

Challenges for the CLC Mission

What can an Apostolic Body be and do concretely?

We will present some challenges to CLC Mission. For that, we will consider two other points. First, we will need an approach or methodology about what may be considered as CLC Mission. Second, we need to know the state (success or failure) of that mission. Humbly I think our mission is going very well. At every moment, something good occurs somewhere in the world by the grace of God acting through CLC. But ... being conscious of the fact that God acts through us, this challenges us to do more and do better. It's all about affirming our works in order to challenge the Mission of CLC.

I will propose a diagram which summarizes how we may understand CLC as an apostolic body. We will design a chart which shows CLC mission at several levels.

Mission Level (a) “Ordinary Activities”

On the first level (a) we find the ordinary, day to day activities. We need to emphasize these because many of the misconceptions and negative images of CLC (or other lay associations) begin there. Many times, lay associations or missions are seen in a bad light – then it is easy to say that they don't do very much, if anything at all –. I think this is a mistake.

Let's begin with a well know phrase “Gloria Dei Vivens Homo” or "God's glory is seen in a person fully alive” (St. Irenaeus). The better a human being lives- the greater will be God's glory. Every person's life is a valuable project in God's eyes. God wants every man and woman to live fully. This phrase, understood in depth, can be viewed as the basis or theme of all lay missions or apostolates: To live life fully, this is its mission! The Second Vatican Council wanted to rediscover the mission of the laity. It states: “the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life”.¹ Therefore, the mission of the laity is to be concerned and committed to the ordinary things like everyone else; but the layperson should do it in a different way: the Christian way. In other words, they are asked to live in the world according to the Gospel. Finding God and revealing God in their ordinary, day to day lives.²

In spite of the fact that many laymen and laywomen in CLC live fully their daily lives, we sometimes hear that “the CLC doesn't do anything”, “Why is the CLC not more visible?”, “ Why does it do so little?”. These statements are unjust, there's a lot of depth in our members as there

¹ Lumen Gentium 31,2

² In the Vatican Council documents (Lumen Gentium, Gaudium et Spes, Apostolicam Actuositatem) we find expressions like “temporal affairs”, “ ordinary activities”, “daily life”. In the text I assume that it refers to the same: the common activities or normal life of any person

is in many lay people. Yes, there is a lot of holiness in laypeople, but it has not been recognized for centuries because clericalism has a much longer history in the Church. Clericalism is a mentality entrenched in the Church. According to this mentality, priests and religious have made a more valuable choice in their vocation than that of laypeople, or their mission is more valuable when compared to that of laypeople. Priests, missionaries etc. have been the model of holiness for centuries. This clerical way of thinking affects us all and we all repeat it to some degree. Clericalism can obscure the good works of laypeople and can repress their prominence/visibility. We must rediscover the invisible or hidden holiness of laypeople and the lay vocation.

We, the laypeople of CLC, are very committed in our “ordinary tasks”. I present testimonies of three people I have met in CLC.

Capucine Boidin (CLC France): She works fulltime and has three small children. She organized the families in her street in order to improve the day care centre. Raising children is a very demanding job. In the past, this was not seen as being an important job and was something only women did. Now we realize its importance. Capucine’s neighbors recognize the value of her initiative, (she is a University professor in the Sorbonne.)

David Uscata (CLC Peru): David manages a small family business, making and selling trousers in a neighborhood market in Lima. The market sellers come to David for advice about different situations in their lives. When they have problems in their families or simply need someone to talk to, they come to him. He is a guide, he is different! But David doesn’t see this as “his mission” because he is not doing “spiritual direction”. He sees himself simply as a friend and colleague.

These two examples show us that a person can do things extremely well, live their daily lives fully, but even so, are not noticed in wider circles. They are excellent people in their family circles, their circle of friends and colleagues but are not recognized in the wider circles of society. Thus, a fundamental part of their mission is unobserved, they seem invisible. They don’t appear in the nightly news programmes. Nobody will ever write a news item or make a film about them, they won’t pass into history... But they bring the Gospel into the world. They live their lives fully (St. Irenaeus) and help others to do the same.

Richard (Cameroon): He is an accountant in the Faculty of Nursing. One time I met his boss, the Dean, and when she realized I was a CLC member, she congratulated me on the good work that Richard does. I thanked her and asked her “what is it that Richard does that you appreciate so much”. She answered “He does the same as the others ... but in a different way, and everyone notices it”. So, Richard does the same work as a regular worker but in a distinct way. His particular style makes the difference. And everyone is aware of it! How I would love to hear the same about every member of the world CLC community. We are in the world, we do the same as everyone else, but in such a different way that it builds hope.

