



Christian Life Community

Australia

8th February, 2015

Dear CLC Guides and members,

World CLC Day 2015

At the CLC World Assembly in Lebanon in 2013, Fr. Nicolás SJ' delivered an address on "Wisdom Language for the Frontiers" and said "**All CLC members are called to *fill our world with Wisdom.....***".

CLC members around the world are being asked to explore a little more deeply what this might mean. NEXCO asked a small group of people in NSW to prepare some reflection material on "Wisdom Language" that could be used by groups around World CLC Day which is celebrated on 25th March, the Feast of the Annunciation.

We ask that you pray and reflect on this material and share with us some ideas of what this concept might mean to you. What is the particular wisdom that CLC members can bring? It is not "words of wisdom" which imply "I know and will tell you what you need to do." but the wisdom of finding God in everything. It is the wisdom of the practice of prayer and discernment, listening to each other and to what God may be saying. It is hearing and speaking the language of God alive in the family, in culture, in everything. This can lead people into a new relationship with God, a relationship of depth and wisdom.

We are trying to deepen our awareness that just as the "ordinariness of bread" becomes the "extraordinariness of the body of Christ" in the Eucharist, the "ordinariness" of life can become "extraordinary" if and when we value the ordinary activities as the basic mission of lay people and live our daily lives with apostolic intensity by seeing that the first and most fundamental call of all CLC members is in "**ordinary life**".

We propose that you commit three meetings to this material but leave it to you to adapt to your situation. The names and email addresses of those who put this material together are listed below and we invite groups or individuals to feed back any thoughts/expressions you may have as a result of praying with this material. We hope you enjoy this material as a way of celebrating the wonderful gift of CLC that we share.

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Peace and blessings,

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MEETING ONE

- Check in** Share in a word, a phrase, or an image how you are at this moment.
- Relaxation (5 mins)** This is a time of preparation. Make yourself comfortable in your chair, ensuring that your back is straight, and your feet are flat on the ground. Begin to bring your awareness to your breath, and follow the gentle movement of your breath coming in through your nostrils, and out through your nostrils. Keep breathing until you can follow the rhythmic movement of your breath in and out. You may like to count in 1,2,3 PAUSE out 3, 2, 1 so that you get an even rhythm to your breath. As you notice any sounds in the room or around you, notice them, and then return to your breath. We now ask for the grace we desire in this prayer time:
- Grace** We pray that we come to value the power of our everyday experiences to reveal to us God's love.
- Scripture (3 mins)** **Mt. 11:25-26** Jesus Prays to His Father
At that time Jesus said, "Thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You hid these things from the wise and from those who have much learning. You have shown them to little children. Yes, Father, it was good in Your sight.
- Remembering (10 - 15 mins)** **Who has brought wisdom into my life and how?**
Using my imagination, I begin to remember the different phases of my life, recent years, young adulthood, adolescence, childhood. I do not try to organise my thoughts or to feel anxious about what comes to my mind. I let my life's journey wash over me as a refreshing stream. I let the memories come of a person who brought wisdom into my life. *Let this memory emerge in your consciousness and dwell on it.*
- I remember the person, I remember how old I was and my relationship with them. I remember the face, something about them that is particularly endearing, their smile, their eyes: what it was about them which drew me to them. I give thanks for their presence in my life.
- I remember the place where I encountered them. I hold it in my memory. I remember the setting, outdoors or indoors, the time of day, the weather, the presence of others. I sit quietly and reflect on this place that has held grace for me.
- I remember the values or the insights or the words that came to me from this encounter at the time.
- Reflecting (10 – 15 mins)** I take time, now, to savour something from the above which is drawing me. How does this encounter still affect me today? How does this relationship continue to shape my life? I spend some time in silence reflecting and savouring.
- Responding (5 mins)** I talk to God about my experience in this prayer. I slowly return to the room and say the prayer:
Glory be to the Father
- Sharing (15 mins)** *Share with your companions something of your meditation. Some of the following considerations might be helpful:*
- First Round** What feelings did you encounter in your prayer? What was the strongest feeling? What stood out for you as you remembered?
What surprised you? What delighted you?
How did you receive the grace you asked for?
- Second Round** What resonated with you as you heard others speak?
Where did you experience harmony with the others as they shared?
Were there new insights that were given to you and your small group?
- Evaluation (5 mins)** What gave life to the meeting? Were there elements which were less animating? How did the prayer and sharing in the meeting lead me to an increase of faith, hope and compassion? Did the prayer and sharing lead me in the opposite direction?

