

AT THE MEETING

OPENING PRAYER

We begin, as usual, with a short time of stillness, putting ourselves in the presence of God and asking for grace that everything that happens in our mind, heart and imagination may be directed purely to the praise and service of God. *Some communities use the CLC opening prayer, or some other formal prayer, to conclude this brief time of stillness. Others use a minute or two of suitable music.*

GRACE We ask for the grace to explore the vision of Christian Life Community together and to listen to our deepest feelings about it.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 25: 31-40 (Ask someone to read this aloud.)

SILENCE

Ten minutes silent prayer remembering my life and prayer since the last meeting. How have I found the prayer this last fortnight? What events in my life and prayer do I wish to share with my community?

SHARING AND LISTENING

- Remember that this is a listening, not a discussion, group.
- Include a second round if there is time.
- It's good to conclude this time of reflection with a short time of silence, praying for each other, and with a formal prayer, such as the *Glory Be* or the *Lord's Prayer*.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER, if wanted.

PRACTICALITIES: This is an opportunity for any reports, eg from members who have attended a CLC event, for questions, for discussion about any concerns, for news about any work or mission in which members might be involved, or for any business the group might need to sort out.

REVIEW OF THE MEETING

- What was good for me in this meeting?
- What was not so good? What would I have liked to be different?
- What do I want to take away with me?

CLOSING PRAYER (Many communities use the CLC closing prayer.)



MEETING PLANS FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

OUR MISSION



**TOWARDS
MEETING FIVE**

PERSONAL PRAYER BEFORE THE MEETING

A reminder of the suggested stages of prayer . . .

PREPARATORY PRAYER Begin as the previous leaflets suggested.

ASKING FOR WHAT I WANT

I ask for the grace to explore the vision of Christian Life Community and to listen to my deepest feelings about it.

MATERIAL FOR PRAYER

Use the following suggestions, staying with the first until you are ready to move to the next.

- * Matthew 25: 31-40
- * Read and pray with the article below. The questions at the end may be helpful for your reflection.
- * Micah 6:8

TALKING WITH THE LORD

Ensure that at the end of your prayer, you spend some time talking directly with the Lord. You may like to end the prayer with a *Glory Be* or the Lord's prayer.

REVIEW OF PRAYER

Afterwards, look back over your prayer and make some notes

THE THIRD HALLMARK: MISSION

CLC has three hallmarks: community, Ignatian spirituality and mission. The third is often the most difficult to understand because it is so varied and apparently so ordinary.

Our mission is rooted in our spirituality. It is because of our gratitude to Christ for loving us in all our sinfulness, weakness and brokenness that we want to do something for him in return; we want to be with him and share his work. (Not everyone comes to mission from this direction, many start by helping others, and then find the need for a spirituality.)

Christ invites us to share his work, to allow him to love others through us and in us.

Our mission is **truly** our mission when it is done in union with Christ. That is how we want it to be: mostly we are conscious that we are not there yet. But we know that in Ignatian spirituality and in CLC we have the tools to help us to live this ideal.

If we are “to do Christ's work rather than just work for Christ”, we have to be listening for what Christ wants us to do. What do we listen to? The signs of the times!! That means noticing what Christ is putting in front of us, in the media, yes, but also right under our noses in the “ordinary” events of life. A friend of mine saw an eleven-year old boy hurl a potato at a woman in a shop, but as well as his wickedness, she noticed the hurt expressed

in his face and in his violence. We need to listen within, to our own deepest reactions and feelings, so that underneath our anger at what is happening, we discover Christ's compassion and yearning for that child.

So mission often seems to be ordinary: it is first of all the **quality we bring to our ordinary life**, whether it be in the factory, the office, the street, the classroom, or the home.

Of course when we contemplated Christ in that naughty violent eleven-year old, we realise that it is not enough to show compassion towards him as we follow and try to help him; his hurt is clearly very deep and has been inflicted over many years; it is written in his face. If we find water dripping from our ceiling, we don't just mop it up, we look for the leak and deal with that as well. So CLC invites us to look deeper at the causes of hurt in our society and our world and to recognise the unjust structures, which lead to so much evil. It enables us to be led by Christ to seek ways to heal our society itself. (This is called social analysis.)

“Too big a task”, you might say, “for me”. But what Christ asks of us is a small step; he will do the rest. Just as he asked for two small fish and five loaves and used them to feed the five thousand.

CLC reminds us constantly that we are not on our own. We have the rest of our group helping us to notice “the signs” that are all around us and helping us to discern the call of Christ that is within those signs.

We are also united with the compassion of Christ, who is ready to transform our small efforts. Christ is present to our environment through us, and also through others around us.

But if I notice even more signs of need, will I become even busier? No! Jesus assures us that his yoke is easy and his burden light. If our burden feels too heavy, maybe it is not all Christ's work. In our sharing and our listening, we come to hear more clearly Christ's call to us and that often means saying “no” to needs, even though they may be genuine needs. CLC reminds us that Christ has particular tasks for me; he does not expect me to respond to everything. CLC helps us to free our energies.

Tony de Mello sj tells the story of the man who has so much wood to chop that he didn't have time to sharpen his axe. CLC helps me to keep my axe sharp. It helps me to discern Christ's individual invitation to me, to discover where I will find Christ in my life.

Tony Horan sj

- * What do you sense are some of the characteristics of CLC mission?
- * “Mission is first of all **the quality we bring to our ordinary life.**” Does that description make sense? How would you prefer to talk about mission?
- * How do you feel now about CLC mission?