The problem isn't that we don't have a mission, we do! The real problem is that sometimes we do not live out as radical apostles our daily life. But that is another problem, not a lack of mission. 100% of our members have their lives, their work, their families, and are citizens, etc. Therefore 100% of our members are already very busy with their mission (a). In many cases these ordinary life missions use up all our energy. I know many members who have a demanding job, small children, and besides, have to study to be competitive in the workplace. Of course, they have to give their full attention to each of these areas of their lives. For example, they can't dedicate only a small portion of their day or their week to the raising of their children, children require both quantity and quality time. In these cases what "free" time do they have? Can we expect them to take on other tasks, like teaching catechism, or volunteering with NGOs? The reality is more likely to be "how many of you (Delegates) have had to use your vacation days or "steal" time from your families in order to attend a CLC Assembly or to serve CLC in other ways? For sure, many of you have had a child get sick at one time or another. When my son got an infection when he was less than a year old or now that he's almost two, he always needs special care and attention. There have been nights when we couldn't get any sleep because the only way to calm him down was to walk around with him in our arms. My wife and I would take turns doing this but the other didn't get much sleep either. Even so, the next day we had to go to work as usual, and sometimes this went on for days. This situation is draining, physically and emotionally. How can anyone say that to be with our son is not our mission in life? Why do we find it so difficult to call this our 'mission'?

For laypeople, their fundamental mission is (a). Also, in the case of CLC members, much of what they do (work, family etc.) is taken on as mission, precisely as a result of the discernment of the Spiritual Exercises. My impression is that the majority of our CLC members live out this ordinary mission very well. We can say that most of them live their daily lives in a Christian and Ignatian way. But we accept the fact that generally this goes unnoticed. On one hand, in most of the Church we have got used to measuring holiness in laypeople in clerical terms, that is to say if laypeople do things that priests do, or things that priests suggest that they do. On the other hand, in our society we have got used to giving more value to the things that are more dramatic/sensational/spectacular or important events.³ Only eventually a lay person in their regular ordinary life will get noticed. When they have a high ranking job, (a politician or a great businessman). Most of us are condemned to anonymity, especially the women. Because we don't value ordinary activities, historically we owe a debt to women, because they have been more invisible in our society's history and in the history of the Church. For example, to look after children has not been considered as important as planning a war. As the task of caring for children was more commonly seen as women's work, it's as if women have not had any part in history.

³ Clericalism and the culture of sensationalism are causes for the invisibility in the mission of laypeople. But there could be others, for example, the pressure of very secular environments which force laypeople to hide their Christian identity.

Challenge One: To rediscover and value the ordinary activities as the basic mission of lay people. To live our daily lives with apostolic intensity

Mission Level (b) "Apostolates"

For level (b) we can use various expressions as mission, volunteerism, apostolate, service etc. For the moment, we won't take time to define which is the best word to use. When we usually speak of CLC missions, Level (b) is usually the level we give more attention to. It's the type of mission we know best. For apostolates of this type, we mean those activities outside of our working hours and unpaid. That is to say, those activities that are done in our free time and are done for nothing. Sometimes we hear people say, "If you work in a hospital and you are paid for your work, then this is not really your apostolate". It's only considered your apostolate if you do it for nothing, or outside of your normal working hours". This misunderstanding happens because level (a) is not recognized as the fundamental mission of the laity. Of course, level (b) or apostolates are important but they should not obscure nor diminish the value of our daily lives as our primary apostolate.

In level (b) traditional apostolates are usually of a pastoral or social nature. Pastoral apostolates are usually catechism classes in parishes, schools or Christian spiritual centres; or even, in the case of CLC - many members are spiritual companions in the Spiritual Exercises and also in everyday life. Social apostolates, on the other hand, are services for NGOs, volunteering in social work projects in schools, in hospitals etc.

At times, it is said that the world community or some national communities don't have much of a presence in this type of apostolate. I had made a personal calculation using the information and contacts which we had in the Secretariat in Rome. I thought that 30-40% of CLC members had this type of apostolate, ie, one out of every three members of CLC dedicates their free time to these tasks. Recently, in the process of preparing for this assembly, we did a survey on this particular point. What do you think the percentage was? In fact, almost 70% of members have this type of apostolate, ie two out of every three members.

I want to emphasize the relation between levels (a) and (b). If a person has a mother or father who is elderly and who requires a lot of care, this would be considered as being in level (a). On the other hand, if they care for an older person in a nursing home, who is not a relative, or if they care for someone they find on the street, this is considered in level (b). But (b) is not better than (a). No! they are both missions but of different kinds. One could ask "Don't even those people who don't know God do (a)?" What is different is not especially that we do (b), but that we all find God in the everyday things, ie in "(a)". Eventually we will be different from most of society because the majority of us (I have just said that at least 70% of us) do (b) also.

