



July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020

Dear companions in the Lord!

*The current experience of COVID19 is showing us many things about ourselves and our world. In particular, I want to focus on how it is lighting up various aspects of our path to God and how, even in difficult times, there is a consolation to be found.*

*First of all, it is showing us that we are one humanity. Every human being, every people, each culture that contributes to human diversity is part of this one, varied, rich and interdependent humanity.*

*It is showing us how overcoming a crisis is possible. It is possible when we become aware of the importance of looking after the Common Good and taking seriously our own individual responsibility. We can only live as one body. Separately, for each person or each people on their own, it is impossible. It is showing us that there is no difference in age, race, religion or social status within our one humanity. Each and every one of us is part of it, no one is left out, no one of us can do without the others.*

*It is showing us that we want to walk together. We are all concerned, we help each other to overcome fears and anxieties. Each one of us is looking for a way to lend a hand, starting by putting what we want in second place and accepting the measures and sacrifices that allow us to contribute to the good of all.*

(Father General Arturo Sosa SJ, Easter message)

As lockdown measures are being lifted across Europe we can observe a slight decrease in the infections. At the same time, we can also see pockets of the virus resurfacing, which clearly shows that it has not gone away and we need to maintain our vigilance both for our health and that of others. As a community in Europe and worldwide we have been experiencing this time as liminal space – a transitional stage of a process leading us to a new ‘normal’. So at this point of our journey through the unknown, we would like to give you an overview of the activities of the Euroteam carried out at the time of lockdown, as well as some plans for the months to come.

## **1. Activities during the corona crisis**

### ***a) Online Eucharist on the CLC World Day (March 25<sup>th</sup> 2020)***

We would like to thank you - all the CLC members and friends - who joined the online Eucharist on the CLC World Day. Both, our Facebook page and our website showed about 400 connected devices during the mass, which means that probably more than 500 people from all over the world were celebrating the CLC World Day together.

Many CLC friends expressed their gratitude in commentaries such as: *“Thank you so much for this beautiful, graced, life-giving service and time together!”*, *“Thank you for making me feel European again!”* or *“Thank you for this mass. Blessings to you all and your families and communities.”*

We would like to offer a very special word of thanks to Nikolaas Sintobin SJ who celebrated the Eucharist from his room in Amsterdam, making us feel the presence of God in our everyday lives at home where we were staying on lockdown at that time.



And we can already tell you that it is not going to be a unique experience in the history of CLC in Europe as we would like to continue praying as a community beyond borders.

### **b) International sharing groups**

At the beginning of the lockdown, we realized a great need for connectedness all over Europe and worldwide. As a worldwide community, CLC has a great treasure to share. So we invited CLC members to form international sharing groups.

About 40 companions replied to our invitation with great enthusiasm and formed eight groups in four different languages (English, French, German and Spanish). They have been meeting regularly via different online platforms to share their life experience and faith. At the beginning, the Euroteam provided some inspirations for group sharing such as Bible readings, spiritual texts, songs, poems. Then most of the groups took over and decided to continue and prepare the meetings on their own.

The feedback we received from the sharing groups was very positive, even though some members found it difficult to find time for regular meetings.

One CLCer wrote: *'Holy Spirit and Christ visited us through The Word and faith-sharing, through fraternity and a quick sense of solidarity, a comfortable intimacy as we just 'jumped in' with one another because of our shared Ignatian spirituality and way of proceeding. It has been a wonderful experience for each of us spiritual, human, and active and incredible that we met at this moment of human history amidst the global pandemic. Our brief journey has been a broadening of our hearts and minds, engaging four different cultures, mentalities, perceptions of the world around. It did not only deepen my sense of CVX-CLC, but also all of us as the Body of the Holy Universal Church'*

Among many benefits of the international sharing groups, the participants of the online meetings mentioned the enriching experience of unity in diversity, getting to know CLC members from different cultures and a variety of life contexts, the experience of deep faith and community beyond borders, making ourselves available to each other amidst the pandemic while experiencing uncertainty and asking important questions.

We are planning to start new international sharing groups in September. We'll keep you updated!

(Photo: <https://www.cvxfance.com/2020/05/18/cl-europeenne-pendant-le-confinement/>)



Capture d'écran 2020-05-19 à 11.18.16 Image 2 sur 2

### **c) Zoom Meeting with the World Exco and the Regional Teams (April 4<sup>th</sup> 2020)**

In April the World Exco organized a Zoom meeting with all the regional teams (Asia/Pacific, Latin America, North America, Africa, the Middle East and Europe). Each regional team was called to reflect on the following questions before the meeting: How does CLC view the experience of the pandemic in their countries and the world? How can CLC help to deal with this pandemic and accompany the necessary social changes?

After the report of Luisa Bonetti, the coordinator of the previous Euroteam (2014-2019), about the experiences in Northern Italy followed the testimonial of Blanca Gracia, a Spanish CLC doctor working in intensive care units with Covid19 patients in 2 different hospitals in Madrid. Then we experienced a three-round sharing process with the questions we had reflected on before the meeting.

We realized that amid this pandemic "we are one humanity" (Fr. Sosa SJ) and feel a completely new, deep and global connection. As an Ignatian lay community, we have a clear mission of supporting solidarity between people, as well as a preferential option for the poor, who are particularly suffering



from this crisis. But we also feel called to share our Ignatian tools to help people spiritually approach the crisis.

