

Christian Life Community (DH-CLC)

A Brief History



**"Vietnamese across the continents" as
"Companions of Christ"**

The Inception

In 1972, in Saigon, Father Julian Elizalde SJ. (Vietnamese name: Phạm Công Thành), who was serving at the Jesuit Dac Lo Student Center, began to guide students in the Spiritual Exercises. After each retreat, the participants often formed a prayer and faith-sharing group. Within a year, six groups were formed. The groups met once a week and served in the activities of the Dac Lo center or the local parish. In addition to these groups, there were other individuals who experienced the Spiritual Exercises with Fathers Luc SJ, Gelinas SJ, and Louis Robert SJ. The groups that were formed after the Spiritual Exercises retreats were often called Spiritual Exercises (Linh Thao) Groups. These groups operated independently, engaging in various activities; each group had a priest guiding them.



Trung Tâm Sinh Viên Đắc Lộ, Sài Gòn.



Thánh Lễ ở Trung Tâm Sinh Viên cho các nhóm.

At the end of April 1975, Vietnam fell under the Socialist regime. The Spiritual Exercises groups no longer operated independently but collaborated with each other in apostolic works. Faced with new circumstances, some followed their families abroad. Those who remained continued to live out the spirit of Ignatian Spirituality, engaging in subtle evangelism, and gradually expanding.

In July 1976, Father Julian Thanh was expelled from Vietnam and went to Denver, CO to assist the Vietnamese refugees who had settled there. He re-established contact with his former Dac Lo companions overseas. In the summer of 1977, in Sedalia, Denver, he gave a 5-day Ignatian retreat for over 20 retreatants, both those who were familiar with the Spiritual Exercises and those who were brand-new to them. In the summer of 1978, he led 5 others in the Spiritual Exercises in Portland, OR. After the course, everyone decided to launch a newsletter. Later, Father Thanh went to the Philippines to serve at the Xavier School in Manila.



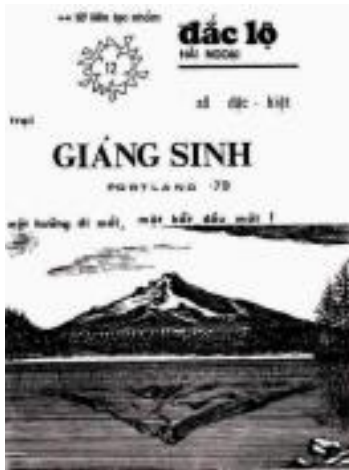
At the refugee camp in Philippines with Fr. Robert SJ and Fr. Julian Elizalde SJ.



Gathering in Denver 1977, Sedalia.

In August 1978, the first Spiritual Exercises group abroad was formed in Tigard, OR. By 1979, refugees were facing many crises in the new society. Members of the Overseas Spiritual Exercises Group decided to organize a Spiritual Exercises - Assembly and seek ways to meet the spiritual needs of young refugees. Over 65 members came to Portland, OR to participate in a 6-day Spiritual Exercises retreat led by Father Thanh and a 4-day Assembly run by lay people. As a result, the Spiritual Exercises & Dac Lo Overseas group was officially formed with principles and objectives but no clear direction or operational guidelines. A provisional executive committee was elected with the responsibility of requesting a chaplain for the refugee youth, drafting regulations, and managing the newsletter.

From the Philippines, Father Thanh wrote letters to provide spiritual guidance for the group and share sentiments from the homeland. Gradually, groups in other localities were also formed and began to operate.



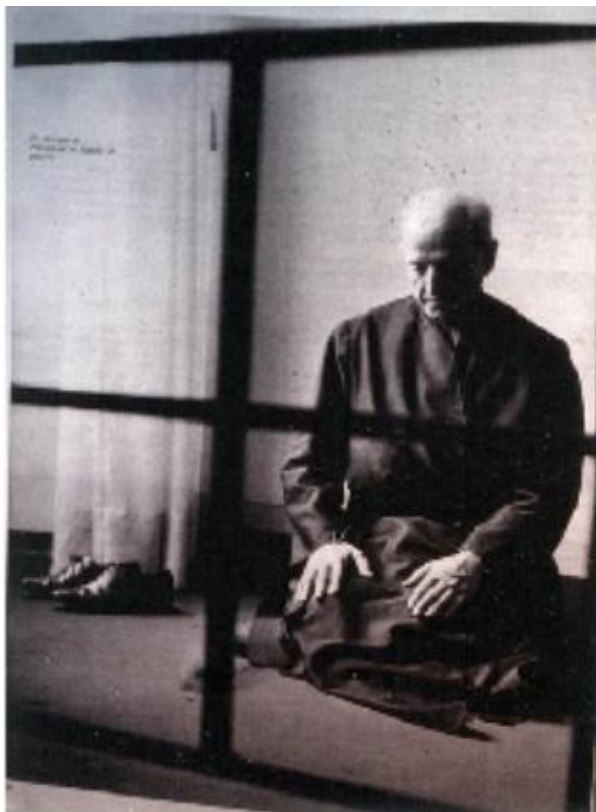
The first newsletter



Gathering of "Linh Thao & Đắc Lộ Overseas"

In the beginning of 1980, at the request of our brothers in Vietnam, for security reasons, the group's name was changed to the Overseas Dac Lo Retreat Group (Tĩnh Tâm - Đắc Lộ Hải Ngoại). The request for a chaplain for the refugee youth faced many obstacles.

