



Newsletter – October 2022

Spiritually said ...



“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”
(Mt 5,9)

News from CLC in Europe and Euroteam

1. Meeting of Eurolinks and Ecclesial Assistants in Warsaw (Pentecost 2022)

On the 3rd to 6th June 2022, the Euroteam organized a meeting of Eurolinks and Ecclesial Assistants in Warsaw – following the invitation of CLC in Poland.

Right from the arrival of the first guests, an atmosphere of joy and excitement could be felt all around. It was our first live meeting in three years! We were as happy as children welcoming every person arriving in the retreat house.

On Friday evening, we had time for community bonding, prayer and integratio, as well as an introduction the meeting.

The main theme of the meeting was community discernment and synodality. From the first day of the meeting we were accompanied by the refrain of a well-known song 'Listening to the Wind of Change' and a passage from point 6 of our General Principles: 'Unity with Christ



Listening to the wind of change
Warsaw – June 2022



leads to unity with the Church, in which Christ here and now continues his mission of salvation."

We delved into the topic of synodality together throughout Saturday, together with three guests who connected with us online to share their insights into synodality from different perspectives: Jos Moons, a Jesuit Doctor of Theology Working in Belgium, Maria Boxberg from Germany and Mauricio Lopez from Mexico - members of our community who are involved in synodal processes. They gave us a little theory and a great deal of practice, sharing their direct experience of accompanying synodal processes. After each presentation they gave us questions to share in small groups and then we returned with a series of insightful questions for our guests. The sessions were very enriching and profound, deepened by our sharing and reflections. We ended the sessions with a moving prayer in which we could feel the Holy Spirit at work in our Community.



In the evening we gathered around a campfire, being together as a community beyond borders. We had plenty of time for conversation, joy and singing away.

On Sunday we left the retreat house to go forth to experience the city of Warsaw and the reality of the local community in Poland, practising synodal attitudes: openness to the new and unknown, attentiveness to



ourselves and others, listening with interest, inner freedom, looking for signs of the Holy Spirit at work in everything and everyone. The whole morning was dedicated to group meetings with Polish community members who told us about their apostolic engagements such as working with migrants and refugees, in education, volunteering in a hospice for children, organising retreats for people with disabilities.

After the group meetings we all gathered in the academic chapel at the Shrine of St Andrew Bobola to celebrate Pentecost Eucharist. Then we gathered around a table at the Jesuit Social Centre. It was a table full of abundance, prepared with great care and hospitality.



After the meal, we listened to a Jesuit from Ukraine, who works with Jesuit Refugee Service Poland as coordinator of activities for Ukraine and refugees coming to Poland.

At the end of the day, two Polish CLC members invited us for a walk around Warsaw to see the most important places around the Old Town and listen to the stories related to them.

On Monday, Manuel Martinez, the Executive Secretary, led the summary of our meeting. We ended the meeting with Eucharist and a message for the journey ahead. Although it was difficult to part, we felt great joy and gratitude for each other and for what we had experienced together.

2. Assemblies

a) England and Wales

National Day and General Assembly CLC England & Wales...

Blessing and sending of the New Exco

- Brother Alan Harrison, Ecclesiastical Assistant
- Julia Lane, treasurer
- John Lavery, South East Rep



- Olivia Lavery (not in photo) Youth Rep
- Ann Kelly, Midlands Rep
- Tony & Judith O'Neil, North West Rep (not in photo)
- Natalia Marsden, Secretary
- Michelle Ellison, Eurolink/Family link

Facing: Jackie Gill, Formation team rep and former President, who gives the blessing and sends them into their mission.

b) Germany

In June, CLC in Germany held its National Assembly. About 50 delegates from all German regions discussed the orientations of CLC for the next 2 years and elected a new National Exco. CLC in Germany was very happy to welcome Manuel Martinez, the Executive Secretary, Joseph Waiß from Austria and Rasa Darbutaitė from Lithuania.



