



CLC COMMUNIQUÉ

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Western Cape – Eastern Cape – Gauteng

<http://www.clc-sa.za.org>

Dear National Community,

We have a news edition of Communiqué. Western Cape have written their thoughts and reflections about Fr Gerry and In April we sent Malesabe Makgothi up to Zimbabwe to be part of an intercommunity Holy Week/Easter retreat directed by Fr Konrad Landsberg. We will be looking at Fr Konrad's retreat to see how we can learn from the experience. Here are some of Sabie's reflections:

Sabie's Retreat in Harare, Zimbabwe Theme: Culture, Tradition and Faith



The approach to this retreat was that the leaders of CLC-Southern Africa would be able to identify themselves as belonging to the Kingdom of God and therefore only bound by the law of love and moving us away from our different cultural/compulsive bonds to being able to fully surrender to him who gives us life.

The retreatants were: Germany – Inge Hoepfl, Botswana: Batiraiye Kaudimba and Topo Modiagane, South Africa- Malesabe Makgothi, Zambia- Collins Malunga and Norbert Tembo and Zimbabwe- Abel Chikomo, Chipo Chagweda, Aluwisi Phiri, Fabian Majena and Thembanani Thaka. All were "directed" by Fr. Konrad Landsberg, who called this retreat an experiment as it was the first of its kind for CLC. We

were therefore expected to keep a common journal which we called daily minutes. What follows is a brief overview of the programme which unfolded each day:

16 April Arrival and introductions over afternoon tea.

17 April The importance of Detachment: eg How long would it take you to recover from the demise of the Society of Jesus/CLC?

18 April Presence of God

19 April What is the promise of life that culture gives you?

20 April The Holy of Holies: the ultimate high point that a human being can reach.

21 April Exercises Principle and foundation. Compulsions/attachments. Humility

22 April Consolation and Desolation

23 April The Kingdom of God

24 April More along the lines of a workshop.





The lessons I learnt

I was constantly relearning what the leadership course in Nairobi in 2009 had initiated. This led to the new mission that I seem to be groomed for by my national community: that of helping CLC-South Africa to grow. Along with this, I discovered that my compulsions are what held me back, are holding me back and might still hold me back if I don't deal with them. One of them is procrastination which has held back the writing of this report!

The highlight for me was all the changes in the liturgies. Fr. Konrad made some adjustments to the liturgy to emphasise the point about culture and tradition often

making the liturgy just a routine that we go through without much learning! The ones that stood out for me are:

1. Mass on the 16th where we had to think about where we stand in relation to God and others then physically moving from this point to get closer to God.
2. The mass of the Last Supper particularly the washing of the feet, emphasis being on the teaching about serving one another. We washed each other's feet in pairs.
3. The Good Friday service: the veneration of the cross. The setting up of a scene in a family where someone had died and how people come to sympathise. This brought back the reality that Christ had actually died and his mother needed support. It was not just simply kissing the cross as part of a big crowd.
4. Easter Virgil: the service of light done after the Old Testament readings, to signify the fact that the light of Christ came to complete the history of salvation.
5. Confession: the preparation for this was made more meaningful by the understanding that I was not waiting for punishment but I had to choose to return to the Father.

This report was very difficult to write simply because one had to be present to fully grasp those moments of awe as the retreat was unfolding. I hope the readers will get some understanding and be curious enough to want to attend one such retreat should it be made available in South Africa.

Fr Gerry Lorriman SJ

Jill McKay has collected together some memories from CLC Western Cape

The Requiem Mass, celebrated by Fr David Smolira SJ for Fr Gerry Lorriman at Our Lady Help of Christians, Landsdowne, on 4th March touched our hearts. The prayers, hymns and eulogies were beautiful. These were led by his Nyanga parishioners, priests who had known and worked with him in those terrible struggle days and his own son who had travelled from UK with his sister to be there. One priest referred to him as a 'giant' and Graham told us some amusing stories in the homily. I loved the way a child from St Mary's school, Nyanga, read out a 'list' with examples like:

"Fr Gerry was a father to us, he loved his dog; he loved music; he came to our classes; he looked after us when we were sick, he took us on hikes..."

His **Nyanga CLC group** - Maria, Katie, 'Nox' and Deborah – continues to be strong and committed to CLC and to their parish work. He was such a gift to them and to us all. From the early days, when he had time, he used to bring the group to the monthly Day of Prayer, first at Little Stream and then later at Springfield Convent. He'd stay for the day, making time for his own reflections in the garden and the sharing afterwards – just simply 'one of us'. He wasn't keen on joining our Regional Meetings usually saying very irritably, 'I've no time for meetings like that!' Yet he took infinite care with the 'essential' meeting of his weekly CLC. His group made their first (temporary) commitment to CLC in 2009 after he had finally retired from the parish - a credit to his guidance and care during his long ministry to them.