Finally, at the end of 1981, after much prayer, consultation, and consideration of the group's need for a chaplain, Father General of the Society of Jesus, Pedro Arrupe SJ, decided to send Father Thanh to the United States to serve in that role, through the letters he sent on January 8, 1981: "...I shall certainly pray that the Lord will make your dream come true..."



Fr General Pedro Arrupe, S.J. in meditation at his private chapel in Japan



Letter from Fr. Arrupe, S.J. to appoint Fr. Julian Elizalde Thành SJ.

Subsequently, a 7-day Ignatian Retreat and a 6-day assembly were held at the end of 1981 in Portland, OR to assess the work completed and to plan for the new phase. More than 70 brothers and sisters attending the 1981 Conference agreed to maintain the initial purpose of the group while also the General Principles of the Christian Life Community (CLC) as their own. At the beginning of 1982, the CLC General Principles were translated into Vietnamese and distributed to all members, along with the Rules and Regulations of the group.

Thus, the 1981 Assembly set the direction and operational manner of the group in the spirit of CLC. The Assembly established three specialized subcommittees: the Committee for the Establishment of Spiritual Exercises groups, the Operational Committee, and the Central Management Committee of the "Overseas Dac Lo Retreat Group." After the Assembly, more local groups began to form. At the end of 1983, the name "Spiritual Exercises" Group was changed to the "DongHanh Group" and the "Overseas Retreat Group" was renamed to the "DongHanh Movement." "DongHanh" signifies "Walking with Christ."

In August 1983, more than twenty brothers and sisters from Đồng Hành, representing the Movement, attended the Christian Life Community in USA (CLC-USA) Assembly in Washington DC with the theme "We Make Our Way By Going."

In 1985, over twenty brothers and sisters from Dong Hanh, representing the Movement, attended the CLC-USA Assembly in Cleveland, Ohio. Also in the same year, Dong Hanh participated in the Catechetical Congress in New Orleans, LA organized by the Vietnamese Catholic Federation in the United States.



The First Dong Hanh Assembly, "The Way of Proceeding of Dong Hanh Groups" in December 1984, at Loyola Retreat House, Portland, OR.



Formation weekend in 1985, at Riverside, CA.



Fr. General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ & Fr. Provincial of the Oregon Jesuits visiting Dong Hanh leadership in Tigard, OR.



CURIA PRÆPOSITI GENERALIS

SOCIETATIS IESU

ROMA - Borgo S. Spirito, 5

TO THE VIETNAMESE YOUTH OF THE IGNATIAN EXERCISES MOVEMENT
In Congress at Loyola Retreat House, Portland, Oregon
25-30 December 1984

Dear Friends in Christ:

It is my privilege and great pleasure to be able to greet you, and through you, all the Vietnamese "Christ's Companions" members of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises Movement. To each and all of you, my heartfelt best wishes for Christmas and for the coming Buffalo Lunar New Year! May Christ who became man for us to be our Way, our Truth, and our Life be the leaven in your generous efforts to discover "the concrete way of life for different local groups" of your Movement which, I understand, is the main theme of your Congress this time.

I take this opportunity to express my warm thanks to Father Provincial and to the entire Oregon Jesuit Province for sustaining you so well. I am also particularly happy to offer my hearty congratulations to Father Julian Elizalde, S.J. for having inspired and for continuing to guide with great zeal such a marvelously flourishing movement such as yours. I share his concern about having Vietnamese-speaking Jesuit confrères to carry out this task along with him.

Dear Vietnamese friends, I know you are facing the problem of how to know and follow more closely the true meaning of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. I know too that you are making serious efforts to train competent spiritual leaders, priests, religious and laymen and laywomen, who can guide your Movement on the way you have chosen, that is, the way of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. I agree with you that quality must take precedence over quantity in this matter. The fact that you pay special attention to such problems assures me that you are moving along the right way.

I earnestly pray for all of you and I recommend your concerns to the Lord. He it is who will achieve what He Himself has inspired if you try to do His will, because He is a faithful God. For my part, I will do my best to see what can be done to meet your spiritual needs by way of finding some Vietnamese-speaking Jesuits who can work with Father Elizalde. But you will have to help me too, and the Society of Jesus, by praying for and fostering more vocations, especially among the Vietnamese youth!

Though miles away, I will be with you in spirit during your Congress. Together let us pray for the success of your Congress, for Vietnam, for the Church, for all of mankind, and for one another. I send you my blessing and, once again, my best wishes.

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach
Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.
Superior General of the Society of
Jesus

Rome, 20 December 1984

Letter from Fr. General Kolvenbach to Dong-Hanh Assembly, 1984 in Portland, Oregon

Christian Life Community Worldwide and CLC Companions

After three sessions of community discernment and choosing CLC as their vocation in the Church, the Companions were accepted by the worldwide community to join the Worldwide Christian Life Community through the CLC community in the United States (CLC-USA) in July 2004 at the 2004 Miami Conference.



