



Prairie Region Newsletter

On the weekend of April 29-May 1, the Prairie Region Assembly at St. Benedict's Retreat Centre in Winnipeg saw members participate in the communal apostolic discernment of a regional mission statement. Fifteen members attended, representing all of the local groups of the region, including three members who drove all the way from Thunder Bay—and then had to drive back in the aftermath of an unseasonable spring snowstorm! With the guidance of Mary Balfe, our process facilitator, we explored dreams, we prayed, we tore down words, we built up meaning. By the end of the assembly, we had unanimously accepted, and confirmed at Eucharist, the adjacent statement of communal apostolic mission, which will serve and guide our region in the upcoming steps of our journey with Christ:

*Ignited by Christ's call,
and nourished
by Ignatian Spirituality,
CLC Prairie Region is sent
to connect and collaborate
with marginalized people,
the Society of Jesus,
First Nations, and others,
challenging
the root causes and effects
of isolation and poverty.*

For the greater glory of God.

*Discern*Send*Support*Evaluate*

CATCHING FIRE AT THE PRAIRIE REGION ASSEMBLY

From Our Ecclesial Assistant...

-Fr Charles Pottie-Pâté, sj

For this issue of our *Newsletter*, what better theme than our recent Regional Assembly at St. Ben's? An Assembly is an important event in the life of a CLC region, and even more so on the national and international level. Our 2011 Assembly was a rich, grace-filled experience for me, and I hope for all who took part. We were almost a year in its preparation, meeting with reps from each local group practically every month. All this preparation resulted in a well-prepared and well-executed event. Thanks to our Rep, Mariette, for coordinating this and for each member of the Planning Committee. Pat MacRae deserves a special thank you for her work on the program and the DVD of our history, as well as part of the post-assembly package for each member of the Region. Mary Balfe's sensitive facilitating and Ruth's role of Process guide during the Assembly enabled us to move surely toward our intended goals.

Briefly, for me the experience of the Assembly convinced me even more how we can trust the Holy Spirit to work in and through a group in our desire and search to find God's will and desires for us as we move into the future on mission with Christ. In the *communal apostolic discernment* process we experienced the dying and rising dynamic that is part of coming to any important decision. It is the dying and rising with Christ in the power of His Spirit that makes this discernment process truly the work of God in us. Our time of prayer during this process enabled us to come to a true consensus. Our confirmation at the Eucharist brought a peace and joy of the Spirit to us. Now we move forward in implementing step by step what this mission statement implies.....all "for the greater glory of God".

Blessings to all as we move into some needed summer rest and re-creation to prepare us for next year.

Your brother in Christ,
Charles, sj



*Spring/Summer
2011*

Christian Life Community is an international lay organization whose charism and spirituality are Ignatian. Find out about us at www.jesuits.ca/clc

Sharon Baker: As we moved through the Communal Apostolic Discernment (CAD) process at the Assembly, I found myself quite intrigued. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the adept leading of Mary Balfe, we stripped down the statement that had been discerned by the Planning Committee and that had taken time to create. We then built the statement up again step by step, completely transforming it, until it spoke to all of us.

I was impressed by the way Mary kept drawing our attention back to our dreams which had been documented and visibly displayed on a wall. I feel that this constant 'drawing back to the dreams' was an important part of the creation of the discerned mission statement that we all agreed upon. Praise be to God!

Sheila Sturley: On first reading the statement that was the focus of our Assembly, I was very taken with the wording. I felt that there had been a great amount of loving, thoughtful, prayerful effort on the part of those who planned and prepared our Assembly. We began, under the guidance of Mary Balfe, to look more closely, re-read the statement, and slowly and prayerfully were able to go deeper. "Take this to the Trinity" was one way Mary guided our discernment. One part stood out for me in a negative way on my first reading was the fact that the word aboriginal was not capitalized. We

changed the words, changed the order of words, withdrew words. Aboriginal became First Nations became persons. We trimmed what might be called "verbiage". We made our statement concise and precise, understanding that fewer words still encompassed the inspiration that guided those who drew up the first statement. Thank you to all of them. Thank you for all who participated. Odd! It took more people to produce fewer words. Now I'm guilty of "verbiage"!