Of course it is important to have missions of type (b). These tasks demonstrate solidarity with strangers and service at no charge, in a world where everything is commercialized . Wherever it's possible to have level (b) missions, we should do them. If God calls us to do this type of

mission, it would be small minded of us to ignore it. Having said this, I want now to make one thing clear: level (b) missions are not always possible for everyone. There are situations where we have neither the time nor the energy, which is understandable. Caring for young children, for example, is very demanding. So if a couple has young children, the time and energy which they can dedicate to level (b) activities is minimal when it is compared to what they could do when they were younger and still single. It's important to state this because the economic system has a great influence on our lifestyle. It demands productivity and hard work. Besides, we are told we must study to keep up with changes in the workplace in order to keep our jobs. So, if many of our members have demanding jobs, take night or weekend classes and also have small children to care for, how much time is left for one of these apostolates? Probably very little.

Every member and every community in their different levels should ask themselves and answer honestly (eg through the process of DSSE) if, at this moment in time, they are doing what they can and what they should. The question is one that could be asked every year or so, as situations can change. Sometimes the good reason, like "I have small children" can be used as an excuse to turn down an opportunity for mission. For example, if my children are growing up and are more independent, I shouldn't go on saying that "I can't do this task because of my children". So if we accompany in spiritual processes or we have a leadership role (normally at the request of the community), we should repeat this question: "are we doing all that we can?". We also have to offer ideas and reflections which will help to answer the question. But we should not impose level (b) as an automatic response.

I stress that I don't want to say that the level (b) apostolate isn't important. The opposite is true. And if God calls one to it, we should listen to God. But it's not always possible for everyone. By contrast, every member is called to live mission at level (a) intensely. This isn't an option, but what we should always do.

Another observation: Apostolates of level (b) aren't very visible but more visible than level (a). Level (b) apostolates seem invisible to us because, for example, if I am a catechism teacher in my parish, it's easy to hear "the parish does such and such" instead of "CLC does such and such". If some CLC members serve in Jesuit Refugee Service (JSR), it will be said "the Jesuits do a lot" and many times people don't know that CLC is involved in that work or service. Most CLC members serve in level (b) apostolates that are not CLC works, then the credit goes to the project itself and not CLC, It's not that we have to compete for recognition, but this is a fact, and it deserves reflection. How can we serve apostolates so that the mission of CLC members doesn't go unnoticed? Sometimes a level (b) mission is more visible when it is not the work of one CLC individual but when a group of CLC members undertakes a task. In this case, we get a bit more visibility because the members as a group show their identity more easily. The member who acts alone goes unnoticed.

Recent statistics collected for the preparation of this assembly show great generosity on the part of CLC members, (70%). In some cases, it's really a heroic effort because the tasks are carried

out in spite of the many personal commitments of the members. Of course, on level (b) we should also include all the internal CLC services that our members do, eg serving on the National Council or on the Formation Team. That is to say, many CLC members serve CLC in their free time and free of charge: “Serving CLC behind the scenes so that CLC is a more apostolic outside”, this is also an important apostolate!!! I’m sorry to report that in the survey we carried out, many communities didn’t include the internal apostolate as part of the whole apostolate.

Mission Level (c) “Institutional presence or mission”

Let’s move on to a third type of mission: Level (c) - this is characterized by its emphasis on institutions. In levels (a) and (b), the presence of CLC is through individual members. In this level (c) CLC has an apostolic presence as an institution. This type of mission is easy to understand when we talk about works/projects or institutions. In levels (a) and (b) our members work or volunteer in institutions which don’t depend on us, but on the State or other private groups like the Society of Jesus. Level (c) refers to the works of CLC: schools, NGOs, Migrant centres etc. These works are the property of CLC or CLC has inspired them (but without a legal commitment on the part of CLC), or CLC participates as an institution together with other groups in managing the project.

The institutional presence, as I would like to understand it, goes way beyond the works themselves. But let’s begin with these because it is the easiest way to understand this innovation. In the 80’s and 90’s, there were only a few institutions or CLC projects like these. Some national communities which were pioneers in this, were France and Hong Kong. In 1993 CLC France was asked to take over a retreat house previously run by the Jesuits, St. Hugues. In a similar way in 1998 CLC Hong Kong was asked to take charge of a school, Marymount, which had been run by a community of religious sisters. Some other communities developed some works but without labeling them as the work of CLC. In Chile, we find two examples of our works which were not formally labeled CLC. In 1982, CLC Chile started a campaign which later converted into a Charitable Foundation “Working for a brother”. It was taken on by the Archbishopric. Today it is celebrating its 31st anniversary and has given work to thousands of people. The other work project started in 1992, when some members set up a school “Saint Luis Beltran”, which is still a place where some CLCers are volunteers. These works were started with great support from CLC but were not formally adopted⁴. We could cite similar cases and other countries. But why were they not taken on officially by CLC? Because [1] it was best according to national legislation, [2] this was an initiative of a few members and it would not have been good to burden the whole national community or [3] simply the question wasn’t