Dong-Hanh officially joined CLC in 2004 at CLC-USA National Assembly, Miami, Florida

CLC started from the time of Saint Ignatius, originally named “Marian Congregation.” 23 years after Saint Ignatius and his companions founded the Society of Jesus, Brother Jean Louis established the Marian Congregation for lay people, using the same structure that Saint Ignatius employed with his first companions at the Collège de Sorbonne in Paris. The Marian Congregation grew to over 80,000 members and had a wide influence in European society before the Society of Jesus was suspended in 1771. The Marian Congregation was transferred to the local dioceses until 1971, when Pope Paul VI signed a decree to re-establish the Marian Congregation as an international association under the Holy See, as part of the Curia with a new title, Christian Life Community (CLC). He entrusted this mission when welcoming the Executive Council (ExCo) of CLC: “We wholeheartedly encourage you to continue the work that you see as the Church’s top priority today: to form solid Christians, who know how to integrate a fulfilled human life with a continuously deepening spiritual life.”

In 1990, Vatican recognized CLC as an international association of the faithful under the Holy See, within the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life of the Roman Curia. The Holy See appointed the Superior General of the Society of Jesus as the Ecclesiastical Assistant for the global CLC community.

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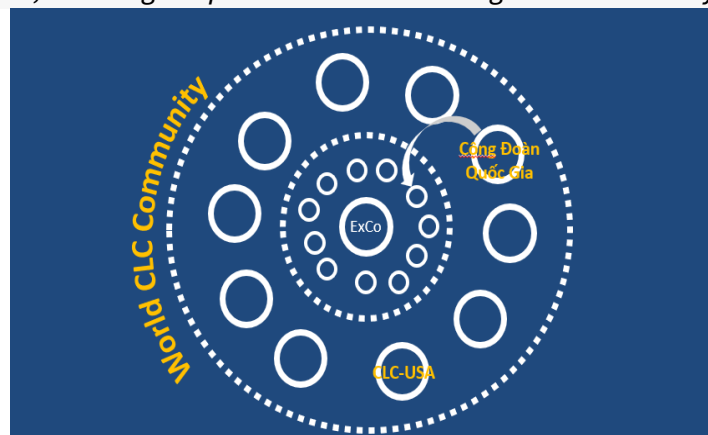
[Dicastery](#) [Laity](#) [Associations and Movements](#) [Family and Life](#) [Youth](#) [Elderly](#) [News](#) [Events](#) [Resources](#)

Charis
OFFICIAL NAME Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service ALSO
KNOWN AS CHARIS ESTABLISHED 2018 HISTORY CHARIS was created ...

Christian Life Community
OFFICIAL NAME Christian Life Community (CLC) Comunidad de Vida Cristiana
(CVX) Communauté de Vie Chrétienne ...

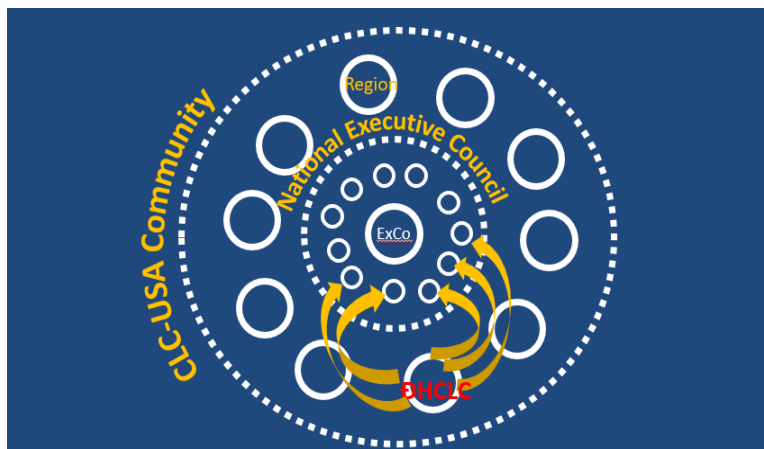
Christian Life Movement
OFFICIAL NAME Movimiento de Vida Cristiana ACRONYM CLM ALSO
KNOWN AS Christian Life Movement ESTABLISHED 1985 HISTORY The ...

CLC is organized based on the principles of discernment and synodality with the leadership body of the World Executive Council, which is elected by representatives of national communities gathering every five years. Currently, CLC has 78 national communities across the five continents of the world. In addition to electing the executive council, the World Assembly also collectively discerns the direction of the community based on the spiritual fruits from the synodal sessions at the conference. The direction, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, is brought back by the representatives of national communities for them to continue the process of common discernment to crystallize and implement through the activities or pastoral programs at the grassroots level – the local groups. The highest decision-making authority of the community lies in the world assembly, chaired by the World Executive Council, which consists of the president, vice president, executive secretary, the Superior General of the Jesuits as World Ecclesiastical Assistant, and five advisors, ensuring the presence of the entire global community.

