



## **CLC's position regarding the Dominican Republic's violation of dignity and legitimate citizenship rights and the brazen injustice against Dominicans of Haitian descent**

"We must be involved in politics because politics is one of the highest forms of charity for it seeks the common good. And Christian lay people must work in politics.... It is easy to say: 'It is so and so's fault.' But me, what do I do? It's a duty! Working for the common good is a Christian's duty! And often the way to work for that is politics."

Address of Pope Francis to students and alumni of Jesuit schools - June 7th, 2013.

The Christian Life Community, CLC, a public international association of the faithful, which is part of the Catholic Church and has presence in 65 countries around the globe, supports its vocation and mission in the world by its profound acknowledgment of a God that acts in our most painful realities, and amongst the most urgent cries. "Inserted among the poor and sharing with them their condition, Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity within our human family" (General Principle Number 1). Our community maintains its tradition in the Ignatian spirituality, and makes a definite and genuine option by which "we are particularly aware of the pressing need to work for justice through a preferential option for the poor and a simple life style, which expresses our freedom and solidarity with them" (General Principle Number 4).

In addition, as a world CLC, we recently celebrated our World Assembly in Beirut, Lebanon (July-August 2013) where we experienced a specific calling to work at the most urgent frontiers in our world. We especially aspire to change oppressive structures by contributing with our own identity and in collaboration with men and women of good will, sister organizations of the Church, and other like-minded organizations with whom we feel the need of working together to answer the great challenges of this world.

One of the frontiers identified and undertaken by our world community is "Globalization and Poverty," where we hope to "establish and develop networks for sharing experiences and taking actions" (World Assembly at Lebanon, Number 12). At this frontier, we acknowledge the need to take a firm and decisive position of complete solidarity with the outrage and deep pain of thousands of Dominican people, sons and daughters of citizens of Haiti or other countries who are in danger of being denied nationality rights by the country's officials. Based on a document written by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (October 1st, 2013), this could apply to individuals of Haitian descent who had been acknowledged as Dominicans, as far back as 1929. According to the new 2010 Constitution of the Dominican Republic, citizenship would be granted only to those individuals born in the Dominican territory with at least one parent with Dominican blood ties, or those whose foreign parents were legally residing in the Dominican Republic.

In this very same UN document, the Dominican officials are granted one year to create a list of all individuals who may lose their legitimate nationality rights. This decision could have devastating implications for people of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic. They are put in a situation of extreme vulnerability, since they



could lose their nationality rights and even access to basic services, in addition to the dire condition they are already facing.

Following our Sociopolitical Advocacy principles, which call for a definite and sustained presence close to the victims who suffer unjust situations through our local and national communities, we -as CLC- aim at establishing partnerships with our brothers in the Society of Jesus, the Catholic Church, and other like-minded organizations, as we undertake this responsibility to make our voice known: we fully reject the violation rights and dignity suffered by the most vulnerable individuals in our fellow country, the Dominican Republic.

We undertake this position with resolve as CLC Latin America and, following a bottom up approach, we confirm it in our international advocacy and apostolic network coordination. Together, we stand by our national CLC community in the Dominican Republic and its involvement within the campaign that is being organized together with Centro Bono of the Society of Jesus and others, with whom we share a deep working relationship in this country.

We are aware that this is a painful situation for our CLC brothers and sisters in the Dominican Republic, because “if one member suffers, all suffer together with it” (1 Cor 12: 26). For this reason, and based on the fellowship that unites all CLC Latin America, we ask that all appropriate communication channels be readily available in order to promote this worthy initiative. We also extend this invitation to the entire world CLC.

As CLC, we fully respect each State's sovereignty. However, when we are faced with actions such as resolution number TC/0168/13 issued on September 13th in the Dominican Republic, which violates the acquired rights and dignity of individuals, we are called to answer the cries of our national community in the Dominican Republic and the networks they're part of. By doing so, we support their work for a welcoming - not rejecting- society that promotes respect and diversity, and fights against legitimizing xenophobic interests, seeking to build the Kingdom of God.

We invite our entire world CLC community to monitor this situation, to answer with solidarity the callings of CLC Dominican Republic and the regional Latin American platform, in order to spread the existing information. Let us be a united in the transformative force of contemplation into action to prophetically respond to situations such as the current one all over the world where our solidarity is called upon.

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