3. Ecology Network: News from Our Common Home

The ecology network of CLC in Europe has now formally met for 5 times. Our journey together started with a discernment process to seek our calling for this network. We asked ourselves questions, like what would a group like ours do in Europe? What is so special or unique about a group of people meeting online in Europe with Ecology as our focus? I am pleased to share with you all that our discernment process led to the writing of a short document (that we attach) that describes what we felt are the results of this process that ended just before summer. Now that autumn has started we have already sent a meeting plan to all of you with the focus on the Season of Creation 2022. Even though the Season of Creation has now passed for this year we still invite you to take time in a community meeting to pray and reflect and listen to the voice of nature! You can find the meeting plan at [Season of Creation 2022 • Christian Life Community in Europe \(clc-cvx.eu\)](#)



During our last meeting we started our reflection on next steps. Watch this space for more news coming from the network as we prepare and organise more activities aimed at raising awareness and understanding of our common home, of how we are all connected!

There are still a few national communities that are not represented in this network. I reach out to you all, if there is anyone interested to join this group please send me an email. We have a mix of people, experts, people working in the various fields of ecology and simply interested people (like myself).

Chris

Some words from the world ExCo ...

1. World Assembly 2023 in Amiens:

The journey towards the next CLC General Assembly is well underway. The World Executive Council, together with the CLC Coordination Team in France are working to welcome delegates in Amiens (and many others who want to join us on the open day. More information will follow).

Preparing an Assembly involves attention to many areas and details. It is a privileged opportunity we have as a World Community. I invite you to read the letter of convocation (http://cvx-clc.net/filesNewsReports/2022.06.21_GA2023%20ConvocationWeb.pdf) so that you can familiarize yourself with the grace we are seeking, with the passage of scripture that guides us and with the theme chosen for this Assembly.

We want to continue to offer paths of hope. We know that God continues to call us to mission. Perhaps it is time to look more closely at the means, the resources, the how, so that we can serve him better, more faithfully and more fruitfully. We count on your prayers for this Assembly!

(Manuel Martinez, World Executive Secretary)

2. World Formation Encounter in Manresa

Last summer, from August 8 to 13, 58 delegates from 50 national communities took part in the first World CLC Formation Encounter in Manresa, Spain. Representing Euroteam Kasia was also among those attending the meeting.

The Formation Encounter was a continuation of a long process that started in October 2021. The journey of the encounter took us through a communal discernment built around the three verbs of Buenos Aires: share – deepen – go forth. We focused on four formation areas, which we called ‘thematic axes’: spiritual exercises, discernment, CLC process of growth and formation for mission.



Each day we were grounding ourselves in personal and communal prayer (morning prayer, spiritual conversation in small groups, and evening Mass).

On the first day of the meeting, we symbolically removed our sandals to step onto holy ground, entering the Ignatian Year Jubilee doors. It was a day of sharing our formation experiences and best practices. At the end of the day, we all felt grateful for the numerous formation initiatives and activities that are undertaken by our community around the world.



On the second day, we took part in an embodied prayer – standing barefoot on the grass of the upper garden facing Montserrat, grounding ourselves in the ‘Take, Lord and Receive’ prayer. The main objective of that day was to generate space and time to deepen our formation experience within the four thematic axes. We were reflecting on the meaning of each axis, identifying our limitations and looking for ways to continue innovating and transforming our formation processes.



On the third day, we had an immersive contemplation at the banks of the Cardoner River where St. Ignatius saw all things anew. Following his steps, we also asked God to help us see our community and its formation in a new way. It was time to go forth and look for concrete invitations and proposals for each of the four thematic axes in our small groups. We shared many concrete proposals in a plenary session.

A nighttime tour of Ignatian sites of significance in Manresa galvanized and energized the group. We reached back to our Shared Sacred Story of St. Ignatius: the Chapel of the Rapture, where Ignatius collapsed for 8 days (why we make 8-day retreats) after trying to be every saint at once, serving the sick and poor, in the adjacent hospital, the cathedral where Ignatius prayed and the Hen's Well (where prayers to St Ignatius raised a hen which had fallen into a well so a little girl could sell it at the market to feed her family).



On the last day of the encounter, we worked in groups by collaboration levels according to different languages and time zones. Each group came up with some action points to follow up on the meeting and continue the process in their respective regions.