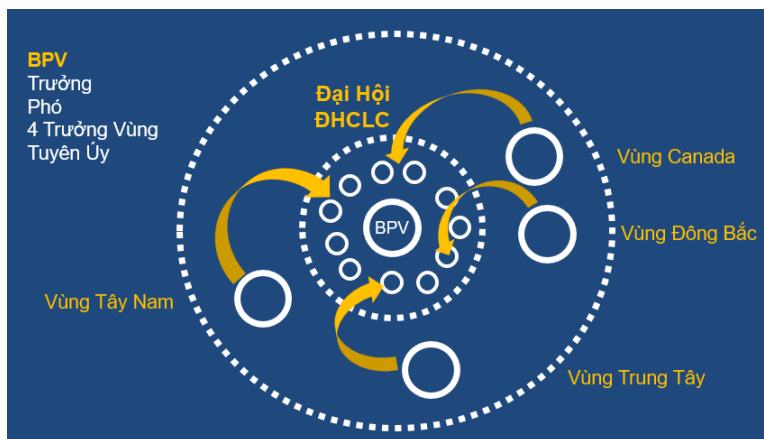


Each national community is also organized according to the synodal model of the world congress, divided into regions based on the circumstances under which the vitality of the community is most flourishing. The CLC community in the United States reflects cultural and language diversity, representing the social

realities of the United States. The national community consists of nine regions, two 'cultural regions' (Korean and Vietnamese), and one Spanish-speaking region. Dong Hanh is one cultural region. The highest voice of CLC-USA is the National Executive Council, with the number of delegate seats based on the number of members in each region. Dong Hanh has five delegate seats out of a total of twenty seats. The National Executive Council (Executive Council, aka ExCo) consists of the president, the president-elect or former president, the Ecclesiastical Assistant, the secretary, the treasurer, two members-at-large, one young adult member-at-large, and the administrative assistant.



Dong Hanh is a cultural region of the CLC-USA community dedicated to the Vietnamese. The organizational structure follows the same model of discernment and synodality as at the world assembly. Dong Hanh is divided into four regions: Canada, Northeast, Midwest, and Southwest. The executive council is called the *Ban Phục Vụ*, consisting of the president, vice president, four regional coordinators, and an ecclesiastical assistant (EA), commonly referred to as a “chaplain”. All roles, except for the role of the EA, are elected by the community through a discernment process.



As in the Catholic tradition, members and local CLC communities (groups) are called to "receive from Christ the mission to become witnesses for Him before all nations through attitudes, words, and actions, by identifying with His mission of proclaiming the Gospel to the poor." - according to the General Principles of CLC Article 8 (GP 8). Activities consist mainly of regular group meetings to share the fruits of God's influence in personal lives, to listen to God through everyone's sharing, and to discern what God is inviting the group to as an apostolic community, because the group is a part of the Mystical Body of Christ. As St. Ignatius writes in the *Spiritual Exercises*, love must be expressed through specific actions. In CLC, not only do CLC members need to concretize their love for God through actions, but CLC groups are also called to

participate in Christ's mission as a corporate person. The lifestyle of the Christian Life Community (CLC) is not a contemplative lifestyle, but rather contemplation in action. "The mission of the Christian Life Community is not limited but is extended within the Church and across the world, to bring the Gospel of salvation to everyone, to serve society and individuals (GP 8)." A CLC member does not lose their identity when joining other associations, and a CLC group is encouraged to participate in other activities to serve the Church.

Communion with Jesus and with each other is the hallmark of all human activities and the CLC group in order to remain faithful to the mission entrusted by the Holy See, which is to form solid Christians, both individually and communally. Ministries and service activities are specific ways to express the communion of the CLC community with Jesus, reflecting love for God and love for the people God loves, as Saint Ignatius wrote in the Spiritual Exercises (SE): 'Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God, and thereby save his soul (SE 23).' This principle is concretized in the CLC lifestyle – loving God and loving the people He loves, through action.

The Ignatian Spiritual Exercises (Linh Thao) - The People for Others

In April 1982, Fr. Elizalde Thanh began driving to various places to lead Ignatian retreats. At first, the Ignatian retreats were organized by acquaintances from other ministries or by members of the Dong Hanh group. The first retreat in Mountain View, CA, had over 90 participants, mostly newcomers. The next retreat in Burbank, CA, had over 80 participants. Then there were retreats in Denver, St. Louis, Washington D.C., Montreal (Canada), etc. Father continued with other retreats in the Western and Midwestern United States, and then to Europe (France, England, Germany, Belgium) and Asia (Japan, etc.).

The need for spiritual care among refugees was increasing. From April to the end of 1982, 28 retreats were organized. During this time, the weekend retreats focused on topics such as helping young people recognize love and purity and strengthening faith in Jesus Christ and His Gospel, all while guiding young people in prayer.

Since the weekend retreats led by Fr. Elizalde Thanh were well-received and appreciated by many, the schedule for Ignatian retreats in 1983 was completely full. Father Manh SJ, although retired, was invited from Belgium to the US to help for a while. During the summer months, Fathers Nguyen The Minh SJ, Gildo Dominici SJ and Felipe Gomez SJ also joined. In Europe, Asia and Australia, Fathers Nguyen The Minh SJ, Gildo Dominici SJ and Felipe Gomez SJ also began to give the Spiritual Exercises to people over there. Thus, the Spiritual Exercises program for refugees was fully kicked off.

From 1982-1985, over 150 spiritual retreats were organized overseas for more than 2,000 refugees. Among these were retreats for elderly parents, women's congregations, etc. Since 1986, along with weekend retreats and 5-day retreats, some members of Dong Hanh were also participating in the Ignatian 19th Annotation retreat in daily life, with religious priests or sisters in the US and Canada

From 1982-1986, most of the retreats focused on the first week of the Spiritual Exercises. In 1987, 'Spiritual Directors' - local companions who had made long-term retreats and received training, assisted the priest in tasks such as preparing morning prayers, moments of reflection, collective examinations,

preparing the mass, maintaining silence, etc. In 1989, the Come & See and Ephata programs for youth aged 13-21 began.