Manuel Martinez, the executive secretary of the World Exco made a short video about this meeting - you can find it on Youtube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0uZmrVzvo0&feature=youtu.be>)

#### **d) Zoom meeting with the Eurolinks (May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020)**

"Why can't we have a similar Zoom meeting with the Eurolinks?" we asked ourselves immediately after the meeting with the World-Exco and the regional teams. As a result, we organised a meeting in early May, attended by 19 of the 21 Eurolinks and some representatives of the World Exco. As the lockdown in many countries was slowly being lifted, the main focus of our sharing in small groups and in plenary was our reaction to the pandemic and its impact on our societies. We could see that the time of the pandemic is a deeply transformational experience, a new beginning. This experience is opening us to new ways of living as a community and in the world. We are called to be more aware and present in the world around us, to be truly contemplative in action. We asked ourselves some important questions: what to do next, how to support the transformation, how to be more connected as a living community with the world around us? Many people around the world now are asking the same questions: how to live after the corona crisis and what are we called to change? We, as CLC are called to use and offer our gift: tools and skills for discernment that is much needed in the church and our everyday environment. We want to be part of the transformation, opening our hearts to discerning new ways, acting as one body and taking concrete steps. **"Let's be protagonists of this change"** – as the World Exco writes in Projects 174.



If you want to deepen this reflection in your communities, you might find some inspiration in Projects 174: <http://www.cvx-clc.net/l-en/projects.php>

During the Zoom meeting with the Eurolinks, we realised once again how grateful we are for all the online tools that help us stay connected as a community in Europe. There is a need for more connectedness among the Eurolinks so we decided to have regular Eurolink meetings online (about twice a year).

## **2. At the Frontiers**



As you might have realized, the team responsible for AtF project in Italy and the Euroteam had to cancel the summer camps in Ragusa, Regio Calabria and Torino. The situation is not stable enough and the sanitary measures are too strict to be fully implemented in the camps.

We hope that the situation will be different in the coming winter or next summer and the conditions will allow us to organize the next edition of the project. We will keep you updated.

## **3. Preparation of a youth camp for young CLCers in 2021**

We had an online meeting with Sara (our Spanish Eurolink) who shared with us some details of the Youth Camp that CLC in Spain is organising in summer 2021 when the Ignatian family will be celebrating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conversion of St Ignatius. During the last week of July 2021, CLC in Spain, supported by the World Community and the Euroteam will organize a youth camp for young CLC-ers. The plan so far is to invite up to 2 young CLC-ers from every country. Watch this space for more information as it is provided to us. To focus our energy and resources on this meeting, the Euroteam will not organize a youth camp for CLC in Europe in 2021.

#### **4. Call for donations**

We have already sent you the information about the two projects we want to support: the youth camp organized in July 2021 and At The Frontiers' future initiatives. The two projects will be implemented if we are capable to finance them with donations. So we would like to ask for your financial support.

Both projects are perfectly in line with our apostolic priority areas.

We are attaching the flyers which were sent to you some weeks ago.



#### **5. International Zoom conference about the Synodal way in Germany**

As you might have read in our last Newsletter, the church in Germany started a Synodal Way, as “a transparent process of dialogue with experts from various disciplines”. Five CLC members are involved in this process – as delegates or as a spiritual guide. Some of you showed deep interest in this Synodal Way and the involvement of CLC members in the process. That’s why we decided to invite all the CLC members who are interested in this renewal of the church to a webinar with one or several members of the Synod on a Saturday afternoon in the autumn this year. You’ll receive some more information with our newsletter in September.

For further information: <https://www.synodalerweg.de/english/>

#### **6. Eurolinks and Ecclesiastical Assistants meeting in Warsaw – Pentecost 2021**

As you already know, we are planning a meeting for Eurolinks and Ecclesiastical Assistants in Warsaw at Pentecost 2021 (21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> of May). We would like to express our warm thanks to CLC in Poland for offering to host this meeting!

You’ll receive more information in the autumn this year. Please save the date!

#### **7. A request from Roberto Piani, CLC in Germany**

*Dear Friends from the CLC in different locations in the world!*

*Here in Germany, we are offering a course on how to take care of CLC formation in the first stage - from the gathering of a new group of interested people, till the end of the first formation phase (for example till the decision to join CLC). The course will take place in September. As we know, such processes may vary from place to place. We are interested in such variety and different approaches! On one evening we would like to offer some inspiration by sharing experiences from other countries. Would you like to send me a brief description of your personal experience of the first stage formation in your country? It could be a text, a video message, a presentation... no limit to your fantasy 😊. You can send it also to my Email address: [Roberto.piani@gcl.de](mailto:Roberto.piani@gcl.de) or as a video per WhatsApp to my mobile: 0049.157.88302122 Thanks a lot for your contribution in advance!*

## **8. Newsletter in September 2020**

We are already preparing the September edition of our Newsletter. We would be glad to receive your stories about different initiatives and activities undertaken in your communities within the last months of the corona crisis. Please write to us if you want to share how you and your community have been living through the crisis, what were the challenges and opportunities you've been through. We are waiting for your contributions until the 6<sup>th</sup> of September.

We wish you all a blessed Saint Ignatius Day! We will be in deep communion with you all on that day!

The Euroteam:     Angelika                      Kasia                                      Chris                                      Jean-Benoît