Further Reflection

You may wish to spend some further time at home reflecting on some of these questions:
You might find it helpful to write down some of your thoughts to bring to the next meeting.

How do I recognise wisdom and how has it impacted on my life?

Who are the people that I see as wisdom figures? Why do I value these people?

What were some of the wise things I learned from my family, teachers, friends, children, strangers, others?

What are some of the 'wise things' that have been passed on to me by previous generations that I still value?

What is the wisdom I wish to pass on to others, to my children, to the generations in our society that follow?

How do other cultures such as that of our Indigenous people hand on wisdom? What can we learn from this?

How is wisdom passed on from our elders through story, through the arts, through scripture, doctrine, and the liturgy of the church?

How can I bring the gifts of wisdom to others in my actions, words and presence?

Preparation for Meeting 2

Prior to the meeting

- Reflect on the images on pages four and five.
- If you have a computer, you may like to follow several of the web links on page six.
- Note down points in preparation for the next meeting – “What was my reaction to the material?” “What inspired/surprised/ irritated ...me?”

Images for Reflection



Overwhelmed: Mr Riva's picture spread across the world when he was caressed by Pope Francis and he said it made his heart beat so fast he thought he 'would die'



Jesus the Homeless

Canadian sculptor Timothy Schmalz says he created "Jesus the Homeless" to remind Christians that Jesus is with everyone, especially those who are marginalized in society – the poor and the homeless.

Featuring Jesus as a homeless person is a sharp contrast to the images of Christ that Christians are accustomed to seeing.

The sculpture shows Christ's body shrouded in a blanket, lying on a 7-foot long park bench, and the only indication that the homeless person is Jesus is the visible wounds on the feet



When we allow our lives to “speak” God, the Word shines forth in our lives. God comes alive in the world.

Ilia Delio

If you have a computer, you may like to follow several of the web links mentioned in this material.

- Interview with the disfigured man the Pope kissed and embraced.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSJGJC33df8
- The Pope: Bring Identity to dialogue.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7nX5cMGI-M>
- The Pope on the Joy of the Gospel.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ieM97Gb_DY
- The Pope visits homeless girls in the Philippines.
<http://www.ucanews.com/news/homeless-girls-pray-for-a-papal-visit/72812>

Note down points in preparation for the next meeting.

MEETING TWO

Check in	Share in a word/phrase/image how you feel at this moment.
Quiet time (5 mins)	Music/Relaxation Exercise:
Grace	That I might be more aware of how to bring the compassion of God to life situations
Prayer (5 mins)	<p>Turning Aside to See</p> <p>We gather now, eyes wide open to wonder. As Moses turned aside to see the bush ablaze with eternal Presence, so in this sacred gathering do we turn aside to see the world charged with grandeur and the glory of indescribable Mystery</p> <p>We turn aside to see the beauty of each other, the goodness of this life, and the truth of sacred wisdom that knows: Earth to be holy; all creatures to be kin; the universe to be One; and Spirit to be a flaring presence, for all who turn aside to see. Amen</p> <p><small>Exodus 3:1-22</small> Bruce Sanguin, (2010)¹</p>
Scripture (2 mins)	God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." <small>Exodus 3: 5-6</small>
Reflecting (10 mins)	Sit with the images provided and ask that you may see with the eyes of the Trinity.
Sharing (15 mins)	<p><i>Share with your companions something of your meditation. Some of the following considerations might be helpful:</i></p> <p>What was your reaction? What touched you as you sat with the images?</p>
First Round	What feelings did you encounter in your prayer? What was the strongest feeling? What stood out for you? What surprised you? What delighted you? How did you receive the grace you asked for?
Second Round	What resonated with you as you heard others speak? Where did you experience harmony with the others as they shared? Were there new insights that were given to you and your small group?
Evaluation (5 mins)	What are you most thankful for, or grateful for, in tonight's meeting? What is it that is hardest for you to be thankful for?