In the three years from 1988 to 1990, the retreats improved both in quality and quantity. More than 50% of the participants were returning attendees who understood the purpose of the retreat, no longer attending out of curiosity or to get an impression as in previous years. The retreat leadership also added Fathers Nguyễn Trọng Tước SJ, Trần Đình Nhi, Nguyễn Bình CM, and Đỗ Quang Biên.

Over the years, people from different groups have attended the Spiritual Exercises retreats; some are from Dong Hanh; some are from religious congregations or associations, including groups or individuals not affiliated with any community or organization. In addition, there were retreats sponsored and organized by local pastors. After the retreats, the attendees returned to their communities and continued their activities in the organizations as before.



First Ignatian retreat (Linh Thao) in Orange County, CA in 1982.

Since 1987, Father Thế Minh, SJ began guiding long-term retreats. After 1990, he focused on guiding 5-8 day Spiritual Exercises in many places; Father Gomez, SJ focused on teaching theology courses during the summer months. In 1993, there were 8 Ignatian retreats for high school students called the Come & See retreat. In 1995, Father Nguyễn Hùng, SJ initiated the Ephata retreats for children preparing for Confirmation. Since 1997, the list of Jesuits giving retreats to the Vietnamese community extended to Fathers Louis Robert SJ, Đỗ Bá Long SSS, Nguyễn Lâm CSC, Vũ Thế Toàn SJ, and Hoàng Tiến Đoàn SJ. Father Nguyễn Trọng Tước SJ also assisted in giving Ignatian retreats in Europe. In 1998, Father Tước started focusing on retreats for families.

The Spiritual Exercises Program initiated and supported by Dong Hanh continues to reach the Vietnamese community, responding to the spiritual needs of our brothers and sisters. More and more, pastors realize that the Spiritual Exercises are an effective tool that God uses to renew the Church today, in many places...

Our “Chaplains” and Ecclesiastical Assistants (EA)

The first “chaplain” of the Dong-Hanh community was Father Julian Elizalde Thanh SJ, a Spaniard, former librarian at the Dac Lo Center and professor at several universities in Saigon; he speaks Vietnamese fluently. In early 1991, Fr. Elizalde Thanh left the US for Rome to serve as Ecclesiastical Assistant of World CLC. Fr. Gildo Dominici, SJ. replaced Fr. Thanh serving the Dong Hanh community. Father Dominici, an Italian, also fluent in Vietnamese, was a professor at the Pontifical Pius X Institute in Vietnam. In 1993, Fr. Dominic Nguyen Hung SJ. replaced Father Dominici as chaplain of Dong Hanh. Father Hung was a Vietnamese refugee who came to the United States in 1979, continued his religious life and was ordained a Jesuit priest of the Oregon Province in 1992. Following Fr. Dominic Nguyen Hung, SJ. were Fr. Le Quoc Tuan SJ. and Fr. Dinh Minh Tri, SJ. When Dong Hanh officially became part of CLC-USA (2004) and started following the norms of World CLC, the term “chaplain” changed to the official title of “Ecclesiastical Assistant” (EA).

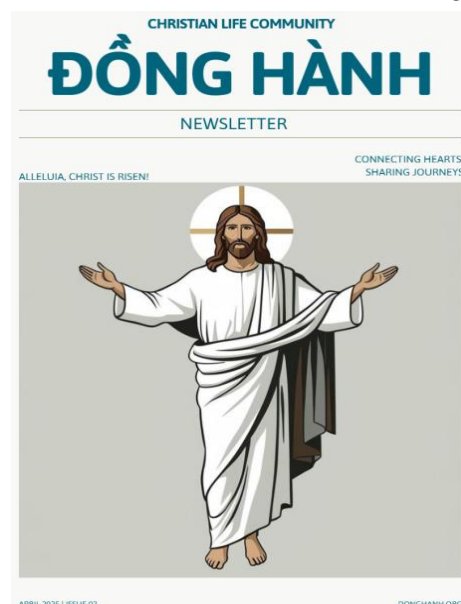
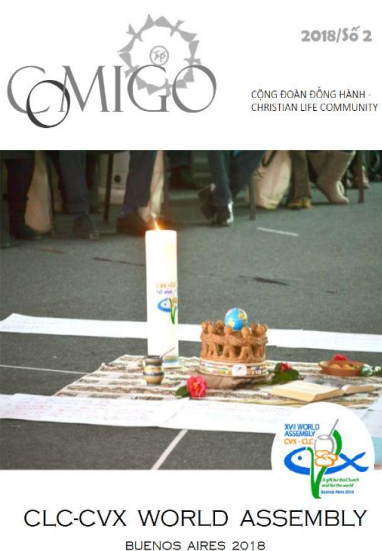
Fr. Nguyen Hung, SJ. returned to serve as the EA for Dong-Hanh from 2012 to 2024. Currently, our EA is Fr. Pham Trung Hung, SJ.



Our “chaplains” and EA’s, from left to right: Julian Elizalde Thành SJ, Gildo Dominici Tr  SJ, Dominic Nguyễn Hùng SJ, Lê Quốc Tuấn SJ, Đinh Minh Trí SJ, Ph m Trung Hưng, SJ.