⁴ In the section “Who are we” on the web page of “Working for a brother” the prominent role of CLC in its formation wasn’t mentioned, though something was said about it in some articles on the same web. There are two articles in *Progressio*, Sept.’83 No.5 and January ’87 No.1 written by Josefina Erraruiz which tell of the history and connection to CLC. In the section “Who are We” from the web page of St. Luis Beltran School the role of CLC is recognized in part. <http://cslb.cl/>

asked, because the important thing is to fulfill the mission instead of arguing about which group claims it etc,

In the 2000's, there seems to have been an "explosion" of institutional works. CLC Mexico has administered the Loyola Centre in Monterrey since before 2000; after 2000 until now, we can count nine other projects of CLC Mexico⁵. This proliferation of projects wasn't a deliberate intention of the World CLC community, nor a topic of the world assembly. However, in the 2000's numerous national communities have taken on such projects. On the current list, we have fifteen national communities involved in approximately forty projects. These figures may not be accurate. In the video of institutional CLC works,⁶ we mentioned some stories and work projects, like the Philippines, Ecuador, Kenya, Italy, etc. But there are other ones which were not mentioned in the video. We can mention the Jesuit Development Service which recently passed from the Jesuit Province of Central America to CLC EL Salvador. Or the two guest houses for university students in CLC Belgium or the Elche Loyola centre, which is the property of CLC Elche, in Spain. Some of these works are run in conjunction with other groups, eg the Lisel Student Centre in Luxembourg⁷. CLC is one of five institutions that share this project.

I have said that the institutional presence is well recognized in these works, but it is present in other areas too. It is present in what some communities call "national common mission". In order to better appreciate these challenges of the institutional presence, we have to think beyond traditional institutional works. Therefore, the institutional presence can be expressed in three ways: works or projects, subjects/themes and activities.

The first is the work projects themselves. We have already talked about them and we know some examples. This type of mission requires a high level of responsibility of the community, given that the works have a life of their own, and they demand financial and legal commitments which are permanent⁸. As well the works, human resources are required - which means a significant number of members who are prepared to work officially or as volunteers.

The second way of institutional presence is to identify areas or fields of mission. I will explain with an example. CLC Rwanda decided some years ago that its common mission would be the issue of HIV. All their members are asked to do something in relation to this subject. For example, some of the members work in this area as health or education professionals, this would

⁵ Loyola Centre, Merida; Loyola Cultural Centre, Monterrey; Champagnat School for poor children; Loyola Cultural Centre, Juarez City; Inigo Oaxaca House; Pedro Arrupe Centre, Aguascalientes; CIE/CLC Formation Programme; FAPRODE Foundation; Indigenous Hands at Work (Indigenous Handicrafts Sales Centre); La Montana, Savings and Credit Co-Operative

⁶ Answering to some calls. Look on YouTube cvx-clc

⁷ <http://www.lisel.lu/>. Among the other promotion members – The Archdiocese of Luxembourg, The Francis Xavier Association, Caritas, Foyer de l'Aluc

⁸ Once the manager of one of these CLC works said to me "it would be good to have a CLC meeting of Project Managers, to evaluate the progress, and see what we are learning from managing our projects"

be their personal mission at level (a). We can add to this group those members who accompany a relative with HIV, which would also be a level (a). If a member accompanies a HIV patient that isn't a relative, it would be a level (b). Adding up these examples we will see that 60% of the national community is committed to this task. It is then easy to say that CLC Rwanda institutionally has taken on HIV as its common mission. This gives visibility and promotes unity in the mission of CLC Rwanda. Subsequently, CLC has decided to set up a centre for HIV patients, but this second phase, the creation of a project, complements an institutional presence that already existed. Another example could be CLC Spain which has identified three priority areas of mission: Youth, family and migration. In each one of these areas there were several local communities involved, which made it possible to identify these priorities. These experiences of Rwanda and Spain show that in these cases the fundamental issue has been to identify one area, or a few areas or subjects, as a common or national mission for the long term. This has helped to concentrate efforts, leaving members open to the possibility of choosing how and when they participate.

The third way of being institutionally present is by participating in one action or activity. I'll give an example which affected me personally. In Peru in the 80's and 90's, there was a time of terrorist violence which the State and society in general fought against. When the period of violence ended, the Truth Commission was set up to study this and make recommendations. In 2003, the Truth Commission presented its report. Immediately a network of civilian organizations was formed, a citizen movement, to promote the recommendations of the Commission. CLC Peru participated very actively during the first years (2003-2005) in this network. We achieved a lot of visibility because some of our members who participated in the network represented other, non CLC associations, to which they also belonged. The national meeting of this network became like a CLC assembly. But after some years the national priorities changed and CLC Peru no longer had a common mission. The participation of CLC Peru was for a particular activity and for a specific period of time. It wasn't necessary, as in the previous cases in Rwanda and Spain, to identify a common mission for the long term. Another example, probably more well known to you is the 4% Education Campaign in the Dominican Republic. But I prefer to defer this example until later.