Penny Fitzpatrick: I thank God for the graces given throughout the whole of the Assembly. Journeying from the beginning to end was very exhilarating and indeed like riding a roller coaster. The planning, prayer, hospitality will be forever remembered. The highlights of the Assembly were Dreaming with the Trinity and going through the process of discernment for the mission statement with a final consensus of 100%. Awesome. Collaborating with everyone and getting to know all of you was wonderful. I pray God will continue to bless our journey together.

Members were asked to Comment on the Assembly: Some Replies



Mary McLean: I enjoyed the Assembly thoroughly and was excited to be a part of the history of CLC and the making of the Mission Statement. I give gratitude and thanks to Mary Balfe for leading us and sharing her experience, strength and hope with us all.

Geraldine Albanese: Assembly in Winnipeg.....What was significant to me?

1. I had a time to talk with Ruth at the last wine and cheese which helped me to see the bigger picture and also to recognize her generosity.
2. I had a conversation with Mary Balfe which I found helpful in my commitment to C.L.C.
3. I had a chance to talk to Steve Chipman and enjoyed answering his questions about my cabin. He thanked me for my showing him a picture of this cabin which Penny had included in our photograph book.
4. I felt at home and blessed in the chapel and felt respect for the elderly sisters who have probably served Jesus Christ (as we are trying to) for so many decades.
5. I felt at home and in community with others and with the Joshua Tree Community, in the dorms and especially at mealtime and in our group sessions and at Holy Mass.
6. The process on the mission statement was a work of art or, shall I say, of the Holy Spirit!

Mike Radcliffe: The overriding aspect of participating in the Communal Apostolic Discernment was to be impressed with the overall goodwill of everyone who came to the table to work through the final statement of mission. We took the original draft of the Communal Mission and completely took it apart and rebuilt it. The final result is something with which I personally can be very comfortable. I truly feel I have a better sense of Communal Mission as it applies to me. The most significant moment for me was when everyone—all of whom are from very different backgrounds and skill sets—were able to come to consensus, truly reflecting the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Mariette Ternowski: Looking back at our months of preparation for our Regional Assembly, as coordinator of our planning committee and as member of CLC over the past 6 years, I became more aware and thus ever more grateful of God's bountiful love for each one of us. The Holy Spirit has indeed responded to our asking "that the fire of Love be poured into our hearts" and is indeed "sending us forth to radiate its prophetic fire". How exciting!

Prayer, dialogue, attentive listening and communal discernment on our proposed mission statement have been fruitful. In coming to a decision on our mission, we have heard and responded to the call that will move us deeper as an apostolic body, eager to follow Christ's call on mission towards those who are marginalized in our world. We have discerned our next steps towards this mission and we have faith that the Holy Spirit will guide us always.

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam
For the Greater Glory of our God

Ruth Chipman: (June 14) Its a beautiful day here in St. John's. God and Air Canada willing, we'll be home very late tonight after Steve finishes his work here. Having worked through a number of large gatherings and assemblies over the years I'm really struck with the theme of the "space in-between." It's our middle son's birthday today and when we gather as a family at some point this week to celebrate, we'll recall the events of his birth day; we'll recall highlights and together share in the delight and hope of his life. But it is the space in between the birthdays that give his life shape and meaning. Flying halfway across Canada this week, I was overwhelmed by the "space in-between" (here in St. John's we are closer to Dublin than to Winnipeg). Newfoundlanders articulate a challenging historical relationship within the Canadian confederation.

So whenever we gather as families, as Canadians, as CLC, we are challenged and connected by our shared histories; we dream and are drawn forward by hope. But it is the "space in-between," filled by the spirit, the power of creativity, generosity and commitment that shapes the work of our lives.

Cleda Reeves:

The moment that made the most impression on me happened Saturday afternoon. After spending several hours working as a community on the statement for discernment I felt tired and thought it looked like we weren't coming to a consensus. Mary sent us off to pray for twenty minutes. When we came back everything absolutely fell into place, and did so immediately. Everybody was in agreement and the statement was accepted without reservation by everybody. It was clearly the Holy Spirit working in everyone.