Dong Hanh Newsletter

The Dong Hanh Newsletter is the main means of communication connecting members in the Dong Hanh Community. Members use the newsletter to share their faith experiences in daily life. Groups also share their activities, successes and failures on the newsletter. In secret, from the Motherland, brothers and sisters also send the fruits of their spiritual journey. In the 80s, Dong Hanh Newsletter was considered a link and spiritual support for brothers and sisters everywhere in their new life in a foreign land. Father Elizalde Thanh started the newsletter in the Philippines in 1978. It was then taken care of by Ta Dac Cuong & Tuyen in Tigard, OR, followed by Le Ngoc Ho and Tran Bach Tuyen. Subsequently, the regions have taken turns producing the newsletter until today.



In addition, to help disseminate formation & prayer materials, as well as retreat news, DH-CLC uses the website 'Donghanh.org', a Facebook account, and an email system for communications.

Đồng Hành - We Make Our Way by Going - CLC (Christian Life Community)

In the beginning, the groups in Dong Hanh were often formed after Ignatian retreats, because they wanted to maintain the atmosphere of prayer and sharing as in the retreats. Therefore, the groups did not have a standard format for meetings or common activities, and there were no topics or materials for group activities.

After 1983, documents on group meetings and activities began to be drafted and distributed to the groups. The “chaplain” often visited the groups to give retreats and provide guidance. From there, group activities improved both in form and content. From 1985 to 1987, thanks to formation courses from CLC, the formation team of Đồng Hành was established; regional gatherings, the Đồng Hành newsletter, year-end meetings, and assemblies helped improve the organization and activities of the groups. However, the implementation of the roles of group guide and coordinator was not very effective. By the end of 1987, the groups began to enter the 'pre-community' phase according to the standards of World CLC. After 1988, the Đồng Hành groups had a clearer distinction of the roles of guide, coordinator, group leader, and group members, but the implementation still faced many hesitations, reservations, and confusions.

By the end of 1990, the Companion Movement had nearly 800 brothers and sisters in nearly 40 groups, living and working according to the CLC guidelines, of which more than 120 brothers and sisters had committed to living the spirit of the General Principles of World CLC. At the 1990 congress in Portland, OR, the movement planned to discuss joining World CLC as a movement at the end of 1993 congress. During this period of exploration, the movement sent representatives to attend the World CLC Congresses in Mexico in 1990, in Hong Kong in 1994, and in Brazil in 1998.



World CLC Assembly in Guadalajara Mexico, 1990

Continuously from 1994 to 1997, Father Thanh traveled from Rome to the United States and Canada to guide courses related to vocation, mission, community discernment, and the CLC charism, etc. At the 1996 General Assembly, following the topic of CLC Charism, the entire assembly decided to apply for membership in the World CLC.

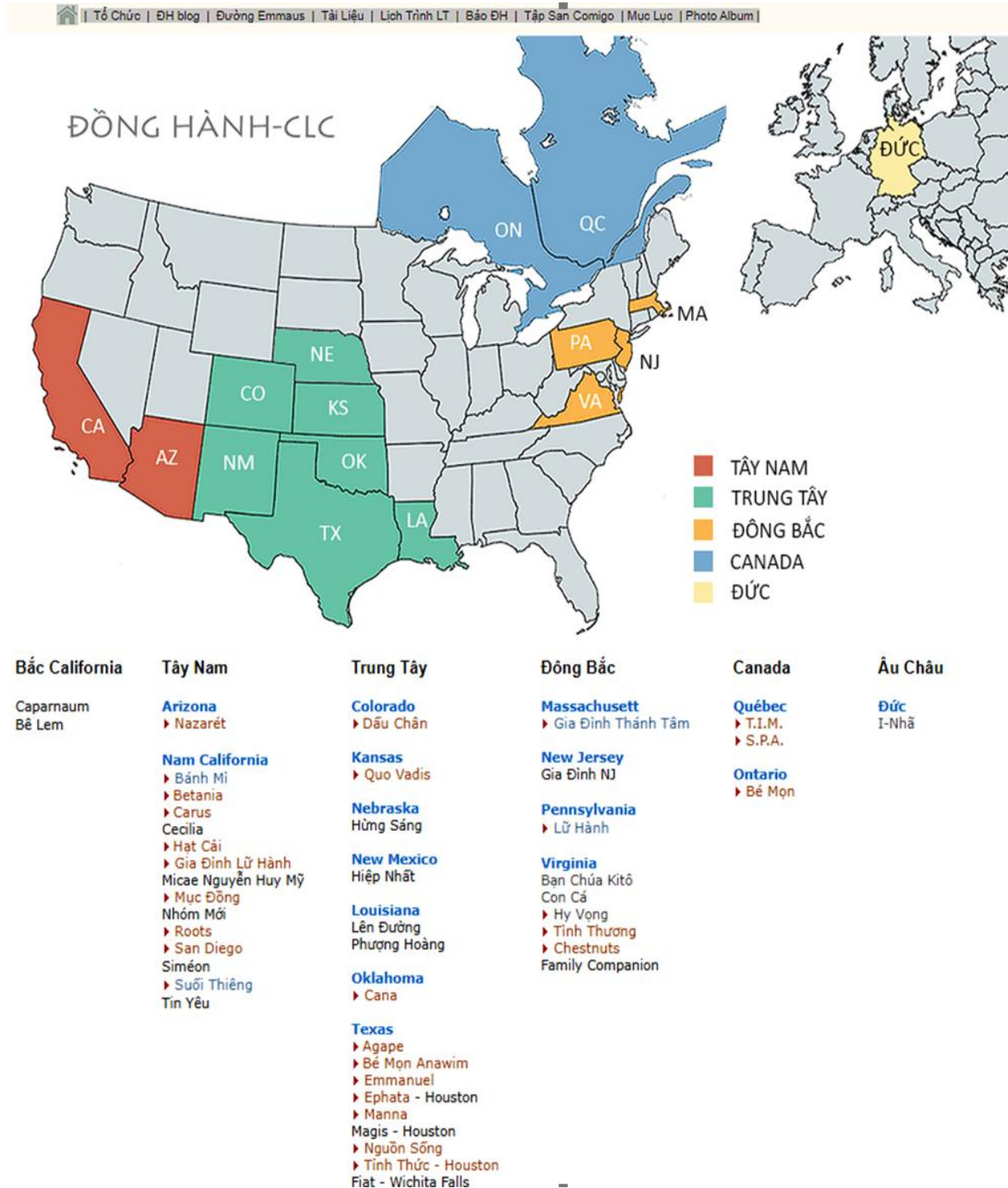
In 1999, courses exploring the CLC lifestyle were held in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. In June 1999, a youth gathering called 'The Walk to Emmaus' was organized in Kansas City initiated by the Youth Ministry of CLC.

