

## PROJECTS

### We believe God spoke to CLC in Buenos Aires

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The World ExCo gathered in Namur, Belgium, during the Easter Octave.

The world assembly revealed that it is possible to listen to the Lord while attending to our duties; we were therefore driven by the very same desire. Working hard as an Executive Council should never prevent us from acting as a small yet universal discerning community. As logical as this sounds, it requires a conversion, especially for those who feel accountable.

Like the disciples of Emmaus, we once more had an experience of God's presence while reflecting on all the events in light of the scripture and celebrating Eucharist. We asked the Lord to tell us more about the World Assembly, beyond the narrative of the final document, trying to (fore)see the promising perspectives opened by the simple yet deep call of Buenos Aires. We do have reasons to affirm that we truly believe in what happened in Buenos Aires.

If you have been waiting for a vision, a long term strategic plan, you will definitely want to read the second part of the present letter. However, we cannot help but tell you first and foremost that our hearts were burning while the Lord was talking to us!

***We believe that God spoke to CLC in Buenos Aires.** We have good reasons to do so, but yet it is an act of faith. No matter how obvious it may sound, we experienced **communal discernment as God's precious gift to CLC today.** It is a gift to be deepened and shared while we go forth. The reverse works as well: it is a gift that urges us to **go forth**, and in so doing calls us to **deepen** in the charism to be **shared**. Indeed, the three verbs don't refer to a linear process; rather an integrated way of life.*

*CLC is present in many frontiers, and we want to feel at home wherever we find ourselves. The "magis" we can offer in each field of mission - beyond or rather in action - is sharing our faith in God's active presence and in our way to seek God in all. The experience at our assembly in **Buenos Aires is transversal and totally relevant at all frontiers.** Since the World Assembly gathered in a tent and we want to repeat, wherever possible, the dynamic of communal discernment, rather than using words about discernment, we **want to move the tent, i.e. create spaces of transcendence wherever we are most concretely committed.** By creating sacred spaces to recognize and respond to the interior movements of the Spirit, we trust that the Spirit will lead us towards greater union with Christ and greater love and service of God and others. Buenos Aires is transversal to all our commitments, personal and communal. That's why we dare say that the call of Buenos Aires is truly and deeply apostolic.*

*It's a call. **Buenos Aires is happening.** Buenos Aires will unfold if we truly believe that God keeps talking to us.*

This is a chorus letter, with several expressions coming from the members of the World ExCo for each of the 6 parts of our "profession of faith".

### **We believe that God spoke to CLC in Buenos Aires because ...**

At the heart of the experience was a modern-day miracle. And we were witnesses to it.

*The community, though diverse, prayed as one.*

The heart of the world CLC was torn by the pain, love and faith of the people of Barrio San Miguel.

*We were honest and free to look at our communal sins and paralysis.*

The Holy Spirit inspired us to try things that only the Love of God can achieve.

*Without a business tone, we were sent to the world.*

The Holy Spirit invites us to offer ourselves through our deepest gift.

*The Lord spoke to us with a clear and strong message.*

We resisted the temptation of an advance “doctrine”; instead, we were open to purification and conversion of heart.

*We made an experience of integration and received the grace we were asking for : it was a reconnection of people, identity, and mission.*

A “burning bush”, a “take off your sandals” experience.

*The Holy Spirit is alive!*

Buenos Aires is a Copernican Revolution, a call to look at our identity in a new way. In addition to being a discerning and serving community, we are called to offer ourselves, while journeying with others.

### **Communal discernment is God’s precious gift to CLC today**

In a world of post-truths, discernment is an urgency.

*Pope Francis said, “People need welcoming, integration, accompaniment and discernment, but discernment is the less developed dimension in the Church.”*

God showed us that the discernment of the community is at the center of our mission. It is not only a means, but central to who we are and our way of proceeding.

*Communal discernment brings unity in purpose.*

In an age of uncertainty and a society of risk, we need to develop a democracy of discernment.

*The liberation of the poor starts with the liberation of awareness. Discernment is a tool for the deepest kind of liberation.*

Communal discernment includes everyone.