We closed the meeting with the celebration of the Eucharist, gathering around the altar and praying together in many different languages as one community. Afterwards, we continued celebrating our unity in diversity sharing food, drinks and music from all over the world.



Next steps:

- The delegates recommended that an online database of formation resources be created
- The delegates recommended that a Global Formation Team be created
- The World ExCo is finalizing the list of team members and the World Formation team will begin meeting in mid-October.
- The documents created for and at the Global Formation Encounter have been posted to Dropbox as a first step for a global online formation database



And the National communities...

1. CLC in Spain and in Portugal: ESDAC TRAINING FOR CLC MEMBERS FROM SPAIN Y PORTUGAL

From July 17th through 22nd, several CLC members of Spanish and Portuguese communities, gathered in Soutelo (Braga, Portugal) for a training in community discernment given by ESDAC (acronym for Spiritual Exercises for Apostolic Discernment in Common). ESDAC is a Christian, Ignatian and international association at the service of communion and group discernment. ESDAC draws its inspiration from the tradition of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola and from the human sciences and group dynamics. Responding creatively to the needs of corporate people who have to make decision in common, this method works with groups in the same way as with individuals, and proceeds by teaching to listen to the movements of the Spirit, who speaks to each person in the group, and by discerning through consolations and desolations. A great example of discernment in common guided by ESDAC method was 17th World Assembly of the Christian Life Community, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in summer 2018.

The days in Soutelo were an experience of an international community that crosses borders and doesn't have frontiers, that wants to be in unity of spirits and walk listening to the Spirit. Furthermore, we rediscovered "*the spiritual conversation*" as a tool of Ignatian spirituality. Grateful for having been able to live this experiential training, we hope to be able to guide processes of discernment in common both in CLC communities and in the Church, thus being able to share the grace received.

2. CLC in Spain: International Family Meeting

Right at the end of the Ignatian year and on the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' Apostolic

Exhortation "The Joy of Love", the Family Mission team of CLC in Spain in collaboration with the Society of Jesus convened an International Meeting of Families in Barcelona and Manresa (from July 30th-August 5th, 2022), under the motto "Mira son nuevas" (Ignatian spirituality at the service of families). The meeting had a double character: a



pilgrimage through the Ignatian places of Barcelona during the first two days and, a workshop presenting and practising the different tools that CLC in Spain has designed for families, held in Manresa, end of the pilgrimage. Thirty-nine people from different countries in Europe, Africa and Latin America gathered and lived together, sharing fruitful days that have certainly increased their commitment to the different family realities all over the World.

A diary of the experience is available at

<https://cvx-e.es/clc-cvx/diario-del-encuentro-internacional-de-familias-en-manresa/>

The tools developed by CLC in Spain and based on Ignatian Spirituality are PADIS (Pastoral Care for Sexual Diversity), Family Clock, Clock of Life, Four Seasons and are available at

<https://cvx-e.es/hacemos/familia/>

3. CLC in Europe/ CLC in Italy: At the frontiers

This summer, as CLC in Europe, we held two ATF camps. The first took place in Palermo and had two shifts with four participants. The activities took place in the Jesuit Refugee Centre in Palermo. The other camp was co-organised with the Scalabrian Agency for Development Cooperation and took place in Oulx (Piedmont). We sent five volunteers from the CLC Malta network. The experience consisted in a hiking trip with workshops and service to the migrants along the route to cross the border into France.

Unfortunately ATF activities were affected by a very low number of applications and the lack of timely communication on the programme.

Other CLC groups had responded to the call for camps and prepared to host volunteers (Turin and Trento) but we had to cancel them for the above reasons.

Taking stock of this summer edition, the Migration Core Team is currently reflecting on the steps forward. The Core Team will hold an annual meeting with the Migration Network on December 3rd where the continuation of ATF will also be on the agenda.



4. CLC in France

a) New National Exco

Last May, at its Community Assembly, CLC in France elected a new national team. Pascale Zerlaut was elected leader. Jean-Yves Blanc and Michel Moutel are coordinators. They are still discerning about co-opting two more members to the team.



b) World Assembly 2023: preparations have started

As you may already know, the next World Assembly will take place in Amiens, France from the 3rd to 13th August 2023.