In October 2000, the first meeting of the Dong Hanh leadership body was held in Montreal, Canada. Also in 2000, the first 10 groups tested Father Tetlow's Lightworks program, which was based on the 18th Annotation of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. In 2002, some members of Dong Hanh attended the training in the Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (SEEL) program by Seattle U. and the Oregon Jesuit Province. In 2003, the first training course for Lightworks facilitators in Dong Hanh was held in Austin, TX.

In July 2004 in Miami, FL, Dong Hanh officially joined CLC-USA, becoming a part of World CLC, an official community within the Church. The 'movement' phase had passed; Dong Hanh entered a time of becoming an apostolic community.

After joining CLC-USA, Mr. Le Thanh Liem (2008-2012) and Ms. Nguyen Mong Hang (2020-2024) served in the role of 'President'; Father Dominic Nguyen Hung, SJ served as the Ecclesiastical Assistant (EA) of CLC-USA (2021-2024); Ms. Nguyen Thanh Dung, Hoang Thu Tam, and Nguyen Tam Uyen also contributed by serving as 'Secretary' of CLC-USA. The younger members Frank Vuong and John Paul Vu, who were born in the United States, also joined the ExCo of CLC-USA in the position of 'member-at-large.' Dong Hanh continues the process of 'integration' into the larger CLC-USA community while still maintaining its Vietnamese identity.

As of now (2025), the Dong Hanh groups are present in states as shown on the map below. The current ExCo for 2024-2027 includes: President (Vu Quoc Khanh), Vice President (Nguyen Phuong Ha), Southwest Regional Coordinator (Trinh Tuan Linh), Midwest Region Coordinator (Nguyen Thuy Phuong-Trang & Le Dinh Phong), Northeast Region Coordinator (Dao Quynh-Huong), Canada Regional Coordinator (Le Nguyen Tuong-Giang).



Ministries in Dong-Hanh

Family Ministry - Marriage Renewal Program

In August 2006, the Marriage Renewal Workshop (MRW) was first organized at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Woodlynne, New Jersey, initiated by the Dong Hanh Family Committee. The MRW, based on the spirit of the Marriage Renewal Workshop of St. Madeleine Sophie Parish, Bellevue, WA, was organized to assist married couples:

- *Recognize the vast love of God as He invites them to embrace family life through the Sacrament of Marriage, becoming a sign of His love.*
- *Understand that the difficulties and challenges in married life are unavoidable, but with God's grace, they can be overcome together.*
- *Be aware of the importance of marriage for the family, community, society, and the Church.*
- *Create opportunities for couples to develop leadership abilities in the spirit of Christ to contribute to serving the community or parish community.*

As of today, there have been over 85 MRW weekends held in many places across the United States, Canada, Europe, and Vietnam. The Advisory Board of the family ministry includes: Father Ông Lượng, Father An Nguyễn, Father Vincent Thanh, Father Dominic Hùng, Father Hiếu, Father Hạnh Nguyễn (VN), Father Paul Vũ, Father Hạnh Phạm, Sister Hồng Quế, Sister Hiền, and Bishop Louis Nguyễn Anh Tuấn.



First Dong Hanh meeting to discern MRW, 1997, Joliette, Canada



Family Ministry Summit - San Jose, CA 2008



MRW 2024 in Houston



MRW 2024 in Hà Tĩnh, VN

S.E.E.D. Ministry

The S.E.E.D. Ministry (Search.Embark.Experience.Develop) was started with a very simple yearning from some children who asked their parents, “Why do you and the adults go on retreats every year, but we don’t get to go?” The parents started thinking about how they could give their children an experience of the God in a gentle and joyful way, as well as who could introduce their children to the God. An initiative was born to ask Catholic students from the Dong Hanh Community to plan and give a retreat for the children, while the parents prepared food and made logistical arrangements to support the leaders and the children.

