

CLC 2015 Regional Assembly June 5-7 *DRAFT ONLY*

Summary Report

BUILDING THE BODY OF CHRIST through FAMILIES

“Gathering our Communities and Love to Strengthen our Faith and Mission through Families”

Crieff Hills Conference Centre, Crieff, Ontario

Guest Animator, Tarcia Gerwing

The purpose of this report is to emphasize the highlights of the Assembly. All reports are attached to the end of this report. The Assembly Team developed the theme “family” from influences of the Regional EA and the relevance of connection between family and community strength and commitment to CLC locally and globally. In his dissertation, Pope Francis directs the church this year to a family focus. A detailed explanation was sent to all members before the assembly. While in past, we have focused more emphatically on our commitment to the Haitian Mission it was felt that there is a need to pause and focus on two other pillars of CLC, Spirituality and Communal relationship. A final written evaluation indicates the outcomes and prospects and it is attached.

Friday, June 5

On Friday evening, we opened with welcome and prayer. Judith Dewitt and Magee McGuire led a few song reviews to prepare for the weekend. Special guests were our National President, Leah Michaud and her husband Gilles, and our National Ecclesiastical Assistant, Fr. Trevor Scott, J.S. We also introduced our Animator, Tarcia Gerwing and Mary Stevens, who has graciously accepted to be our listener. Mary was mentored by Gilles Michaud as this was her first experience as listener. We are indebted to Gilles for his assistance. Jewel Laciste generously offered to be our official photographer. All participants were agreeable to be photographed. A letter from Bishop Crosby, Bishop of Hamilton, was received and placed in the folders.

The primary focus was the business reporting. Several reports are attached as addendums to this document. These include the Financial Report (Marylou Gonzales), including the figures for the Haitian Mission. There was very active conversational engagement on the topic of arrears of membership fees in Central Region to National, as outlined by President Leah Michaud in her recent letter to all CLC communities. Magee McGuire proposed that Central take responsibility for paying those arrears, seconded by Mary Balfe. The vote was 22 in favour and it carried. Marylou Gonzales will follow up with National Treasurer for that payment. Gilles Michaud confirmed that one can donate through Canada Helps website or send him a cheque. He also mentioned that the role of National Treasurer will be reviewed by General Council. The Formation Report was prepared by Lidvina, Daisy, Judith, Kyoko and Peter Nightingale. . Main points: To date there are a total of 126 active members. They currently aim to meet potential members at churches or in homes. Much traveling is required at those times. They use techniques like role playing and establishing an official Welcome Team for each cluster. New communities have started in Milton and Scarborough. There is a call for guides to be trained for communities without guides. *Peter Nightingale stated that there is no structure for members in Stage Four. Susan Tomenson and Susan R are assisting in developing a process for this*

apostolic discernment stage that will encompass comparative consolations as referenced in the Progress of Growth Manual.

Kyoko Leung gave an update on the Leadership Search. It goes without saying that the organization and operation of CLC is totally dependent upon the Leadership. Central Region is looking forward to new volunteers or volunteer communities to take on these roles.

Magee McGuire spoke briefly to the insertion trip to the Dominican Republic and Haiti by four members but there would be a visual powerpoint report given by Fr. Trevor Scott on Saturday evening. Magee also introduced the request of National General Council for our region to develop some resources for CLC National on Poverty, a World CLC priority and how it is affected by Globalization. *CREXCO proposes that we collect information that supports the documents on Poverty found in Progressio, that interested persons might meet to collate the information and bring some report to General Council by December 2015. This report would serve as a foundation report for CLC. More information will be forthcoming.*

Goals of the Assembly

Clearly, one goal was to underscore the importance of family to our development as Christians, single or married or otherwise. From there, we wanted to build a toolkit, like a running list, for members to refer to upon their return home. Finally, we hoped to inspire, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit, an acknowledgement of CLC co-responsibility toward each other, to our CLC communities, to our neighbours and families, to the world and to God. Should these foundational relationships be supported, we can courageously move forward in our Regional Communal Mission.

The evening ended in song and participants were sent off with four reflections for evening prayer.

Saturday, June 6

The morning opened with song and prayer. Tarcia Gerwing spoke passionately about how we can live the Ignatian principles and prayer approaches in our families and daily lives beyond. She also emphasized diverse family structures and the importance on conscientious inclusiveness. She gave handouts for 20 minutes of reflection, all of which we took into our first breakout group. We explored what “family” looked like to each of us. Regardless of our differences, God still loves us. Reflections brought out the realities of our lives. Some lived in small villages, others a metropolis. Some lives were messy, others more intact. Some were multigenerational, others were single parent units. Single people were still connected to their family of origin, some were surrogate members of families in the community. Here *CONTEMPLATIO* can enrich the role playing nature of these lives. Some lives were lonely, fearful of aging, struggling in a new country. Family was to be found everywhere, even in places of work and recreation. Regardless, God is present to us all and at all times. The second round emphasized the importance of seeing blessings in the marginalized and realizing that any person who does not feel loved, is marginalized. How important it is for us to listen authentically with focused heart and affirmation of the other. The exchange can be even more enriched when we celebrate the mother that lives inside each one of us, whether or not that one is married, single or celebrate.