The preparation team has already started working with people who have shown their interest and availability to engage in the meeting.

Pascal Lamiaud and Charles Bokor are taking care of logistics. Sophie Bahé is in charge of communication, Virginie Duval of liturgy, Catherine Raphalen of recreation, Brigitte Jeanjean of the open day, Dominique Léonard of finances and I of translators and interpreters. Colette Périssé coordinates the whole team, together with Cyrille Debilly - the general secretary of CLC in France. Christine Beaudé accompanies the team.

We meet online every month. We are going to set up teams around each of the leaders.

Colette and Cyrille meet regularly with Denis Dobbstein, the World President, and Manuel Martinez, the Executive Secretary for follow-up on the demands of the World ExCo.

We will share more information and keep you updated on a regular basis.



Marie-Emmanuelle Reiss

5. CLC in Germany

Seven months being on the way with Ignatius

Inspired by the Ignatian Year 2021/2022, CLC in Germany invited to be on the way with Saint Ignatius for about seven months. At the end, 24 people from CLC in Germany and Luxemburg decided to join this journey: Individuals of different ages - from 40 to 75, different jobs, different ways of life, married or single, longtime members of CLC, newcomers, some with permanent commitment and others who had only recently joined a CLC group.

Different like the people were the reasons for participating in this formation course; but most of all, all were keen to travel to Spain, spending time in some of the places important in the life of Saint Ignatius, i.e. Loyola and Manresa.

Thus, we met for the first time on 25 February, just one day after Putin's invasion to the Ukraine. We started with a long weekend, focusing on our own biography. For three days, we were concerned with our strengths and weaknesses, the ways and reasons why each of us had become the person who he or she is now; and during this intensive time of prayer, reflection and sharing, we started from more or less strangers to form a community.



In May then the highlight, the trip to Spain where we spent 14 days. First, we visited Loyola and could develop a closer connection to Father Ignatius whom several of us had thought to be very awkward and even strange. 14 days in which we shared experiences, questions and thought, got a lot of input from our guiding team, together with not a little some red wine during unusual mealtimes, and last but not least the time of retreat in and around the Cova of Saint Ignatius in Manresa.

After this intensive period, we met for two more weekends. In July, we spent four days, dealing intensively with the process of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, and early October we concluded the course with a weekend concerning CLC at all levels from local up to the worldwide community, supported by Denis Dobbstein, the president of World CLC. Thus, which are the fruits of this journey? I would call it: walking as friends in the Lord. A community that has grown together and with each other, where everyone knows more than ever why they are traveling with the CLC and what that means.



In addition, the fruits for our wider community? People who are more awake and aware than before how to shape their life in an Ignatian way, within both CLC and elsewhere in church and society. People who now know what CLC can give them, has given them and are therefore willing to give something back, willing to serve, be it in CLC or wherever it is necessary.

I dare say a win for both sides, the participants and the community.

Jana Skiba

b) Katholikentag

Every two years German Catholics gather at a large meeting with 30 000-100 000 participants called 'Katholikentag'. In 2022 the meeting was held in Stuttgart, in the South of Germany, where people met to pray, attend conferences, listen to concerts, sing and discuss current issues in the Church and politics. Many people attended mini- trainings on Ignatian spirituality delivered by CLC members as well as asked for information at the CLC stand.



c) European holidays in Germany

A short announcement in the last GCL newsletter of 2021 sounded like a warm invitation to the 'European Holidays' of the GCL family. We let ourselves be seduced and at the beginning of August 2022, we were together in Dahner Felsenland with about 50 other GCL members from 9 countries for a week's holiday.

Vacation. Because that's what it was in the first place: lovely walks in the forest, swimming in the local lake, a trip to the neighboring picturesque French town of Wissembourg, just across the border.

European brotherhood. During international evenings, everyone introduced their country: Swedish caviar, Lithuanian Šakotis (pastry), Hungarian palinka, Swiss cheese, Belgian chocolate ... Real 5th meals, having fun, laughing and dancing. All this often in a mixture of German, French and English.