So we have seen that to participate as an apostolic body in a concrete subject or in a specific activity is also a way of being an institutional presence. In order to say that we have an institutional presence, what counts is that CLC (on some level, but especially on the national or regional level) is present as an institution. In levels (a) and (b) some members participate. In "(c)", it's CLC as an institution that participates. Thus the institutional presence can be seen in one work/project, one subject or one activity or a combination of all these.

Now then, are we called to have an institutional presence? Maybe in some cases yes, but it isn't something automatic. It isn't about promoting this type of mission simply for the sake of it, just to gain more visibility. Visibility is the medium for the mission, not its objective. Sometime NGO's are set up with a very good, solid objective. Later the context changes, the social reality

doesn't require the objective any more. But then some NGO's look for other new missions in order to justify their existence, and to support themselves financially. We must avoid this temptation. In CLC we should promote the institutional presence only if we sense the call of God, only if He invites us to do more and better in that particular direction. Not so that people will say "look how many works CLC is involved in" or "look how many things they do". The institutional presence is growing but it demands a lot of work. Sometimes the work project overburdens a few people who don't always feel supported by the rest of the community. At times the work overburdens the community and generates tension because not everyone sees it as a priority. So, as we have created some projects, others have been shut down or suspended. .

Now, if we feel called to take this step and we ask ourselves "what type of institutional mission is right for us?". Frankly I don't have an answer. One can't answer this question in general terms. It has to be in regard to concrete situations. What does the context require? What is the situation? In the abstract, it is very difficult to make comparisons or analyses because many factors come into play. For example: What financial resources are available? How big is the national community? What are the urgent needs of the country? Are most of the members enthusiastic about a common subject? In some national communities, it is almost impossible to define what is the subject in which the members are most involved. Geographic considerations also play a part, even if we don't realize it. For example, CLC Uruguay has been able to maintain the "Corner for Everyone" also thanks to the fact that the majority of the members live in the same city, Montevideo. In the case of Peru, this was more difficult. That is why participation in a national activity, as in the promotion of the recommendations of the Truth Commission, was a better way to involve the national community.

One great advantage of level (c) over (a) and (b) is its visibility. In level (c), it is when people say "look at what CLC is doing!" It really is a help if a building has a sign showing CLC. These institutional presences begin many times as initiatives by a few members or groups who discern a particular call. Later, on another level of discernment, regional or national CLC may take on these tasks as a common mission. When the larger community takes on these common missions, we know that not everyone will participate with the same energy and time. Besides, these missions don't exclude personal missions, especially at levels (a) and (b). We'll see this right away. For the moment, what does the Institutional presence of CLC teach us, from its growth over the past few years? For me, the great lesson is "the call to consolidate the common mission".

Challenge two: Review to see if our understanding of the apostolic body is inviting us to new institutional presences centred around common missions.

Mission Level (d) "International Actions"

Let us deepen our understanding of the challenge presented by an institutional presence on a new level, ie level (d). Since Itaiçi (1998), World CLC has spoken of the “common mission” which was identified in three wide areas: Christ and social reality, Christ and daily life, Christ and culture⁹. The Assembly in Itaiçi gathered to identify the common mission. The conclusion was that any CLC member who carries out any action to evangelize in the social arena, daily life or culture already forms part of the common mission. Even if someone wanted to, it would have been impossible to identify only one activity, (like Christian education, the promotion of Ignatian Spirituality) as our common mission. The Social, the Everyday life and Cultures were sufficiently concrete and general so that everyone could identify with these three subjects. Besides, the final document from Itaiçi brought together the more concrete and urgent needs which could be prioritized in each national community. Therefore, the wisest idea was to leave the common mission open to interpretation, as our General Principles already brought forward: “The mission field of CLC has no limits” (PG 8). To sum up, to the question " WHICH or WHAT is the common mission?", the answer is a general one: the social, the everyday, the cultures.

In the Nairobi Assembly (2003), we took it one step further. In order that the common mission, which had been so general and abstract, could become a common mission in real terms and in practice, the answer isn't “let's do the same” but it was “let's do it in the same way”. The common element of the mission doesn't depend on WHICH or WHAT is the mission. Instead, it's HOW it is lived out. The HOW is a simple methodology which could be applied also in community meetings, in government teams and other different structures. The DSSE which stands for four very Ignatian verbs (Discerning, Sending, Supporting, Evaluating)¹⁰. The dynamic of DSSE has spread widely since Nairobi. The great majority of members has applied it or has heard about it at least once. It's too early yet to say if it will become our natural way of proceeding. We are a long way from having it fully incorporated.

In the Fatima Assembly (2008), it was clearly seen that the world community had already adopted the dynamic of DSSE and was committed to developing it even more. So if Itaiçi gave us the WHAT or WHICH, Nairobi gave us the HOW. The common apostolic identity in the mission doesn't come from the WHAT but from the HOW. The WHAT is still very general and open. Every member of the world community ideally should live out the DSSE and so to be able to say that the mission of each member of the national communities is shared by the world community.

