

PROJECTS

Our next CLC General Assembly in 2023:

A Journey from Amazement to Witness.

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To the National Executive Councils and all CLC members:

Dear Friends in Christ,

We look forward with joy to the CLC General Assembly in Amiens, France, next August (2023). In the midst of recent upheaval, and reflecting on our graced history, the theme invites us into **Discerning Paths for Hope**.

We are a lay, Ignatian, apostolic community gifted with discerning processes. In tune with our gift, Pope Francis has invited the entire Church to a process of listening and dialogue, seen especially through the Synod on Synodality.

In and through our discerning way, God calls us to deep reflection and action in the world. This call animates us to respond to the realities of poverty, to ecological crises, to the challenges of family life, to the expectations of youth (Lebanon General Assembly, 2013), and in our commitments to spiritual ministries.

I. Preparing the way to Amiens

Be Amazed

In looking at the earth with love, God wants to give us the joy and solidarity of his Son Jesus (Incarnation Contemplation, SE 101-109). This love is total and for all people, preparing a steady cause for amazement.

Moreover, the Creation we live within fills us with awe and wonder. In the beauty of the earth, and its sustaining power, we find God's care for us. God invites us to delight in all that exists.

When we consider our human predicament and the rolling crises we have faced, however, we may fear the future. It is only in looking back that we see how God renewed us with courage and resilience, equipping us to rise to each challenge.

We share a graced history of God moving among us. In deepening our charism, experiencing the call to mission, and embracing our identity, CLC has constantly seen God with us. As we move towards Amiens, we will now pray the grace with constant trust: *Lord, help us to go forth; show us the way.*

Hear the Cries

Pope Francis invites us to listen to “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” (Laudato Si’, 49). In recent years, humanity has cried out together, vulnerable, and fearful during several crises. People of every land sought courage during a global pandemic which brought death, endangered health, and disrupted livelihoods. Generations young and old cried out with urgent pleas for change as climate disasters, drought, famine, and floods became widespread. Millions sought refuge and safety, leaving their homes through forced migration. Vulnerable populations faced war. Societies reckoned with conflict, racism and discrimination, and the poor were left on the edges. Then there were the cries of families seeking a full life together amidst economic challenges, and young people seeking a safe future for the planet and encouragement for their journey (see frontiers discerned at Lebanon General Assembly, 2013).

Amidst so many intense cries from all sides, we need to take time to go deeper. By listening at depth, we experience God’s call to mission, love and service. As CLC, we must let the cries impact our lives. Jesus takes a very personal interest in our response to those cries:

“For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you welcomed me; I was naked, and you clothed me; I was ill, and you took care of me; I was in prison, and you came to visit me” (Matthew 25:35-36).

Imagine Possibilities

We are people who discern signs of hope during struggle. As we prepare for Amiens, we tune in to the transformative power of the Spirit. We share a great desire to open creative ways to share our gift more broadly and deeply with others in our time.

During the worst of the pandemic, God moved signs of life. We discovered creative ways of being together. Overnight, online advances and fresh imagination enabled us to convene international meetings and prayer experiences for our World CLC Days in 2021 and 2022. While seeking God’s presence, we pondered and reviewed our lives with new perspective. We would do well to take these reflections further: Where did we see the movement of the Spirit among us? How did the experience enable us to review our commitments? How were vulnerable persons impacted?

In recent years, Pope Francis continued to write encyclicals and convene synods with sensitivity to the Spirit. We celebrate the vision of Pope Francis’ encyclicals *Laudato Si’* (2015) on care for creation and *Fratelli Tutti* (2020) on social friendship as a way to transform our world.

The synods on youth and family offered fresh insights and renewal for the Church. The Amazon Synod helped us realize that what happens in one place impacts all of us. The convening of the Synod on Synodality has opened paths for CLC to share our gifts of accompaniment and small group spiritual conversations. We are returning to an ancient way of being church, of listening to the Holy Spirit within each person, indeed of listening to God moving within all creation. We are being invited to imagine new paths and for this we need a holy boldness.

Be Witnesses of Christ

In the journey to Amiens, we ask Christ to make us joyful witnesses to the creative work God is doing among us. Moving towards fullness of life with God in all things, we have begun a process of “Discerning Paths for Hope”.

As a world community: CLC has a graced history. We have experienced the Holy Spirit gathering us into one community, together on mission with Christ. We are learning how to better discern with and support one another. Our mission extends across Poverty, Ecology, Family and Youth, and we

remember that many of our ministries involve Spirituality and Formation. Indeed, formation for lay leaders is part of our DNA. Over the years many among us have trained to become guides, coordinators, spiritual directors, as well as companions and directors of the Spiritual Exercises in daily life retreats.

We recently observed the Ignatian Year alongside the Society of Jesus and the Ignatian Family. Celebrating the 500th Anniversary of Saint Ignatius' cannonball experience prompted our community to reflect on our personal lives as graced stories of conversion.

Global Formation Encounter: In August 2022, over fifty national communities sent delegates to Manresa for our first Global Formation Encounter. The desire was to reflect on formation for our members, including outreach to young people, and to gather experiences, resources, and expertise. Manresa was where Ignatius, as a lay person, prayed and began to write the Spiritual Exercises. The experiences of prayer and spiritual conversation were a sacred experience of God's call. We will now establish an ongoing Global Formation Team to help coordinate next steps moving forward.

