

PROJECTS

World CLC Day 2024:

Make all things new.

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*“The movement from power through strength
to power through powerlessness is our call...
We are free to reenter our world
with the same divine power with which Jesus came,
and we are able to walk in the valley of darkness and tears,
unceasingly in communion with God...
to keep announcing the good news everywhere at all times.
It is this divine power that makes us saints—fearless—
who can make all things new.”*

(Henri J.M. Nouwen. Finding my way home: pathways to life and the spirit)

To the National Executive Councils and all CLC members:

Introduction

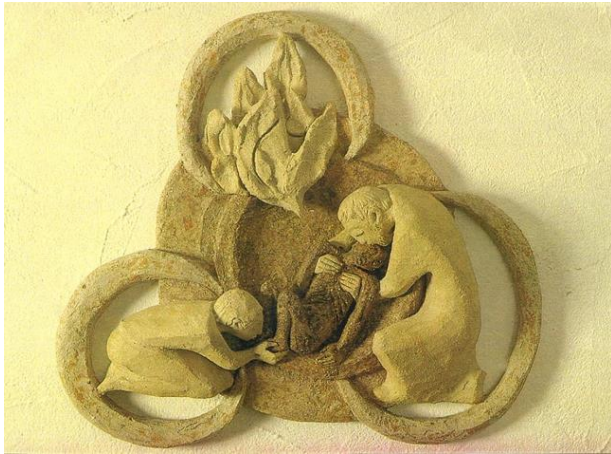
The Contemplation of the Incarnation is a profound exercise that invites us to ponder God’s mercy. It transforms us to put what we are and what we have at the service of the Reign of God’s Kingdom. Let us contemplate the experience of Mary, and like her, embark as one world community on our journey towards the future that God is preparing for us, not knowing our destination but filled with the same hope she had anchored in Christ.

The Contemplation on the Incarnation

Imagine the Trinity looking down upon the earth and seeing it filled with human beings. We are invited to enter God’s perspective, viewing all of Creation with compassion. We experience ourselves in the middle of a world teeming with human existence, encompassing suffering and joy, violence and caring, poverty and solidarity, division and unity, struggles and hopes.

In the heart of Amiens, we bore witness to the profound suffering endured not only by those embraced in our apostolic initiatives but also by the very assembly that unites us, our CLC members. We were granted a glimpse into the immeasurable compassion of the Holy Trinity, a compassion embodied in the icon of the Trinity of Mercy. Within its sacred bounds, the Trinity embraces the suffering, wounded, and nearly lifeless humanity. The circles encircling humanity, in a delicate dance with one another, symbolize a wounded and suffering planet.

However, there are also moments of joy, unity, and prayer amidst the chaos. Makeshift shelters, wounded souls, and compassionate aid workers tell a story of unwavering human endurance in the



face of overwhelming adversity, reminding us of the indomitable spirit that persists in the most challenging of circumstances. We are reminded that God is still here, and the icon represents God's trinitarian presence. The Father, with infinite love, upholds creation and the humanity that resides therein. The Son unveils the tenderness and alliance of God with all creation by humbling Godself and serving with a heart full of hope in humanity. The Spirit stirs the Love of God in the realm of Creation, unveiling the promise of God's Reign that is hidden yet already mysteriously present.

Icon of the Trinity of Mercy. Terracotta sculpture made by the Dominican Sister Caritas Müller of Cazis in Switzerland.

How does the Contemplation of the Incarnation illuminate:

- My daily life?
- Our national community?
- Our apostolic initiatives?

The Incarnation: The Lens on Mary

We invite you to remain with the compassionate gaze of God as you step into the divine revelation when the angel Gabriel visits young Mary in Nazareth. Imagine what she could be doing in a humble dwelling in Nazareth when she receives the unexpected news that she will conceive Jesus. Feel the mix of emotions and questions she may be experiencing. After all, what does one say to an angel? As the angel Gabriel reassures her, imagine the tone of their exchange. Dive into Mary's heart and mind as she finds the courage to ask, "How shall this be?" Witness her transformation from uncertainty to faith, saying, 'I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word.' Experience the depth of Mary's connection with God's infinite compassion and hope as the Lord Jesus enters our world through her 'Yes'.