Nevertheless, the story doesn't end there. What follows are some teachings of the mission level (c) for the world community. The first and most important lesson is that we are going to need missions which are more concrete or more particular. That is, the world community, as some national communities have done, can have a WHAT as a “global common mission” or a priority

⁹ Itaiçi Our common mission (1998)

¹⁰ In Spanish, the word “accompany” sounds better than “support”. To accompany seems closer to the Ignatian meaning.

activity which only lasts for a certain time. This is not done to gain visibility but to gain apostolic efficiency. But another important reason to consolidate common missions is so that it would be part of the call to be a world community or an apostolic body. I believe that we are going in that direction, even if we are not always aware of it. The fact that many national communities opt for some common “WHATS” shows me that the world community is called to walk in that direction also.

From Assemblies in 1979 and 1982, we have spoken of CLC as a “world community”. From Assemblies in 2003 to 2008 we have spoken of CLC as an “apostolic body”. The theology behind these expressions may be correct but what still remains is a practical challenge: how to incarnate this body in the world? How to do it so that our members truly experience being part of a world community? And that the same happens in our national communities. The common WHAT helps to flesh out the meaning of the word “community”.

The best example we can find is the 4% Education Campaign in the Dominican Republic. You know the story well¹¹. In the Dominican Republic there was a law which legislated that the State should invest 4% of its GDP in Education. The law wasn't implemented, so a citizen movement “Coalition for a Decent Education” was started, to insist or put pressure on the State to make this law effective. CLC (Dominican Republic) joined this movement. At a certain point in the campaign, it was decided to implement an international strategy: that on October 4th 2011, a letter supporting the campaign would be presented in Dominican Republic embassies. Among the institutions with an international element, and which formed part of the “Coalition” besides CLC, were “Fe y Alegria” and Jesuit Social centers. But it was CLC which led the international campaign. On October 4th, CLC delegates, dressed in yellow, presented the letter in embassies in almost twenty countries. It seems that the action was effective in this long struggle, and finally this year the Government of the Dominican Republic accepted the 4%.

What has world CLC learned from this experience? It was the first time, as far as I know, that CLC has actually acted as a world apostolic body. Many members stated that for the first time they felt part of the world body. It was a very well planned and coordinated action. It required something very specific and in a way which members in various countries were able to participate. Thus we were able to take advantage of our international characteristic. In fact, many members and also people and institutions outside of CLC were surprised that CLC could have such an impact. A body is characterized by its actions. If we speak of body or community but never do anything in common, we run the risk that the expression ‘world community’ is merely an aspiration, not a reality. Moral: We are one body when we act together.

In the past few years, from the World Secretariat, I have seen another two concrete activities which encourages me to propose these same ideas. In March of 2011, a very strong earthquake struck Japan. The news stories and images were pitiful. In many parts of the world, several

¹¹ More detailed reference in Progressio N1-2012

CLC members wondered: “how can we show solidarity with our Japanese brothers and sisters?”. CLC Japan shared their reflections and proposed a novena of prayer. It wasn’t a coordinated or well planned action, but I think it was successful. I calculate that at least six thousand people, (more than one-fifth of the CLC world community), took part in this chain of prayer. It was a spontaneous response to a spontaneous request. If six thousand people come together in a town square or an auditorium to pray together, this may be considered news-worthy and get some publicity. But it wasn’t like that. It was an intimate action which took place in homes and churches in many parts of the world. Moral: We are one body when we pray together.

Another less obviously spiritual but concrete example is the “Accommodation Project” between 2011 and 2012. The ExCo proposed the idea of buying an apartment in Rome for the people who work in the Executive Secretariat of CLC, instead of renting an apartment. The objective was to stop paying out 18,000 euro annually. The campaign was a success. Forty national communities (two-thirds of the world community) collaborated, even some unofficial communities¹². This money could now be spent on the apostolic fund. The Apostolic Fund was formed after Fatima and is another concrete example of being one body. From this fund, donations have been made to Chile, Korea, Ecuador, Rwanda, Syria and Sudan. World CLC, by means of this fund, acts and shares its resources with a national member community. Moral: We are one body when we share our resources.

These examples show moments when the body becomes a reality. We could say that they are moments when the body becomes visible and acts together. They are privileged moments in which the body exists in a practical way. World CLC Day (March 25th) and its masses and meetings are other moments when we come together as one body.

In level (d), in our international action, the CLC group at present at the UN in New York, also plays an important role. We closed down the group in Geneva due to a lack of members in that city. But a short time ago we started a group in Rome in order to do advocacy and represent CLC in the FAO. These groups represent us in a permanent way on the world level. Thus they are a permanent expression of the world body.