Maria Bilyk: I was with the group in spirit and prayer throughout the whole Assembly weekend. I thought every word in the Mission Statement is very meaningful. When it is Christ-centered there is no limit to how far it can and will go. The love and excitement of the Assembly was brought back and shared with all. A lot of thought and planning went into this and I thank you for the opportunity to participate.

Lorraine Mueller: When I took the experience of the April 29-May 1/11 Communal Apostolic Discernment to prayer, I received two images. The first image was that of a seed. I heard the word "organic". It was made clear to me that the seed had been planted long ago. I started to understand that years ago the seed had been planted in each of us gathered at the Assembly and also others who had been involved in the past and others involved in CLC that were not able to make it to the assembly. I was led to 1 Corinthians 3: 6-7 "Each one of us does the work which the Lord gave him to do... it is God who matters, because he makes the plant grow." And he will make the dreams grow.

Another image I received was of a rough terrain. It was dark and hard to see to avoid obstacles and pitfalls. Once night vision goggles were put on the terrain was made visible and it was easier to negotiate the way. I was reminded of the prophets and their use of the senses.

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Responses to the Assembly

Pat MacRae: In many ways our regional assembly was an inspiration: that creative pattern of descent to despair and emptiness followed by the sudden flowering of the right, the perfect, is so familiar and yet...always so surprising. Once again comes that painful and humbling carving of the void within, which seems the only means of preparing to be so richly filled. In retrospect, the transcendent "aha..." always seems so very worth the abject struggle and defeat, yet always in the anticipation of the next struggle I lose that confidence, and I flinch. The current temptation for me is to rest on our laurels. I was exhausted by our assembly process, and not in any way prepared for "the next steps." I'm still not. But I do recognize that my shell must be carved deeper and thinner still—for each day, for each step—and it will be at least as painful and at least as humbling as it always is. And so I pray that the desires of my skittish heart come to match the desires of my words:

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me!

The Back Page: of general interest in the region

Sending Fr Charles to a Neighbouring Harvest Field

On June 6, Prairie Region met at the home of Ruth and Steve Chipman for our annual John English Memorial celebration. Eucharist was followed by a barbeque and potluck meal. Special guests for the evening were a group of young couples and families considering joining CLC. A significant part of the evening was the region's sending of Fr Charles, who, although he

remains our Ecclesial Assistant, will soon be moving to Calgary and from now on will be serving us from there. We will miss the joy and the luxury of constant contact with him, but now send him "into the west," with our prayers and thanksgiving, to continue Christ's mission there, and to be more fully with Rockies Region.

God be with you, Fr Charles!



Upcoming Dates

The preferred deadline for **financial donations** to CLC is now past, but

DON'T LET THAT STOP YOU!

Find the new form and address at the bottom of the latest UPDATE

www.iesuits.ca/clc/UPDATE%20APRIL%202011.pdf
FINANCIAL CO-RESPONSIBILITY...PRACTICE IT NOW!

July 27-31, 2011

400th Anniversary Jesuit Congress
In Midland, Ontario

July 31, 2011 St Ignatius' Feast Day

to join the 'feast' at the above Jesuit Congress
RSVP reception@iesuits.ca by July 6
At home? Celebrate your gratitude for his life, his charisma, his Exercises, in your favourite way.

August 6-13, 2011

Walking Pilgrimage

from Guelph to Midland Shrine (>20 km/day)
details: www.ignatiusguelph.ca/pilgrimage.html

400 YEARS!

On May 22, 1611, the first two Jesuits stepped ashore in what is now

Nova Scotia. Now, four hundred years later, Prairie Region extends our best wishes and congratulations to the Society of Jesus as they celebrate their quadricentennial anniversary of service in North America. This summer, the Society of Jesus will hold an historic congress at Midland, Ontario from July 27 to 31. May they continue to find God here and everywhere—including with us—for another 400 years, and more.

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam!

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