

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES  
OF THE  
CHRISTIAN LIFE  
COMMUNITY**

**a paraphrased version**

**PREAMBLE**

**1. GOD LOVES US AND SAVES US**

The Three Divine Persons, looking upon the whole of humanity, and seeing so much selfishness, greed, violence and indifference to the needs and rights of others decide to give themselves completely to all men and women and to make them free from all that drives them.

Out of love, 'the Word was made flesh' and born of Mary, who relied, not on herself, but on God. Jesus, choosing to live among those who had nowhere to lay their heads invites all of us to give ourselves continuously to God and to work for unity within our human family.

This gift of God to us and our response continues to this day through the influence of the Holy Spirit in all our own personal experiences and circumstances of life.

Therefore we, the members of the Christian Life Community, have composed these General Principles to aid us in choosing to imitate Jesus Christ and to take part through him, with him and in him in this loving initiative which expresses God's everlasting faithfulness.

## 2. GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT

Our Community is a way of living the Christian life; Hence, these principles are to be interpreted by the spirit of the Gospel and the interior law of love, which the Holy Spirit inscribes in our hearts, rather than by the letter of this text.

This interior law of love is always open to meet new situations in daily life.

It respects the uniqueness of each personal vocation and enables us to be open and free, always at the disposal of God.

It challenges us to recognise our serious responsibilities, to continue seeking the answers to the needs of our times, and to work together with the entire People of God and all those of good-will for progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all people.



## 3. A HISTORY OF GRACE

The Christian Life Community has an executive office in Rome, and local and national communities in many parts of the world.

It is the continuation of the Sodalties of Our Lady, founded by Jean Leunis sj and approved by Pope Gregory XIII in 1584.

Before the Sodalties there were-committed groups of lay people around St. Ignatius of Loyola and his companions.

Inspired by their apostolic achievements, we live in communion with all those who have preceded us.

In love and prayer  
we relate to all those men and women  
of the Ignatian tradition  
whom the Church offers us as friends  
and intercessors,  
helping us to fulfill our mission.



## PART ONE: OUR CHARISM

### 4. PURPOSE

Our community is made up of Christians: men and women, adults and young people, or all social conditions, who want to follow Christ more closely and work with him for the building of the Kingdom, having recognised the Christian Life Community as their particular vocation within the Church. Our aim is to be committed Christians, hearing witness to those human and gospel values within the Church and society which affect the dignity of the person, the welfare of the family, and the integrity of creation.

In particular we recognise the urgent need to work for justice by trying to see our world through the eyes of the weak, the oppressed and the poor and by seeking a simple lifestyle which expresses our freedom and solidarity with those in need.

To prepare our members for apostolic witness and service, we form communities of those who strongly desire to unite their lives completely with their Christian faith according to our charism. We hear Christ speaking through our everyday lives calling us to this unity of life.

### 5. SOURCES

The spirituality of our Community is centred on Christ and on participation in his life, passion, death and resurrection.

It is helped by the scriptures, the liturgy, the doctrinal development of the Church, and the revelation of God's will through the events of our time.

Amongst these universal sources, we especially treasure the **Spiritual Exercises** of St Ignatius as the specific source and the characteristic instrument of our spirituality.

We are called to be open to whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily lives.

So we need prayer and discernment, both personal and communal, a daily examen of consciousness, and spiritual guidance in order to seek and find God in all things.



## 6. SENSE OF THE CHURCH

Union with Christ leads to union with the Church, where Christ here and now continues his mission of salvation.

By learning to recognise the signs of the times and the movements of the Spirit, we will be better able to encounter Christ in all people and situations.

Sharing the riches of membership of the Church, we take our part in the liturgy, meditate upon the scriptures, and learn, teach, and promote Christian doctrine.

We work together with the hierarchy and other Church leaders, motivated by a common concern for the problems and progress of all people, and open to the challenges facing the Church today.

This leads us into creative co-operation in advancing the reign of God on earth and into readiness to serve where we are needed.

## 7. COMMUNITY BONDS

We each commit ourselves to the World Community, through a freely chosen local community.

This local community is united in the Eucharist, a unity expressed in love and action.

Each of our communities is a gathering together in Christ, a cell of his mystical Body. We are bound together by our common commitment, our common way of life, and our recognition and love of Mary, as our mother.

We aim to extend these bonds of unity to the National and World Christian Life Community, and to the Church communities of which we are part, to the whole Church, and to all people of good will.