¹ Sanguin, B. (2010). *If Darwin Prayed: Prayers for Evolutionary Mystics* (p. 148). Vancouver: Evans and sanguin publishing.

Preparation for Meeting 3

During the coming fortnight be aware, when engaging in at least one conversation, of stepping back, listening, and considering how you might move from superficiality to depth.

In going about this “task”, you might find it fruitful to reflect on the following points:

What does it mean to take wisdom language to the frontiers² of our lay mission? *Note which of these suggestions resonate with you::*

- To have an openness and a sense of wonder, to be attentive and receptive to different perspectives and to new realities;
- To make the right choices and help others to choose what is deep, permanent and meaningful;
- To respect those who are not familiar with God and to appreciate their joie de vivre;
- To be able to engage in non-religious discourses surrounding ‘the frontier’ and to give genuine effort to find out what are the different options available which can enrich life in those situations;
- To recognize the presence of God in the little things of daily life and help others to recognize this presence;
- To bring the compassion of God to life situations;
- To refuse to settle for simplistic or comfortable solutions;
- To give value to the wisdom of humanity which we have inherited;
- To enter into a fruitful dialogue with the world of today.
- Endeavour to search for God **in all**.

² “Wisdom Language for the Frontiers” was the title of an address given by Fr. Nicolás SJ at the CLC World Assembly in Lebanon in 2013. The article can be found on the CLC website (clcaustralia.org.au)

Note down points in preparation for the next meeting

How do I experience God’s Wisdom in my daily life?

What was my experience of God since the last meeting amidst the bustle, rush, fatigue and complexity of everyday life?

Note to Guides

After one week, send members a text message: “Have you done your “homework?”/ “Don’t forget to take note of at least one conversation.

MEETING THREE

Check in Share in a word/phrase/image how you are at this moment.

Quiet time (5 mins) Music/Relaxation Exercise

Dadirri³

Dadirri is deep listening.

Listening to the land.

Listening to the Spirit speaking through the land.

Listening to the stillness.

Dadirri is awareness of the land as sacred silent awareness of deep springs within me.

I am the story of the land. I feel the harmony that is in the land.

My life is sacred.

A deep theme unfolding.

Dadirri makes me feel whole; renews me and brings peace.

My life is new.

Grace That I may learn to see what I am doing in my ordinary life to bring about the Kingdom and that I may find new ways to do this.

Prayer (5 mins)



An anthropologist proposed a game to the kids in an African tribe. He put a basket full of fruit near a tree and told them that whoever got there first won the sweet fruits. When he gave them the signal to run they all took each other's hands and ran together, then sat in a circle enjoying their treats. When he asked them why they chose to run as a group when they could have had more fruit individually, one child spoke up and said: "UBUNTU, how can one of us be happy if all the other ones are sad?"

'UBUNTU' in the Xhosa culture means: "I am because we are"

God help us to change. To change ourselves and to change our world. To know the need for it. To deal with the pain of it. To feel the joy of it. To undertake the journey without understanding the destination. The art of gentle revolution. Amen

Michael Leunig

Reflecting (10 – 15 mins) **Read and reflect on the following:**

Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium" – "The Joy of the Gospel" (2013) gives us food for thought and prayer:

Reflect on the following and notice your reaction? What resonates? What jars? What challenges? What inspires?

20. *Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our comfort zone in order to reach all the "peripheries" in need of the light of the Gospel."*

29.small communities are a source of enrichment for the Church, raised up by the Spirit for evangelizing different areas and sectors. Frequently they bring a new capacity for dialogue with the world whereby the Church is renewed.

127. Today, as the Church seeks to experience a profound missionary renewal, there is a kind of preaching which falls to each of us as a daily responsibility. It has to do with bringing the Gospel to the people we meet, whether they be our neighbours or complete strangers. This is the informal preaching which takes place in the middle of a conversation, Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey.

273. My mission of being in the heart of the people is not just a part of my life or a badge I can take off; it is not an "extra" or just another moment in life. Instead, it is something I cannot uproot from my being without destroying my very self. I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world.