Mary said yes, and her mission didn't impede her from addressing Elizabeth's needs. To what extent do I (CLC) live my (our) mission with openness to meet the needs of creation and other people?

Hope Anchored in Christ. A Journey with Mary's Hope

Anchoring ourselves in hope in Christ, like Mary did, is profound and transformative. Mary lived in fidelity to that first "Yes!" her whole life, experiencing that God uses our powerlessness to accomplish great things.

"The movement from power through strength to power through powerlessness is our call... It is this divine power that keeps us always announcing the good news everywhere, makes us saints—fearless—who can make all things new." We experienced this same dynamic at the assembly in Amiens. We felt the fragility of creation and the pain of nature and many people in the world and in the Church. At the same time, we witnessed that the human spirit, filled with hope anchored in Christ, persists in offering hope. That hope helps us to find Christ present and working even amidst the challenges we face at the frontiers and in our lives. Yet we continue hoping and trusting that Christ's seeds of recovery and healing may one day take root. We felt hope in Amiens to go forth to our frontiers in our new ways using the final document, a live document that conveys new ideas and the spirit of the assembly for years to come.

"Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. (...) Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice, she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!" (Lk. 1, 39-42)

Mary had just said "Yes!" to the Lord. A yes that commits her whole life according to God's guidance. How might she be feeling about her mission? How does she interpret the angel's visit? What motivates her to set out in haste to see Elizabeth? Possibly, in this haste, we can discover her need to find confirmation of the angel's announcement. We sense that, moved by the Spirit who gives us freedom and creativity, she freely makes a dangerous decision for a woman alone and betrothed to a man.

She wants to help her cousin and interprets what is happening to Elizabeth as God's work. Mary wants to help her, and she also needs to be welcomed and helped with the secret of the mission that God has entrusted to her. The cousins greet each other, and in this daily encounter, in this relationship of kindness, respect, and mutual help, the recognition of the mystery of Mary's mission, of her faith in the God of life, emerges.

The relationship between Mary and Elizabeth allows for the recognition of one's mission and mutual accompaniment in it. What do we need to maintain or change in our communities in order to discern, support and evaluate our responses to the Lord's call?

And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord, and my Spirit rejoices in God my Savior, (...) His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. (...) (Lk. 1, 46-55)

Mary feels understood. Another person confirms what she is living, encourages her, and assures her that she has done well. From Mary's heart emerges the Magnificat. A song that expresses what she had kept in her heart: the profound truth and hope that gives meaning and guidance to her life. The God of her people chooses her, a poor girl, and will do amazing things. Mary experiences that her life and her mission are in the plan of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God is ever faithful and merciful, and guides and animates all creation. Her life and her mission are part of God's plan: a world in which the weak, the poor, and the small are valuable and in which human beings can enjoy a

peaceful, just, and spiritual existence on a healthy planet. Each of us has an inner song expressing this faith and hope experience that is nourished and shared in our small communities.

How does Mary's song resonate in me and in the life of my community (local, national, regional, worldwide)? What dissonances do I discover between the Magnificat and my/our songs of hope?

Mary accompanied Jesus his whole life, even at the cross.

Mary bore Jesus and walked with Him throughout His life, pondering all these things in her heart. The image of Mary at the cross at the moment of separation from her son, placing her hand on her heart, must have symbolized both pain and powerlessness. She may have carried many unanswered questions in her heart from the incarnation to the resurrection until the day she finally gained understanding and hope.

Imagine yourself at the Holy Cross with Mary. You are also a Christ follower who has experienced the call of the Lord. You said yes and try to live in creative fidelity to your vocation with the support and accompaniment of CLC. Even when there seems to be no hope, the Lord calls us, and we are invited to follow Him in hope.

Staying with Mary before Christ on the Cross, I ask myself, looking at Him in the suffering of creation and humanity.

- What have I done for Christ? / What has CLC done for Christ?
- What am I doing for Christ / What is CLC doing for Christ?
- What should I do for Christ? / What should CLC do for Christ?

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