pity that Rob was unable to be present due to having just had hip surgery – we wish him a speedy recovery! Jocelyne had just had a family bereavement and although she stayed briefly to meet informally with her “CLC family” members, needed to leave due to her own family commitments. May 2016 be a good year for both these hard-working, energising people.

After prayer, we all dispersed to the sumptuous feast-table – always amazing at these events how with just one plate supplied from each

person, what an imaginative and tasty meal is laid out. Many thanks to those who brought flowers, greenery and decorations to help create a lovely atmosphere.



Sister Gwen, our guest speaker, was a wonderful but humble champion for the Hutt Street Centre in Adelaide’s CBD. She outlined all the facets of work done at the Centre for the homeless and disadvantaged folk in our apparently affluent community, and then the proverbial pin could be heard to drop as she described in general terms some of the problems faced – incredible deprivation and hardship endured by too many people. Afterwards, she asked if there were any questions, and one member asked how many there were to handle these cases. Sister Gwen answered quietly that she was “it”, and that it is very hard work – emotionally - at times. It was clear that she draws on great faith. She was thanked for her heartfelt talk and June Duffy presented her with a gift before she slipped away.

Chris Hogan gave the World CLC Report, talking about members’ activities in disadvantaged areas of the world, while Paris spoke about activities in South Australia, and Helen gave the national report.

Afterwards we enjoyed some delicious desserts and coffee, and the hall was quickly returned to order by willing helpers. Once again, another great end-of-year gathering, giving members

inspiration to carry forward to an active CLC year 2016.



**Wendy Baker.**  
(*The Encounters*)

## **FSE update in SA – August 2015**

### **The First Spiritual Exercises**

The First Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola are a precious gift to our church and to anyone in the world who yearns to foster an intimate relationship with God. In 2013 there was a training program offered in Melbourne by Michael Hansen SJ to train Givers of the FSE using the book he had written which updated the language and style of the exercises to appeal to the modern world. Six CLC people from South Australia participated in this training. There were also a number of non-CLC people from SA trained. Since then there have been CLC members who have received a FSE and have been mentored to give the Exercise in tandem with trained Givers.

There is a graced fervour that erupts from receiving the exercises - a strong desire to share the gift of God's love that one has received. This fervour has brought our national CLC community to the decision to make the giving of the First Spiritual Exercises a National Project. As members of CLC we are already adept at spiritual

conversation – the ability to listen attentively to others as the Spirit reveals God's action in their everyday life. We are formed by Ignatian spirituality and familiar with the Examen, imaginative contemplation on Scripture and discernment, so we are well equipped to be Givers. We can also see how the receiving of the First Spiritual Exercises may ignite in receivers the desire to join a CLC group to continue the spiritual renaissance they have experienced.

There are two strong national movements working in tandem to foster the giving of the First Spiritual Exercises. One is Christian Life Community, which has made the giving of FSE a National Project. The other is a National FSE Team that is headed by Michel Hansen SJ. Both movements are working together to decide on criteria for Givers, training requirements and suitable accreditation/endorsement of Givers. While these teams work on these aspects, the First Spiritual Exercises are being given in parishes, Ignatian Spirituality Centres, schools, prisons, etc.

Here in South Australia the retreats 'Divine Love and Friendship with Jesus' and 'Divine Love and Inner Peace' have been given to individuals, CLC groups, on retreat at Sevenhill, in parishes (Norwood, Sevenhill, Victor Harbor & Adelaide Hills Parish), to staff at Loreto College, and by Tertians in the Murray Mallee Parish.

As the chairperson of our CLC SAEXCO I have joined the CLC FSE National Project Team, the South Australian National FSE Team and the planning team for the Loyola Ignatian Spirituality Centre. I am accompanied by other CLC members, as well as others in our wider Ignatian family, as we work together to bring Christ's

mission to fruition in the hearts of all whom the Spirit calls.

I hope that many of you reading this will recognise the compelling eagerness associated with the FSE because you have tasted it yourself. If you have received one of the First Spiritual Exercises you may be inspired to give it – to friends, colleagues, etc. and you can rely on being supported to do so.

