

Reflections on the North American Conference

CLC-CVX
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I was asked to write some impressions about the North American Conference. I arrived in Toronto with a happy heart, with memories fresh from Ania and the World Youth Days that had happened in the area not so long ago. I knew I was going to meet again some of the wonderful Canadian CLCers who I had had the pleasure to meet in the World Youth Day events. And, sure thing, there they were, also happy to meet me. It is very interesting, meeting CLC people. Deep inside we know we're family in the heart of our Lord.

In the airport I already met some American CLCers, who I only knew by name or e-mail, but not personally. The same happened throughout the Conference. I was able to meet quite a few "famous" people, besides seeing the ones I had already met, and some friends also.

So, that was the first big thing of the Conference: meeting people, real people, real CLC-CVX members. Having encounters with those people....

In a sense I was very happy to be there. It was a real privilege to be able to really experience World CLC and see where the Spirit seems to be moving us in this particular part of the world. On the other hand, I was also a little afraid that I was not experienced enough to be there. I felt a little like "the little girl intruding into her parents' party." Some people reassured me that it was ok for me to be there....

In a sense that was my first experience of the National CLC as well, since I am not officially the rep for my region. I was only there for that Conference since our rep Sherill couldn't go. That was already very good, to see some of the faces who shared those Graces and Concerns we talked about, and that I had already heard about from Sherill, from the National Conference in the summer.

Also, it was good to see the Graces and Concerns of the other National Communities, to see how some of them are repeated, there is some trend, pattern there, and it helps us in feeling more like one body. Even if one of the Concerns, paradoxically, has to do with this issue.

I will share some other blessings I lived or witnessed at the conference. One of them was meeting the CVX groups and the Vietnamese Companions and being presented by them with some of their history and stories, very enriching to all of us, I think. Another one was getting to know the story of one particular Canadian CLC Community, called Emmaus and their apostolate.

Another blessing was to see such a number of committed, mature CLC members, a good inspiration for me. At the end of the conference, we were faced with the question:



One of the aspects that helps me in this surrender is knowing in which company I am, with those committed, mature members.

...the importance that CLC may have in this privileged part of the world, in decisions not only of internal issues of justice and peace, but also in issues regarding foreign policy.

“How has this weekend affected your CLC vocation?” For me that was very moving, for I have been struggling with this, resisting it somehow, and it became clear how I am starting to surrender to God. One of the aspects that helps me in this surrender is knowing in whose company I am, with those committed, mature members.

The facilitation of the entire Conference, by Jack Milan, was very, very good. That was, in itself, an inspiring experience, certainly very helpful for community discernment in the future. We have, as Jack pointed out, to “go to Jerusalem”.

Talking about going to Jerusalem, it was also a blessing for me to realize that some of the ideas/movements that crossed my mind and heart were also crossing other people’s minds and hearts — especially the importance of reaching the young and the very young in families, perhaps to have activities for them; and the importance that CLC may have in this privileged part of the world, in decisions not only of internal issues of justice and peace, but also in issues regarding foreign policy.

Another blessing I can share was to be with the Canadian CLC members who joined us for Mass and dinner on Saturday night. After dinner we had a singing time together that was a lot of fun, very happy, joyful. Some songs made fun of some Ignatian/CLC themes, in a very appropriate way, I think. And just seeing those other members there, with their families, young children, brought more hope and joyfulness to me.

Something else I can share is the great moment when Leah and Gilles Michaud shared what’s going on in World CLC with us. That is very different from reading a bulletin or newsletter. It was seeing news from people who met those other people in different parts of the world, news coming “alive”. Really a blessing... I even heard a little bit of what is happening in CLC in Latin America (I am originally from Brazil, and my first contact with CLC was there).

Now I am faced with the challenge of sharing what I experienced with my regional community (NE) and keep discerning where to go, how to go to Jerusalem from here... I am filled with love for those I met in Guelph and for CLC, and also hope, knowing that we are together in prayer and in the heart of our Lord...



Four of the original Canadian CLCers: John English, S.J.; Peter & Barbara Peloso; and Helen Drago



*From left to right - first row:
Tuan Le (SJ), Hanh Nguyen (VCCt, San Jose)
From left to right - second row:
Binh Ha (VCCt, San Jose), Nam Tran (CVX, Montreal)*



Elaine Regan-Nightingale and Fran Morrison, Past Presidents, CLC Canada