

CLC SOUTH AFRICA: A GRACED HISTORY

The Grace of a Good Beginning

Jesuits brought CLG (Christian Life Group) to South African Catholic schools in 1966. The work of John Goller SJ, supported by the Religious Owners of schools, was instrumental in this regard, and many present-day CLC members were first inspired by the Ignatian Way, while still at school, or afterwards through forming small prayer groups.

The early 1970s to mid-1980s were years of foundation and formation for CLC South Africa. "Twinning" between South Africa and CLC Germany ensured friendships, on-going formation in the Ignatian Way and financial support. By 1975, CLC groups had been established in Johannesburg, Soweto, Cape Town, Welkom, Natal, and throughout the Eastern Cape. CLC South Africa owes much gratitude to Sr Eugene O.P., Greg Lourens, Sr Cecilia, Fr Johnson, José

Gsell, and Fr Patrick O'Sullivan S.J. under whose guidance and support CLC South Africa took root and grew. A committee, comprised of members drawn from across the country, was formed in 1981, in an attempt to root CLC South Africa in sound administration. In 1986 at the Convention in George, an Interim Constitution was approved and validated for a period of two years, and the Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant, Fr Tim Quinlan S.J., welcomed CLC South Africa into the World Community.

Taking Root

Ecclesiastical Assistants were appointed, where possible from the Society of Jesus, to serve CLC South Africa and assist in forming her members in the tenets of Ignatian Spirituality, while offering advice and support while CLC South Africa discerned how best to respond to God's call to serve humanity as an apostolic body.

The Grace of Crisis

The 1970s and 1980s were times of great socio-political turbulence

in South Africa and the tensions spilled over into the leadership of CLC South Africa. Between 1987 and 1989 the National Exco was fraught with tensions and misunderstandings amongst its members, and after a spate of resignations the National Exco seemed in tatters. During this time of crisis, a Secretariat was installed in Cape Town for the purposes of good administration. When Fr Mike Lewis S.J. became Ecclesiastical Assistant in 1990, attempts were made to restore relationships with those members and groups who had distanced themselves from CLC.

The contribution of Hildegard Ehardt (CLC Augsburg) at the 1991 National Convention and the visit of Mary Nolan (CLC Australia) in 1992 to CLC groups strengthened CLC South Africa's bonds with the CLC World Community. A new National Exco was elected in 1991, and at the National Convention in Port Elizabeth in 1992, a Vision Statement was discerned by the community and accepted

by Frs Jack Gillick S.J. and Graham Pugin S.J., with the proviso that symbols of Our Lady always be present in symbols and logos used to represent CLC South Africa.

Moving Forward

During the 1990s and early 2000s, CLC members did the Spiritual Exercises, attended World Assemblies in Mexico (1990s), Hong Kong (1994), Brazil (1998), Nairobi (2003), Fatima (2008), Lebanon (2013), Buenos Aires (2018) and held National Assemblies in Coolock House, Natal (1997), Hermanus (1999 and 2006), Laverna (2009 and 2017), Port Elizabeth (2004 and 2011), and Cape Town (2014). We have also sent delegates to International Formation Encounters in Zimbabwe (1991 and 2001), Johannesburg, Kenya (2009), Douala (2011) and Rwanda (2016).

CLC South Africa registered as a Public Benefit Organisation in October 2008, thereby enabling CLC to receive bequests, sponsorships and funding from

registered trusts and to own property and employ staff.

At the National Assembly at La Verna in 2009, the Assembled Community accepted that CLC is called to be an Apostolic Body, and it was agreed that a national apostolic project was the way to respond to this call. The 2011 National Assembly at Port Elizabeth discerned that support for quality education would be the national apostolic project, and it was resolved that “a school in whatever form” would be established. The Assembly Community gathered at the National Assembly in La Verna affirmed this project by reimagining it from a “school in whatever form” to “CLC Education Support”.

The frontiers identified at Lebanon (Globalisation and Poverty; Family; Ecology and Youth) were discerned and converted into action plans within groups, and the survey on the frontiers submitted to World Exco in 2015 gave groups the opportunity to reflect on

progress being made in each frontier.

Growth and Formation have characterised the early years of the 21st century with members celebrating Welcome Rites, pronouncing Temporary and Permanent Commitment, and official recognition being given to the Grahamstown and Katilehong groups.

Throughout its history, CLC South Africa has grown in understanding and commitment to becoming an Apostolic Body. We are heartened by the memory of the many graces received and are hopeful that we can respond to the needs of present times and any challenges that the future may hold for us, as we root ourselves in God-with-us and live our call and mission “to the greater glory of God”.



National Workshop 1987

BACK: Dan Le Cordeur, Jacques Pienaar, Dudley Boyer, Greg Lourens, Desmond Plaatjies

FRONT: Shelley Hawthorn, Pat Noffke, Unknown, Connie Gilbert, Enrico, Mary Amour, Unknown, John Norse



1988 National Convention -Paul and Lily Mbatha, Sheila Cowburn and Connie Gilbert



1988 National Convention Social - Denise Moolenschot, John Norse, Greg Lourens, June Norse, Julia Magee



Planning Meeting for IFE, Hekima College, Nairobi

Sr Edel (Kenya), Victor Kachaka (Zambia), Terry Charlton SJ, Jill McKay (South Africa), Paul Vaz SJ (India), and James Ndere



CLC National Executive, 1991

BACK ROW: Jacques Pienaar, Mike Lewis SJ

FRONT ROW: Dillian Meyer, Pat Noffke



1997 IFE Germiston. Roswitha Cooper (World Secretary) with delegates from South Africa, Nigeria, Botswana, Lesotho, and Zimbabwe



CLC Convention 1992, Port Elizabeth with Fr Graham Pugin SJ in attendance



The First Temporary Commitments in South Africa with Roswitha Cooper, World Secretary in attendance



Daniella Frank, CLC World Secretary, with members of CLC Western Cape



National Formation Team, 2002, Veronica Miller, Jill McKay, Paul Vaz (Facilitator), Jane Hulley and Pat Noffke



IFE Zimbabwe, Pat Noffke and Sabie Makgothi



Temporary Commitments, Eastern Cape, 1999

**Dermot Preston SJ (Ecclesiastical Assistant),
Desmond Platjies, Maryeen Maynard, Raymond
Booth**



**NATIONAL EXCO and Preparation Team for Fatima
Assembly June 2008**



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: SCHOENIES, PORT ELIZABETH
December 2011, NATIONAL EXCO Graham Pugin SJ; Jane
Hulley; Mandy Jones; Kaye Henrick and Veronica
Wellburn**



**National Exco May 2013. Meeting with SA
National Exco and Botswana. Back Row:
Jane Hulley, Graham Pugin SJ**

**Middle Row: Veronica Wellburn; Fr. David
Smolira, Reg. Superior SJ, Fr. Luke
Rodrigues World Vice EA**

**Front Row: Barbara Notswothy, Botswana
Exco; Malesabe Makgothi; Kaye Henrick;
Mandy Jones**



NATIONAL EXCO: 2014

**Jane Hulley; Graham Pugin SJ; Veronica
Wellburn; Kaye Henrick; Mandy Jones**

SEATED: Malesabe Makgothi



National Assembly, Cape Town, 2014



National Assembly, La Verna, September 2017



National Exco 2018

Back Row: Fr Graham Pugin S.J. (Ecclesiastical Assistant); Colleen Callahan; Rose Shongolo

Front Row: Malesabe Makgothi; Kaye Henrick

Absent: Shrikant Peters



Colleen Callahan and Sabie Makgothi at the World Assembly, Buenos Aires, 2018