Ecology Networks: Our members promote ecological awareness, sustainable actions, and advocacy with an enthusiasm fueled by prayer and understanding of God's love and care for all creation. Collaboration networks have emerged within CLC national and regional communities and a new international CLC Ecology Working Group has been brought together. CLC has been working with networks such as Eco-Jesuit and the Laudato Si Movement (formerly the Global Catholic Climate Movement) to collaborate towards best efforts.

Youth Initiatives: Our World Council has been enriched by the presence of two young members recently co-opted to join the council, alongside the formation of a World Youth Team. These initiatives have emerged out of the Loyola Youth Encounter "Embrace the World in an Ignatian Way" hosted in 2021 by CLC in Spain. There is much promise for what can be achieved in the lead up to the Amiens General Assembly and beyond.

II. Our Desire to Develop in HOW we Deepen, Share, and Go Forth

At our Buenos Aires General Assembly in 2018, God invited us to Deepen, Share, and Go Forth. As our president Denis Dobbstein noted in his Amiens convocation letter, we want to share and deepen our response to the question of **how** to go forth.

We mention here again the grace, scripture, and theme of our Assembly.

Grace sought: *Lord, help us to go forth; show us the way.*

Scripture: *"You will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth."* (Acts 1:8)

Theme: **Discerning paths for hope**

We encourage communities and members to pray with the below prompts for reflections as we prepare our entire community for the General Assembly. Moving towards Amiens, CLC communities will discern at local, national, and regional levels. We will gather fruits of these discernments to share with members of our world community. Then at the assembly, we will gather as a world body in discerning mode. Together we will pray, converse, notice, and experience HOW God invites us today.

Jesus proclaims at his ascension into heaven, "You will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). May the world Christian Life Community truly discern together how best to bear witness to Jesus' steadfast love for all creation.

As a global community sent forth on mission, we ask the Holy Spirit to open paths for hope. Let us

often pray together the grace we seek: “Lord, help us to go forth; show us the way.”

United in Christ,

World Executive Council

Rome, 17 October 2022

Points for prayer and reflection

	Composition of Place & Scripture	Reflection Questions
<p>Be Amazed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God’s Love • Wonder of God’s Creation • Hope and Resilience in the midst of upheaval • Our Ignatian Charism • Our CLC Way of Life 	<p>Composition of Place:</p> <p>Consider a moment in your life where you experienced a strong sense of amazement.</p> <p>Scripture</p> <p><i>This was the Lord’s doing, and it was amazing in our eyes.</i> (Mk 12:11)</p>	<p>When have you experienced being amazed?</p> <p>How has your life been changed and enriched by this experience of amazement?</p> <p>Who has inspired a sense of amazement for you?</p>
<p>Hear the Cries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor • Planet • Families • Young People • Seekers of God 	<p>Composition of Place:</p> <p>Consider people and places that you have found to be especially vulnerable.</p> <p>Scripture:</p> <p><i>“For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me; I was naked, and you clothed me; I was ill, and you took care of me; I was in prison, and you came to visit me.”</i> (Mt 25: 35-36)</p>	<p>What are the specific cries in our world that you are hearing?</p> <p>How has God been revealed to you among these cries?</p> <p>In what ways have you been able to accompany or respond to some of these cries?</p> <p>How has CLC been part of your response?</p>

<p>Imagine Possibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Creativity • Doing Outreach • Creating Sacred Spaces for Spiritual Conversations • Communications 	<p>Composition of Place:</p> <p>Consider a time when you experienced or witnessed the transformative power of the Spirit.</p> <p>Grace we ask for:</p> <p><i>Lord, help us to go forth; show us the way</i></p>	<p>What does a community in union with Christ look like for you?</p> <p>How does a life in the Spirit require faith? Openness to new ways? Courage to be bold?</p> <p>What are some creative or lifegiving approaches to sharing our CLC way of life?</p>
<p>Be Witnesses of Christ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being People of Joy • Journeying Together, Discerning Pathways • Incarnating Christ in our circumstances 	<p>Scripture:</p> <p><i>“You will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8</i></p> <p>Composition of Place:</p> <p>In your prayer, enter the scene in Acts 1: 3-8. Imagine Jesus speaking to you. How do you feel?</p> <p>Theme of the Assembly:</p> <p>Discerning paths for hope</p>	<p>Who is a witness of Christ for you? What are they like?</p> <p>What are the attributes of a community together on mission with Christ?</p> <p>How do you feel you and/or your community are called to be witnesses of Christ?</p>

Annex – Upcoming dates to note

Due Dates		Actions
2022		
October	31	Nominations of candidates for the next World Executive Council should be submitted by the National Council to the World Secretariat.
November		Projects 179 – World CLC Day. March 2023.
December	31	Donations, or commitments to donate, to the Solidarity Fund should be made to the World Secretariat.
2023		
January	25	Proposal for amendments to the General Principles and/or General Norms should be submitted by the National Council to the World Secretariat.
February	05	Names of National Delegates to the General Assembly should be submitted by the National Council to the World Secretariat.
March	25	World CLC Day
August	3-12	XVIII CLC General Assembly in Amiens, France