In Lebanon 2013, I would like the Assembly to reflect on mission at level (d). Isn’t it time to go one step further than Itaici and Nairobi? Keeping a general and permanent WHAT, like the one which was identified in Itaici, is it possible and practical for the world community to define WHATS which are concrete and time specific? Imagine if every five years we present an apostolic priority, a common WHAT for the world community. Like (i) the dissemination of the Spiritual Exercises, (ii) the protection of the environment, (iii) the fight against AIDS in Africa, (iv) Peace in the Middle East, (v) a less speculative world economy, (vi) the promotion of Migrants’ rights. Or maybe, it isn’t necessary to identify a mission field, instead one concrete activity as in the case of the Dominican Republic. Imagine if every two years we could identify

¹² More detailed reference in Progressio N2-2012

one international campaign which all members could support in a simple way. To sum up, it's not a case of redefining our mission, rather it is to present concrete actions which can be embodied universally at regular intervals¹³.

Challenge 3: To discern our apostolic potential with missions that involve the world community.

Collaboration with Jesuits and others

With the diagram which we have constructed, I would like to go on to one last important point: Collaboration for the mission. The challenges for the CLC mission don't only depend on us, because the mission is greater than our efforts alone. We have many collaborators, both actual and potential. In first place, of course, is the Society of Jesus. I'm going to concentrate on the Society, even though later I would like to speak about other companions in the mission.

The collaboration for the mission has been a theme which the last two Jesuit General Congregations, 34 and 35, have highlighted. Both Congregations have been prophetic in various ways and particularly on the theme of collaboration¹⁴. Since then, great advances have been made but there are still important challenges. I won't talk about the advances, but of what I consider the greatest challenge for us. Understanding what is the mission of the laity in collaboration.

When CLC lay people and Jesuits start to talk about collaboration, we frequently do it from the perspective of levels (b) , (c) and recently (d). As if collaboration only started with "(b)". This isn't correct. A lot of collaboration occurs at level (a) but when we don't recognize level (a) as a valid mission of lay people, we don't recognize the collaboration that exists there either. We also obscure the service of many Jesuits. In level (a) as lay people, we fulfill our ordinary missions and the Jesuits "work with us" in many ways: as spiritual companions, as group guides, as confessors, giving the Spiritual Exercises etc. Every time I have a "spiritual conversation" with a Jesuit about my work or my family, he is collaborating with me. In the (a) level a lot of collaboration exists but unfortunately, lay people and Jesuits still don't see it like this because (a) is not clearly seen as a mission, and even if it was, is not as clearly visible.

¹³ It would take too long to try to redefine the common mission which we gained in Itaiaci(1998). Nevertheless, some type of redefinition could be good and necessary. For example, to prepare for this World Assembly, all communities were asked to propose the frontiers within which they are called today. A large group has underlined Ecology as an urgent necessity, along with poverty/inequality and the family. The Family fits well into what Itaiaci designated Everyday Life and Poverty/Inequality fits into the Social. But where can we fit in Ecology? Personally, I think it would seem a bit unnatural to insert Ecology into the Cultural category. We may have to redefine our common mission to some extent. In fact the Society of Jesus, which promotes Faith and Justice as its mission, has had to extend the Justice in order to designate to its secretariat " For Justice and Ecology".

¹⁴ Also both GCs have consciously declared that they want to continue collaborating concretely with CLC Mission. GC34 Decree13, 17 and GC 35 Decree 6, 28-29

Level (b) on the other hand, is where collaboration begins, the type most talked about, or promoted after Congregation 34 and 35. Both Congregations present a general goal of collaboration with lay people which might be more explicit in showing the collaboration on level (a). Nevertheless, the majority of the examples which appear in the document of CG34 show more the collaboration at levels (b) or (c), ie that collaboration which centres on works or institutions like schools or NGOs. The problem is that the daily life of lay people is not this type of mission. For example, I miss the word ‘family’ when we talk of the mission of lay people¹⁵. To raise a child with love is a project just as important as running a school. But this isn’t evident in the approach that still predominates. In the minds of many lay people and Jesuits, the only real collaboration begins with level (b), when it deals with missions which have to do with institutions, precisely because this type of mission is more visible.

Of course, it is said that there is only one mission, the mission of Christ. But then, when the time comes to draw up the plans for collaboration, or at the moment when people are trained for collaboration, many times it is done thinking more about institutional works. If the mission begins in (b) or (c) where the majority of ignatian institutions belong to Jesuits, it’s no wonder that in the end people go on thinking or acting as if “it’s the lay people that are collaborating with the Society”. When a Jesuit works in a University (even a non Jesuit University) everyone recognizes that this is his mission. But when a lay person works in a University, level (a), many times it is said that this is his job, but he doesn’t have a mission. If the mission at level (a) is not rediscovered and emphasized, we will perpetuate this model of collaboration, where it seems that the Jesuits do more than the laypeople.