After lunch we heard several members give witness to their family lives. They represented families from China, the Philippines, Ecuador and a Canadian family who adopted a child from Ethiopia. We were asked what we had heard and learned how important it was to the speaker to have our eyes, not just our ears, to listen in solidarity with the speaker. The expectations of a Canadian culture differ from those of a Chinese, Philippine or Latin American culture. These differences are fraught with challenges and assumptions that can shock and leave a person feeling

depraved and lonely. How important it is for them to know they are not alone; that they can share and that they can contribute to wholeness of community life as anyone else. In spite of these facts, there can be much joy in the experience of traditional practices and events. In second round, we observed that forgiveness and consolation came in different forms, depending on the culture, but they all lead to God's loving arms. It is important to grow in comfort with the marginalized and indeed with all creation. Listening authentically was again emphasized in addition to reading the signs of the times when an action is discerned. Family includes all of creation and is metaphorically attached to the Tree of Life. Finally, we ourselves need to accept with love, forgiveness to ourselves and others. We need to affirm ourselves and then also, the community.

As for the toolkit, it will be in the addendum.

Given all of this new knowledge and awareness, there was an exercise that took the form of a silent contemplative activity to pray with the new material and ask for the blessing of greater insight. Following from that we went to our third breakout group to find key words and phrases that would clearly recall our learning and anticipate our summary statement. There were many examples from the group. Examples: dependency on God, humility in requesting help or receiving help, religion, politics, suffering, joy, contribution to society, limitations, mother-in-law prayers, loving actions and words (*I love you*), generational conflicts, cultural conflicts, evangelization, blessings, gratitude, cycle of ego (ego growing toward indifference and freedom can be its own barrier), mystery of God, God's ways, put expectations aside for children and grandchildren, differing spiritualities, social media, love vs. liking family, patience, await the stages, need to be present, children leave church practice but want to be married there, Small and large families, original family lessons, tradition, culture, country vs. city, places of belonging, diversity, rules, compassion, mercy- BUT, loving our neighbour makes us all the same denomination.

After the Mass, celebrated by Fr.J.P.Horrigan, the Formation team lead a ceremony for 12 members who were making their final commitment. It was a joy filled ceremony in which everyone participated and it was the highlight of the weekend for them.

As an adjunct to this celebration, we held an evening event of games, singing and good eats. Fr. Trevor Scott presented a power point movie about the recent trip to Hispaniola to visit La Cienaga, our CAM project, and the residential program for displaced Haitian boys in Dajabon. He spoke at length about it. We retired for the night in grateful harmony.

Sunday, June 7

Sunday brought us into our final second round. The concise graces cited were profound. Examples: aware, empathetic, collaborates, accommodating, sharing Spirituality, striving for selfless love, community that shares brokenness, our structure like a pyramid (family at the base, CLC Mission from Day One, who isn't family?), need to have more frequent communications between each other, diversity, comfort level, walk without looking behind, image a tree branch (imperfections to the whole), acceptance, accepting, St Francis (called to heal wounds) Third week of Exercises: We note the value of suffering. We ask who is carrying the cross today? Creation teaches contemplation.

Then we asked our Listener and Animator to speak to us and tell us what we heard. To paraphrase Mary and Tarcia is our best option given we had recording no recording.

Mary Stevens, Listener

Mary stated that she witnessed expectancy, joy and getting to know one another.

During the business on Friday, she noted hard consolation as Central came to grips with its negligence toward compensating National for our World Memberships. The assembly was willing to accept its responsibility and people stayed with the issue. A resolution and directive to CREXCO was voted on unanimously. This was the first contraction.

On Saturday, she sensed overall consolation. She pointed out to the power of stories, especially the "Witnessing Session". She heard lived experiences, revealing our common humanity, fallibilities and dependence on God's graces. She saw deep focus in both small and large groups.

Stage One: Grace of the Spirit is present. Members are growing in love and acceptance.

Stage Two: There is consolation in the sustaining power of Spirit, a desire to bring love into the family and beyond. There is expansion, openness, and sensitivity. God is revealed in prayer and hope. There is a desire to use our CLC in the World.

Stage Three: There is an experience of joy out of the pain expressed by the witnesses.

Stage Four: How do we take this? There is a desire to share with and invite more communities. It is a blest time.

Tarcia Gerwing, Animator

We need more than rote prayer. We need more than the rosary.

We need more scripture.

Practice Lectio Divina, even with a child. After a reading, ask, "which one do you like?" Use phrase sinclusively, "let's go....". Ask a child to "hold that word". Sophia Cappalecchio writes about this.

Gospel Contemplation works in a larger group: "What should we do today?" Use role playing.

Awareness Examen: Ask: "What is the grace we are asking for today? Did we receive the grace?"

Husband and Wife: Check out the rules!

Love requires that we give real presence, a gift of ourselves.

The assembly had a break and the writing team developed a draft statement to reflect the weekend graces.

Upon return, there was much input into the statement. There were still two persons not ready to accept it. When it appeared that we might have to approach consensus another way, a suggestion from the floor asked the writing team to take another try. With the intense openness to rewrite and create anew, a statement was brought to the assembly that everyone could accept. Glory be to God!

Our final Eucharistic celebration followed lunch with Fr. Trevor Scott as Presider. The mood was one of deep peace and consolation. We left, to

"depart in Peace, sent by Christ, Members of a Family, for Mission in Faith and Love.

We wish to express thanks for the hard work of the entire assembly with special thanks to our group Facilitators and Writing team without whose leadership, we could not have found our way. Again, we thank our Animator and Listener. We are grateful for a beautiful setting to host this assembly. Finally, we are grateful for the presence of the Holy Spirit who stuck with us the whole way.

*Respectfully submitted,
The Regional Assembly Team*