Ignatian. It was a bonus that we could start our week on the day of Ignatius of Loyola and he inspired us with his chapter 'Principle and Foundation'. We could pray and share around it. Every day there was a refreshing morning reflection and we also gathered in small groups for the revision of the day.

But above all an experience of friendship and connection. We connected with each other much faster than in any other international organization. Everyone was familiar with the way of contemplative dialogue. Despite individual differences and national accents, we especially felt we had much in common as seeking Christians and members of the wider CLC family.

We let ourselves be seduced. And have benefited greatly from it! And we hope that you, dear reader, can join us next time.

Kris Dierickx, Belgium

6. International Hiking retreat

The International Hiking Retreats are being organized by the CLC [Center of St Hugues](#) de Biviers, France since 2009. During these retreats the groups go for daily hikes in the beautiful Alpine mountains around Grenoble. The spoken languages are usually English and French. Whereas during part of the days the walking and meditation are in silence, exchanging and sharing between the participants from many different countries also have an important place. This fully allows to experience brotherhood in an international environment.

Below you can read the experience of Karin from the Netherlands.

I could never have imagined beforehand that I would return so grateful from my retreat in Saint Hugues near Grenoble. Early this year, the general mood in the Netherlands, and my own privately, was grumpy. The unrestricted power of big Russia to misbehave heartily in Ukraine had dealt my faith in the existence of God a severe blow. At the same time, I longed for the uncomplicated confidence of my college days.

By silly coincidence and actually out of the blue, I was alerted by a facebook friend this spring to the possibility of participating in the International Hiking Retreat at the Spiritual Centre of Saint Hugues, a week of hiking, fraternal life and prayer in an international context.

I decided to go and was excited that this was taking place outside the Netherlands, happy as I was with the European Union becoming more and more united since February.

In early July, the time had come. I didn't want to fly with current climate problems, so I took the Thalys and TGV via Paris and Lyon to Grenoble. Changing trains was a bit exciting, but the journey went without a hitch.



I was there one day before the start of the retreat to

acclimatize a bit. Saint Hugues gave me a warm welcome and I immediately felt at home. The beautiful location, the typical French CLC atmosphere of friends and among each other, the delicious cuisine with a focus on really tasty and at the same time good and responsible cooking with everything from their own garden, in addition to the focus on sustainability and young refugees, made me a fan of the new place in no time. This is almost *flower power* back from the past

We were in the luxury of five participants and two facilitators. In all, four Walloons, one Hungarian and, to my surprise, two Dutch. And that while we in the low countries excel in secularization. We met our Dutch guide in Grenoble, Allard Kouwenhoven, and Philippe Marbaix S.J.

The theme was Encounter with God in the midst of Creation. The daily schedule was fixed: Morning prayer at 7:15 a.m.; breakfast in silence at 7:30 a.m. and picnic preparation at 8:00 a.m. Departure at 8:15 a.m. with two cars.

After a 40-60 km drive, we began a 600 m climb. Halfway up, we had a meditative break.

At the highest point we had Mass and then lunch. Descent back to the cars with permission to talk and share, but only if you wanted to.

Each day we had a delicious dinner together and ended the day with a small gathering after dinner.

This was not my very first retreat, so I can tell you that the third day was my hardest day and that is a familiar phenomenon. Fatigue, fear, anger, tears, my personal history and a little gratitude, something like that in a mix. I thought I was not fit enough, not good enough, not young enough. Especially that last one bothered me. I was by far the oldest of us all.

Climbing may have been tough, but in the end that is a matter of distributing energy well, descending on the other hand I found every time a real challenge and especially to keep up with the group.

I thought I would do well to go home or maybe stay at the centre for a day. But I knew, and dreamed this very insistently the next night, that I was going to regret it immensely. The next meeting, I told the group. That it was quite hard for me and that I had dreamt this.

That day, a super guy from the group, who had still done military service in Chamonix, offered to carry my rucksack. I was speechless about it. The symbolism of this only gradually dawned on me that day. It emotes me again as I write this.

As it really should always be, so it was during this retreat. That everyone helps carry each other's burden a little. And so we succeeded this Meeting with God in the midst of Creation. The beautiful vistas, the space, the wind, the weather, we could not have done better. What joy and what grace from above!