Then, we have to regain the role of the lay person, to consider their life as a mission and eliminate certain hierarchical attitudes. In this way, we will bring the Gospel itself into our way of collaborating. Thus we will evangelize each other, lay people and Jesuits. In a true vision of collaboration we include every level, from (a) to (d). In (a) Jesuits collaborate with the ordinary projects of CLC lay people as individuals. In (b) the lay people, as individuals or in groups, collaborate in works of the Society. It seems that only in levels (c) and (d) we collaborate as two institutionalized bodies, eg when both share institutionally the management of a project or campaign. But we should remember that CLC is body from (a) so that the collaboration between both bodies starts in (a).

To promote the more explicit inclusion of “Level (a)” in our collaboration is not a new or strange idea. There are precedents in the Society, from the time of St. Ignatius to our time. I quote two examples:

Fr. Arrupe said “competent professionals..... convincing witnesses”

¹⁵ It’s true that GC34 Decree 14, dedicated to the position of women, mentions the family as a mission area. My comment is that I would have liked more examples within the Decree 13 of GC which was the one dedicated to collaboration. It could have mentioned in more detail, the ordinary missions of lay people (like the family) and the ways in which the Jesuits already collaborate in these missions.

Fr. Nicolas has said that it's about our profession demonstrating what we profess.

Changing the subject, a lesson which we can learn from the Society of Jesus, and particularly from CG35, is the broadening of our collaborative horizons. In CG 35 Jesuits talk frequently about collaborating "with others", considering even those non Christians who are nevertheless people of good will. In fact, CLC also does this on various levels, in many parts of the world. In every level of mission on the graphic, we can be witnesses to examples of collaboration with others. In the assembly in Fatima (2008: 2.11, 2.12, 3.12) CLC expressed the general desire to create networks and collaborate in a broader way. There are many lay Ignatian groups to which we have got closer during the 450th anniversary events¹⁶. They are also our companions in the mission and friends in the Lord. Also, we should not forget several female congregations which accompany CLC in many countries. The whole Church is the greater body to which we all belong and in which we collaborate with other members. Even outside the Catholic sphere, we find many people of goodwill. It would be good that the Assembly gathered here can evaluate how far we have come and what more we can do.

Challenge Four: To propose different ways of collaborating which, starting with a fair understanding of the components (levels), it might become a model of apostolic effectiveness and fraternity.

Final Summary

I have upheld mission at level(a) as something valuable, something where CLC already does a lot. This level includes what is more local and intimate as the family but also what is wider and shared as civic life (voting, discerning and sharing my political positions, etc). I admit that we can do much better. What we need to do is to intensify the commitment to and experience of everyday living which is the principle mission of laypeople. It would be great if people recognized us by our special way of doing things, by the value that we give to the simplest things. Imagine if our work colleagues for example, were to say to us "where do you get your vitality and dedication from? And even "I want to be like you". How we bring God into our daily activities determines how attractive we become, so that others are captivated by what has captivated us. The treasure we have in our Faith and Ignatian spirituality should shine through us in some way in our daily lives so that others will want to drink from the same 'well'.

The DSSE is a method by which each person's mission becomes a common mission. Above all, "support" or "accompany" can make the common mission practical and concrete. Community action or corporate action is obvious especially in levels (c) and (d), but sometimes in (b) and even in (a). I have seen CLC people who babysit so that other members can hold their CLC

¹⁶ For example some Marian Congregations which are still operating, The Association of Jesuit Ex-Students, The Eucharistic Youth Movement, The Magis groups (formed around the World Youth Days) and many other local groups

meeting or simply take a break. It also has become a common practice to help each other out when some member has lost a job, has personal problems, a bereavement etc. The CLC body helps even on level (a).

When we have exposed these four levels, one on top of another, it could give the impression that what is on top is the ultimate mission or that it is of more value. I don't believe this. I have upheld the priority of (a). Instead of seeing the graphic as an ascending pyramid, we should see it as an iceberg. An iceberg is a huge mass of floating ice. We only see a small part of it, the part that is above the water and just under the surface. But the largest part of its bulk is under water – hidden, invisible. Even so, it holds up the part which is seen. So it is with the mission of CLC, or other lay associations. It is as if level (a) is condemned to remain invisible. Part of the (b) apostolates can be seen, but not very clearly. In contrast, the institutional presence (c) is seen more clearly and international action (d) is also. But there would be no iceberg without the great mass of (a).

Final reflection. Where is the Magis?

One of the Ignatian criteria of Magis says: "The more universal the good is ... the more divine"¹⁷. The ordinary activities of the laity (a) don't always align with this criteria. If I run a school with hundreds of students I am being more productive than if I dedicate my time to just one child. Parents have to focus on their children, which is a local mission as opposed to a universal one. Fortunately for Ignatian laypeople, there are other ways of understanding the magis. Let us do what we do, even if we only have the energy to do (a) or if we achieve a greater institutional presence (c). The important thing is the principle and foundation of our actions. "Our one desire and choice should be what is most conducive to the end for which we are created". (S.E. 23)

¹⁷ Ignatius. Constitutions 622