If you have yet to have received one of the exercises, or would like to do another one, I encourage you to watch for an opportunity to do so. In fact, I encourage you to **SEEK** an opportunity! It is here for you in South Australia! I will endeavour to send an invitation to all members whenever there is an offering of a First Spiritual Exercise in our state.

May Christ's love fill your heart to overflowing!

**Paris Huffman**  
(*Chair SA EXCO*)

### **Reading Faith**

When my heart brought me back to Jesus crucified, after decades of exploring other faiths, I had a great desire to understand the mysteries of Christian faith. For the last 3 years I have been on a wonderful journey of discovery, seeing Christianity in its breadth and depth, in a way that hadn't been possible as one "born Catholic", or even as an adult committed to living faith. We are living in a time of vibrant renewal for the Church, and the resources available for nourishing, understanding and challenging our ideas of the Gospel-life are very rich. Below are a couple of examples of the very best of these "reads" in my journey so far.

**Jesus of Nazareth – what he wanted, who he was by Gerhard Lohfink** (Liturgical Press 2012)

This is a marvellous summary of a German biblical scholar's grappling with the New Testament for a lifetime. The opening chapter, "The so-called historical Jesus" outlines the key issues that have caused great ferment among scholars in the last 20 years, especially the question of what we can really know about Jesus. Very clearly and directly he shows how to read the gospels in particular as documents of faith, reflecting the real experience of the first companions of Jesus.

From there he develops a unified picture of Jesus' mission, starting from the proclamation of the "reign of God", exploring all the issues that flow from this, and how that mission leads to death and resurrection. The person of Jesus emerges in very clear perspective, in the process reconciling the very different views one gets from each of the gospel writers.

At the end one is filled with a sense that the Good News is breaking out before our eyes, has been doing so for 2000 years, and now through us carried forward by the Holy Spirit, is doing so anew! In the last chapter Lohfink asks whether Jesus was proclaiming some unattainable utopia, and finishes the book with these words : *"Jesus proclamation and practice of the reign of God is more radical than any utopia. It is more realistic, it is more critical, it knows more about human beings. It is the only hope for the wounds and sicknesses of our planet."* (p357)

**Meditation and contemplation – an Ignatian guide to praying with Scripture** by Timothy M Gallagher OMV (Crossroad 2008). The author is a spiritual director

working in the tradition of Ignatius. At the centre of the Spiritual Exercises are guidelines for praying with passages from the gospels, and this concise, very readable book offers helpful ways to understand how to put these guidelines into practise in our daily prayer.

It is enriched with a wealth of quotes from people the author has directed in their spritual journeys, illuminating how people have taken these suggestions into their own lives, how they have been changed and guided by God's own hand, with significant consequences for their whole lives.

This book has been very helpful in re-introducing me to connecting praying with Scripture that I was meant to have learnt when I was young, but that passed over my head for lack of maturity I think. The distinction between "meditation" and "contemplation", and how differently Ignatius' use of these words is from others', has been especially helpful.

*"Our focus will be the two basic Ignatian methods for prayer with Scripture : meditation, the reflective approach, and contemplation, the imaginative approach. Both methods, through different human capabilities – our ability to reflect on the meaning of the text and our ability to enter the scene in the text imaginatively – open for us the message of the Scriptures. Through different gateways, both lead to the heart."* (p10).

If you would like to borrow either of these books, please contact me on 8556 3915 or at [impe@internode.on.net](mailto:impe@internode.on.net).

**Peter Laffan**  
(Member Aldinga Pre-CLC Group)

**2016 dates for your diary**

**March 19-Sat-World CLC day-**  
**all members and Pre-CLCs**

**March/April TBA- Guides**  
**retreat**

**Sept.9,10,11- Sevenhill retreat-**  
**all members and Pre-CLCs**

**Nov 12. End of year gathering.**  
**all members and Pre-CLCs**



Editors:

Rob and Jocelyne Randabel-Williamson.