*Generate processes and experiences of discernment with people in any place where there is fear, division, doubt, pain, conflict, misunderstanding, exclusion, abuses, failure, non-sense... In any place where freedom and love are lost.*

We are called to open spaces of communal discernment wherever we are in today’s world. Let our very presence invite communal discernment. May we radiate a holy openness.

*Discernment creates reconciliation.*

We trust that as we strive to connect with the Holy Spirit, we can listen to the movements of the Spirit in our hearts and be conduits for Christ’s love and action.

### **Deepen, share and go forth. Or go forth, share and deepen!**

It is cyclical, an upward spiral, one leading to the growth of the other.

*Go forth, Share and Deepen are entry points to the path of our calling, coming from our own particular circumstances. Let’s begin with where we are.*

“We want to go forth, but *this way*” (a delegate to the Assembly, pointing to the tent of the plenary).

*The final document has no specific steps. It’s not about specific steps, it’s about listening according to each reality. The final document is incomplete.*

Get in touch with the Reality. It is reality which inspires Pope Francis to renew the Church.

*Help everyone to be attentive to those close to them in their daily life.*

To really have an impact in the world, start with where we are, with what we have.

*To be a real lay Ignatian community.*

Our CLC charism is a gift to be treasured, nurtured, and cared for—in order to share with others and to reveal Christ’s peace, joy and love.

*Buenos Aires is a call to a profound connection with Christ and to an apostolic impetus. We are invited to be intimate with Jesus in mission.*

### **Buenos Aires is transversal and totally relevant at all frontiers**

We were sent to discern together at the frontiers.

*We will see a blooming of apostolic fields, of frontiers.*

The call of BA is both a way of seeking and finding where we are needed most, and a way of being in any frontier we are called to.

*If we are courageous enough, we will know that our way of being IS mission, and our lives will need to be poured boldly, totally this way – in all the peripheries where the Spirit is working.*

Diversity and fragilization of families require more opportunities for discernment.

*Migration and human mobility need to build bridges of shared discernment for the new society we are making.*

We asked for the grace to better integrate our charism. As a kind of bonus, we got a clear message about the unity within a diverse CLC.

*“At the center of your Ignatian spirituality is this desire to be contemplatives in action. Contemplation and action, the two dimensions together: because we can only enter the heart of God through the wounds of Christ, and we know that Christ is wounded in the hungry, the uneducated, the discarded, the old, the sick, the imprisoned, in all the vulnerable human flesh.”<sup>1</sup>*

### **We want to move the tent, i.e. create spaces of transcendence where we are most concretely committed**

Create sacred spaces where we are. Create encounters, open squares.

*Move the tent and stay with those who enter, rather than spreading leaflets with instructions to build a neat tent.*

All of us now; we do not need to wait for perfection.

*Everywhere we go, we are called to open spaces of discernment. Wherever we live, we live this way. Whenever we leave, the way is transformed.*

We need an experience of conversion rather than perfection or sending perfect documents.



### **Buenos Aires is happening**

The mystery is still unfolding. The long conversation with the Spirit is continuing.

*The real frontiers lead us to paths unknown, guided only by the light of the Spirit. This is the invitation and the grace we are called to carry together.*

When God speaks, we need time to understand, to be converted, and to consent.

*The invitation is clear, let us be witnesses.*

We are in the hands of God, not always a comfortable place but ultimately a place of responsibility.

*If we respond to the call, something “big” will happen; it is the Spirit who creates a deep wave that we neither launch nor control.*

BA is still happening, which brings us back to the act of faith: we believe that God spoke to CLC in Buenos Aires.

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<sup>1</sup> From the letter of Pope Francis to the CLC Buenos Aires World Assembly (<http://bit.ly/Supplement74>)

## IF YOU WANT TO READ MORE ABOUT THE PERSPECTIVES WE HAVE:

In Buenos Aires, we revisited our charism, so as to dare to name what had allowed us to say with confidence that CLC itself is a gift for the Church and the world. The question was fundamental and universal. So we knew it would not be a classic discernment (i.e. a discernment leading to a choice between options / an election). The miracle of this World Assembly is that we have dared to listen to the Holy Spirit in community, without any preconceived idea as to the answer. It was a discernment that began with a desired grace, and led to a renewed expression of our identity and calling. We can thus speak of a founding experience, which will spread especially through the testimony and the invitation to live the same approach.