The next retreat will take place from **July 1st until July 8th 2023** – look out for the announcement in Spring!

Some inspirations from the National communities

SPANISH SPIRITUAL MISSION.

The last national Spanish CLC assembly, held in Pamplona in August 2019 gave several recommendations for the new national Executive Council highlighting the need of caring for “being contemplatives in action” by living an appropriate spirituality. As stated in the final document, we have been called to

1. *Deeper Ignatian Spirituality and offer it to our society*; 2. *Promote the Ignatian Charism of CLC*; and 3. *Ensure the way of being missionary of the people sent and those who send and accompany, both as apostolic mission for the society and as internal service to the CLC.*

As a result of these recommendations, a new apostolic team was created in Spain. The “Mission Spirituality Team” wishes to take a transversal approach, to accompany and support other apostolic teams, deepening in “**the point from which**” we live in the mission. We consider a priority to grow in the awareness of living from “**Being rather than Doing**”, attending our interiority from the Ignatian Spirituality.

The Spiritual Mission is organized in five main lines of action: 1. *Collaboration with the Society of Jesus*, whose apostolic preferences include “*Showing the way to God*”; 2. *Transversal collaboration with other apostolic teams*; 3 *Ignatian Spiritual Exercises (SE) as a way to God*; 4 *Growing in the service of accompanying, not only in SE, but also in discernment*; 5 *offering Ignatian Spirituality tools to the society, as an outgoing CLC.*

As an example of collaboration with the Migration Apostolic Team, the Mission Spirituality team prepared “**Contemplation of reality in the key of Spiritual Exercises**”, tool aimed to accompanying people who travel the *Southern migration route*, (the one from Nador, Africa to Almeria, South of Spain), in the opposite way, from Almería to Nador, trying to contemplating the reality seen by the migrant people in their journey to Europe. CLC members of the National Migration team have lived the experience last July sharing with all Spain CLC their feeling of walking with the excluded and of being part of a “going out” Church.

In line with offering Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, the experience “**Ignatian Lay Vocation: Spiritual Exercises for CLC members**” took place at Loyola from August 2nd to 11th. Nine CLC members and two lay accompanying people shared a time of silence and prayer, opened up their hearts and listened to the Word of God addressed to each one of them. The deep encounter with the Lord made them “feel and taste things interiorly, with eyes opened to the world and with a new gaze”. In summer 2021, the Mission Spirituality team offered the first experience of Spiritual Exercises for CLC members.



You are invited! (sessions, international retreats, gatherings)

1. Coming soon:

a) New online sharing groups and new inspirations for existing groups

The Euroteam is going to launch new online sharing groups soon as well as send new inspirations to the existing groups. We'll keep you updated.

b) "A booster on Ignatian spirituality"

The Ecclesial Assistant of the Euroteam, Fr. Nikolaas Sintobin is going offer a series of online talks about important aspects of Ignatian spirituality. Everyone is invited to listen to the training and deepen their experience in sharing groups. We are planning 5-6 online meetings (90 min). We'll share more information soon.

2. Meeting of the Migration Network

The European **Migration Network** will have its annual meeting online on **3rd December** (Sat), 9–12 CET. Anybody feeling the Spirit's pull towards refugees, migrant workers, and their issues is very welcome! Please register your interest through the Core Team's email address (euromigrationscoreteam@gmail.com) so we can send you the link and other details.

3. Call for translators for the World Assembly!

The World Assembly preparation team is looking for volunteer professional translators. The 3 official languages are French, English and Spanish. We need professionals for simultaneous interpretation.

4. Pray as you go

The Ignatian prayer podcast "Pray as you go" has a totally new app. Not only in English, also in French, Spanish, Dutch and Arabic. An interesting change is that you now have the possibility to write down your personal reflections on the daily prayer in a kind a personal diary, built in the app. Moreover, the new concept of the app gives you a much easier overview of and access to the rich content of the app: not only the daily prayer, but also different series, audio books and all kind of tools to help you in our spiritual life.

The prayers are also available on Spotify.



The Euroteam

Nikolaas Angelika

Kasia

Jean-Benoît

Chris