## 8. APOSTOLIC LIFE

As members of the pilgrim People of God, we have been sent by Christ to be his witnesses to all people by our attitudes, words and actions.

We take as our own his mission to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free and to proclaim The Lord's year of favour.

Our life is essentially apostolic.

The field of CLC mission knows no limits; it extends both to the Church and to the world, in order to bring the gospel of salvation to all people and to serve individuals and society by opening hearts to conversion and struggling to change oppressive structures.

- a. We each receive from God a call to make Christ and his saving action present to our own environment. This personal apostolate is necessary for extending the gospel in an effective way among the great diversity of people, places and structures.

- b. We also exercise a communal apostolate in a great variety of forms, whether through group action initiated or sustained by our Community, or through the involvement of our members in existing secular or religious organisations and events.
- c. The Community helps us to live the different dimensions of this apostolic commitment, through personal and communal discernment. We try to give an apostolic sense even to the most ordinary parts of our daily life.
- d. The Community urges us to proclaim the Word of God and to work for the reform of the structures of society, taking part in efforts to free victims of all sorts of discrimination and especially to abolish differences between rich and poor.

We want to play our part in the evangelisation of cultures from within. Our desire is to achieve all this in an ecumenical spirit, ready to collaborate with those initiatives which bring about unity among Christians. Our life finds its lasting inspiration in the gospel of the poor and humble Christ.

## 9. UNION WITH MARY

Because the spirituality of our community is centred on Christ, we see the role of Mary in relation to Christ: she is the model of our collaboration in Christ's mission. Mary's co-operation with God began with her 'yes' in the mystery of the Annunciation/Incarnation.

Her effective service, as shown in her visit to Elizabeth, and her solidarity with the poor, as reflected in the Magnificat, make her an inspiration for our action for justice in the world today.

Mary's lifelong co-operation in her son's mission, inspires us to give ourselves totally to God in union with Mary, who by accepting the designs of God became our mother and the mother of us all.

This confirms our own mission of service to the world which we received in baptism and confirmation.

We honour Mary, the Mother of God, in a special way, and we rely on her intercession in fulfilling our vocation.



## PART TWO: LIFE AND ORGANISATION OF THE COMMUNITY

### 10 MEMBERS

Membership of the Christian Life Community requires a personal vocation.

For a period of time the candidate is introduced to the CLC way of life.

Once a decision regarding the candidate's vocation has been taken by the candidate and the wider community, the member makes a temporary commitment, to allow time to test, with the help of the wider community, his or her ability to live according to the end and spirit of CLC.

Then, after a suitable period of time, a permanent commitment is made.

## 11 BUILDING COMMUNITY

In order to grow in the CLC way of life, members meet regularly in a stable local community to encourage a deep sharing of their faith and human life, a true community atmosphere, and a strong commitment to mission and service.

## 12. WAY OF LIFE

- a. The CLC way of life commits members to strive, with the help of the community, for a continuing personal and social growth which is spiritual, human and apostolic.

In practice, this means participation in the Eucharist, when possible; an active sacramental life; daily personal prayer, preferably based on Scripture; discernment by means of a daily examen of consciousness, and, if possible, regular spiritual direction; an annual retreat, in accordance with our spirituality; and a love for the Mother of God.

- b. Since the Christian Life Community

aims to work with Christ for the coming of the Kingdom, each individual member is called to be active in the vast field of apostolic service.

Apostolic discernment, both individual and communal, is the ordinary way of discovering how best to bring Christ to our surroundings.

Our broad and demanding mission asks each member to be willing to take part in social and political life and to develop their human qualities and professional skills in order to become more competent workers and convincing witnesses.

Moreover it calls for simplicity in all aspects of life so that we may follow Christ more closely in his poverty and preserve our inner freedom.

- c. Finally each member is responsible for taking part in the meetings and other activities of the Community and for helping and encouraging other members to follow their personal vocation, always ready to give and receive advice as friends in the Lord.

### 13. GOVERNMENT

a. The World Christian Life Community is governed by the *General Assembly*, which determines norms and policies, and by the *Executive Council*, which is responsible for carrying them out. (The *General Norms*' give more details about the World Community and its Executive Council.)

b. The National Community consists of all those members who are trying to live out the CLC way of life and mission within a given country or countries.

The National Community is set up according to the *General Norms*, and is governed by a *National Assembly* and an *Executive Council*. Their goals are the harmonious development of the whole Community and its effective participation in the mission of the Church. Their role is to determine means to achieve these ends and to work for their accomplishment.