Sharing (15 mins)

Some of the following considerations might be helpful.

First Round

During the last fortnight, you focussed on at least one conversation amidst the bustle, rush, fatigue and complexity of everyday life? What did you notice?

When you conversed with another person, did you hold the other in loving reverence as you conversed? Did you give the other person deep respect? Were you humble before the other? Were you open to being moved by him/her?

Second Round

What resonated with you as you heard others speak?
Has paying attention to the presence of God in the little things of ordinary life raised your awareness?

Can we identify a tool, an insight, or ways of using our words and gestures and actions, that may help our CLC members to be more attentive to bringing God to others in ordinary life?

Evaluation (5 mins)

What do you take away from this meeting/series of meetings?

Closing Prayer:

Dear God, When spring returns we celebrate the rejuvenation of the natural world. Let us be moved by this vast and gentle insistence that goodness can return, that warmth and life shall succeed, and help us to understand our place within this miracle. Let us see that as a bird now builds its nest, bravely with bits and pieces, so we must build human faith. It is our simple duty, it is the highest art; it is our natural and vital role within the miracle of spring: the creation of faith. Amen. Michael Leunig

³The Indigenous People of Australia have a depth of spirituality that can enrich our Non-Indigenous spirits in so many ways. One of these spiritual gifts is Dadirri - inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness.

Dear friends,

We have found this topic very challenging to work with. We have had many meetings, many exchanges and many false starts and searched far and wide for material that might speak to us and that we hope will also speak to you. We would really value your feedback and dialogue.

In the process of exchanging ideas and prayer, we also asked others for thoughts, insights and reflections. We haven't been able to include everything we gathered but would like to include the following random ideas

- Wisdom comes from within. God is to be found in our own experiences so reflect, observe, be open to the wonder and joy of the moment (thus the importance of the Examen). One needs to express the desire to reach out to others so pray out of that desire to the Holy Spirit to show us the way and be open to maybe a new way.
- We are in the milieu of the 'God of surprises' and openness is what we need. A trusting vulnerability and being willing to accept the unexpected, - to go against the accepted boundaries of the world.
- There is also the link to the values we hold - since in these lie the fund of the wisdom we will act out of and be within. And again that comes back to the foundations of our living and to the process of discernment.
- Many struggle with the idea of mission without seeing that the first and most fundamental call of all CLC members is in Ordinary life. One way in which we can recognise and embrace this call is to actually set out each day with the intention to take the Lord with us into our conversations and interactions and seek out possibilities. In our nightly examen we reflect on the opportunities we found and missed each day. "When we allow our lives to 'speak' God, the Word shines forth in our lives. God comes alive in the world." (Delio, 2008)³
- This (the wisdom of finding God in everything) leads the people into a new relationship with God, a relationship of depth and wisdom. This is a language that makes sense to believers and unbelievers alike. It is the emphasis that Pope Francis places on the language of the common person. It is the language of being poor, of being compassionate, and in the simplicity of expressing our love each day – perhaps at least just greeting everybody, wishing them 'good evening' or 'have a good meal' or 'have a good rest'.
- What we bring to the world as CLC members is our knowledge of and growth in Ignatian spirituality which trains us for reflection and meditation, for active listening and helps us grow in our ability to sort out what is superficial and banal from what is deep and real. This is what Ignatian spirituality does for us – it trains us to be sensitive, to discern.
- This sort of language is not so much a language but rather an approach or a disposition/attitude which takes us back to the heart of God. The tools of listening, respecting, praying, reflecting, discerning are what we bring to the very frontiers of our world whatever that front line be for us i.e. family, workplace, and the groups and individuals people with whom we engage. We are called to recognize and to proclaim Jesus Christ and His Gospel not as a set of prohibitions, interruptions, or regulations, but as a living Word of life in real situations which are being lived.
- Our lives are our mission. We need to discover the sacredness in the ordinary.

Blessings on you all,

Di, Kay, Luke, Michael

³ Delio, I (2008) *Ten Evenings with God*. (page 17) Missouri, USA. Ligouri Publications.