On World CLC Day, Feast of the Annunciation, for many years - except when taxi wars intervened – CLC members from all over Cape Town used to go to St Mary's Nyanga for 6.00 p.m. Mass. We'd have tea and a shared supper afterwards with Gerry, his parishioners, his dog and cat! In 2003, on World CLC Day, Pat Noffke and I made our CLC permanent commitment there - a treasured memory, with Fr Gerry as celebrant and Maria as minister of the Eucharist.



This is what members of his CLC group said:

Katie Nunes, mother, grandmother and actively serving parishioner of Nyanga since early Apartheid days:

'When we first met Fr Gerry, we immediately saw what a very humble

*Pat and Jill's permanent
commitment at Nyanga
with Fr Gerry*

person he was. Before St Mary's Church was built, we used to have Mass in the school grounds or in someone's house. He loved the community and was a role model to all of us, especially during the riots when he walked in front of the people carrying coffins and stood up to the police, saying: 'These bodies must be buried'. He showed no fear and would warn us of raids or any trouble coming. He helped to strengthen our faith when we saw how strong his faith was.

After my husband died, he invited me into a CLC group at his house. After a time, we had our meeting in my house with Mrs Deborah Domingo. Then Maria and later, Rose joined and we met the others in CLC in the Western Cape. I am so thankful for the people in CLC – for the meetings, for the retreats – for all the love and inspiration. We also have a very good new Jesuit Father now, Fr Matsepane, bringing us new faith...

Fr Gerry... he was a father to us and a friend and treated all with love and care. And he was cheeky too – even when I saw him in Nazareth House the day before he died! I will always miss Father Gerry! '

Maria Mzebenzi, mother and early childhood development teacher trainer; minister of the Eucharist and Catechist.

I was introduced to CLC in about 1998 when Fr Gerry brought the John English programme – first to a big group and then, in the small CLC group in which we are today still. Fr Gerry was a person who showed the right path to us – the way of life for my faith and the solidarity of CLC. I am so grateful. CLC is not about big numbers but about commitment and Father Gerry helped me to trust and believe without compromise. I always think of Fr Gerry as someone who was straightforward. He didn't beat about the bush and was an amazing leader. At the same time, he was so kind. I remember when I didn't have my bible and was so upset because my sister had given it away. He was calm and he consoled me by saying it was a good thing that she had given it to someone who needed it! He taught me to not to judge and he helped us all to increase our awareness. He was a father figure for us and this was especially healing for me as someone who had grown up without a father. I am grateful that God gave us Fr Gerry.'



'Nox' (Noxolo Mpfana), wife and mother, primary school teacher and catechist and her husband, Cecil, father to their children and nurse at Groote Schuur. .



Cecil has a funny story about Fr Gerry that he likes to remember – illustrating Fr Gerry's single-minded determination! Cecil was on duty one night at Groote Schuur when Fr Gerry, suffering from a bad stomach complaint was admitted. He was examined by the doctor on duty and treatment was prescribed, though Fr Gerry, very agitated, seemed to argue heatedly with the doctor and the nurses! Sometime later the nurses came to Cecil saying, 'Your priest has disappeared'!

Father Gerry had indeed disappeared. Dissatisfied with the course of treatment prescribed and keen to get better quickly, he'd phoned a private taxi and had taken himself off to Vincent Pallotti for a second opinion. The nurses still laugh at the story yet admired him for his decisive plan of action.

*The Nyanga Group
after their temporary
commitment with Veronica
Wellburn who made her
temporary commitment in
Plumstead 2009.*

Nox tells this story:

'It was Christ the King that Sunday and we were ready to go out for a procession. Fr Gerry came out of his house with his Altar Servers and we started to process.

On our way back Father rushed to his house to fetch his Bible and when he came back he was with two helpers! These two men were supposed to have joined the procession but Father had locked his house and had forgotten that they were inside. He was very sorry but was laughing loudly! He was the best Father and priest! May His soul rest in peace! '

Mrs Deborah Domingo, mother, catechist and long serving parishioner of Nyanga. I wasn't able to contact Mrs Domingo due to problems with her phone but she will surely also tell us of her love and respect for Fr Gerry whom she knew so well.

There are so many stories that his parishioners and CLCers tell of all his kindness and love for them - his support and bravery. At 96 it was surely time to go to heaven but I can't help feeling sad that we've lost someone like Gerry - a true example of a parish priest devoted to those who were poor and suffering - quite a saint in fact!

We remember in our prayers Veronica Wellburn and her family. Veronica's nephew died this week of cancer. Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord, and may peace be with his family and friends.

Best wishes

Mandy

For the Exco Team