Therefore, each community, whether local, regional, national or continental, is called upon to continue to experience communal discernment in more traditional contexts, where it is a matter of making a choice in relation to a specific question, either within CLC itself or in mission at any frontier. However, do not get us wrong: Buenos Aires has confirmed the apostolic desire of CLC without any ambiguity. By having communal discernment as both a gift and a calling, we were not looking at the CLC in a narcissistic way. Instead, CLC was declaring its desire to go forth in a way that is faithful to its deepest vocation.

Buenos Aires adds nothing and removes nothing from the intuitions of previous Assemblies. Yet we heard a very strong calling: the call to offer the most precious that we carry. Not exclusively Ignatian spirituality or the spirit of community or missionary impetus; rather, a better integration of the three dimensions. This is the enormous prophetic potential of this Assembly. Moreover, by calling us to give ourselves, with our desire and our ability to see the mysterious link between charism, vocation and mission, the Spirit has made us glimpse as a “bonus”, by overabundance, the fundamental link which will gradually make CLC a true apostolic body of lay Ignatians. This is what one of us has summarized with this clear formula: *Communal discernment offers unity in purpose.*

We believe it will take time to assume the call and to deploy our potential. Definitely much longer than 5 years. However, to avoid giving the (false) impression that we have to prepare ourselves for a long time before moving on, we propose to constantly interchange the order of the three verbs used in the final document of the World Assembly. We even suggest that you look for synonyms that will more accurately express what it means to “deepen, share, and go forth” for your community.

However, if it is necessary to speak about the ExCo, you may know that we DESIRE to dedicate ALL of our mandate to help direct and integrate ALL the efforts into perspectives that respond to the call of Buenos Aires :

- **Communal discernment in a way of life that is essentially apostolic.** Communal discernment combines perfectly with the iceberg<sup>2</sup> presented by Franklin Ibañez in Beirut. It is an attitude to cultivate at all levels, from level "A", in our families, in our professional environments, in all our places of service.
- **Sharing our gift in all identified and emerging frontiers.** More than ever, we are invited to question what it means to be lay and Ignatian in our present and future fields of mission. It is not a matter of being original for the sake of pleasure or challenge, but for considering as a responsibility the promotion of the "tools" that help being contemplatives in action. It is not a treasure to cherish, but a gift to share, daring to be creative in pastoral work.

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<sup>2</sup> “Challenges for the CLC Mission” by Franklin Ibañez. Progressio Supplement #70 (<http://bit.ly/Supplement70>)

- **An intergenerational vision for sharing our charism.** If we mention more urgently the challenge of transmitting our charism to future generations, our youth engagement becomes a clearer necessity for transforming the call of Buenos Aires to reality. If we believe that CLC is a gift for the Church and the world, it is the next generation that will "judge" us regarding our ability to transmit the fire.
- **Formation for communal discernment.** Formation is a basic requirement for the vitality and sustainability of our community. We are however invited to approach this service to the community in the spirit of Buenos Aires, with the aim of promoting the ability of our members to become agents of change. The ExCo can mobilize technical means to facilitate the exchange of expertise. It will also first focus on highlighting formation tools that help the local communities make the most of DSSE<sup>3</sup> and help members to become confident practitioners of communal discernment as a service to the Church.
- **Collaboration as a natural way of proceeding.** We want to develop collaborations by focusing on those that offer the best potential to make the call of Buenos Aires a reality. Collaboration is not a theme to be explored in a conceptual way, but a necessary way of doing things for CLC in the Church's "kairos".
- **Communication** itself cannot be conceived simply as a means to the life of CLC. Even communication intended primarily for our members will be reviewed in depth to promote the emergence of an apostolic body.

We want to look beyond the horizon, that is, to project ourselves into a reasonably foreseeable future but with no guarantees. A future at 10 or even 20 years, which would see CLC become a key player because of its ability to support communal discernments. There are many unknowns along the way, but we certainly need to set the stage now so that those who will succeed us can continue the work with confidence and enthusiasm.




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<sup>3</sup> Discern, Send, Support, Evaluate