The first S.E.E.D. retreat took place in the summer of 2006 in Flagstaff, Arizona, with 6 leaders for the youth and their families. Since then, every year there has been a retreat in AZ during the summer. The retreat has received enthusiastic support from participating youth and their parents in AZ and has gradually expanded to California and then to other states like Pennsylvania, Texas, Denver, New Orleans, and Massachusetts. Each year, there are a total of 8 retreats in the summer with about 80 to over 100 people. The retreat integrates spiritual elements and nature with the hope of helping the youth meet God through nature, community, and family.

Some unique features of the retreat:

- *The retreat is an 'adapted' form of Ignatian spirituality.*
- *The retreat includes 4 tracks: Kids Track: ages 6 to 11, Pre-Teen: ages 12 to 14, and High School Track (ages 15 to 17), Parent Track: for parents. Perhaps this is a unique place where all generations - young and old - can gather together.*
- *The Young Adult Catholic students serve as retreat leaders to work with the children. There is a priest to administer the sacraments and masses. The leaders must undergo training on SEED, Safety Environment of the diocese, and attend an annual Ignatian retreat.*

From a simple retreat in the desert, S.E.E.D. has become a larger ministry. Summer 2025 will mark the 20th anniversary of the blessed history of nearly 100 S.E.E.D. retreats, with many families having experienced the joyful and healthy atmosphere of a 'small church' in nature. The Holy Spirit continues to actively work with the call of the Dong Hanh community to keep organizing S.E.E.D. retreats to serve a larger Catholic community, and to be a place where younger generations are nurtured in the seeds of Faith for the Church and families in the future.



S.E.E.D. Arizona XIX, 2024

Young Adults Ministry

At the General Assembly 2015 (Pittsburgh, PA), after the entire assembly listened, reflected, and assessed the needs of young people, the project 'Our Way for Finding God with Ignatian Spirituality' was proposed, and a Young Adult Working Group was established to bring the needs, concerns, and dreams of young people into prayer and further discernment.

At the 2018 General Assembly (Dallas, TX), the Young Adult Working Group presented the direction and mission of the youth ministry, which includes three core needs: sense of belonging, mentorship, and relationship with God. A unified vision is described as follows: "Through the specific calling of CLC, we are ready to support the Church in accompanying young people, to embrace a lifestyle centered on Jesus Christ. We nurture in them a deep longing to develop a relationship with God through discerning communities, and prepare them passionately to respond to the call of the Gospel in their daily lives." The Assembly once again approved the Young Adult Working Group to continue the project and a Young Adult Implementation Team was established.

In January 2023, a first meeting of the youth ministry was held in Texas with the presence of over 30 youth from the Đồng Hành, Korean, South Florida communities, and CLC-USA ExCo. The meeting identified four needs of the youth and established committees and plans to address these four needs.



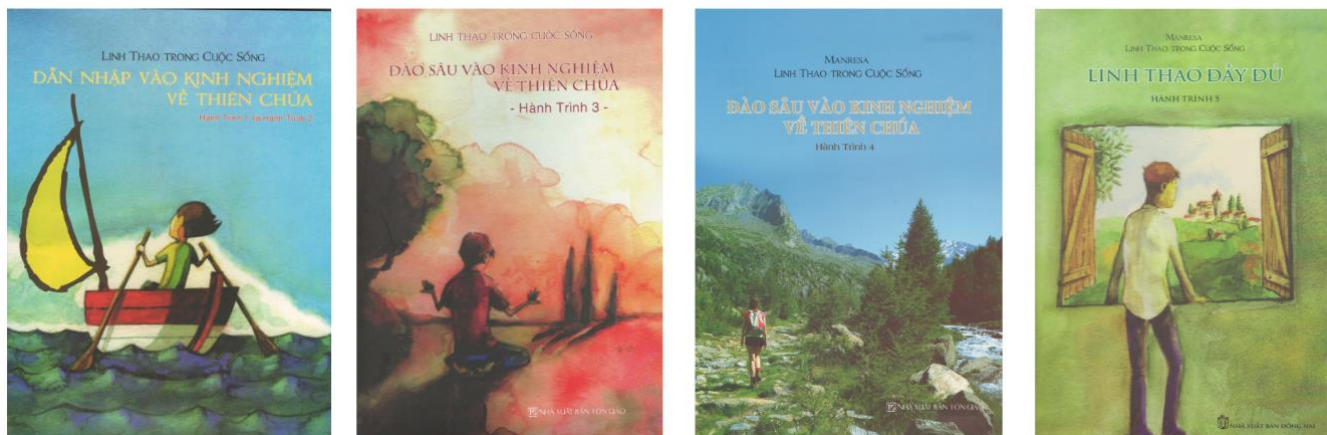
Young Adult Ministry Summit - January 2023, Big Sandy, TX

In July 2024, the leadership of the Young Adult ministry held a meeting in New Orleans. The direction and mission of the Young Adult ministry were revised, and the name was changed to 'Ignis Ministries'. In the annual meeting of the CLC-USA Board of Directors (National Coordinating Council), 'Ignis Ministries' was approved as the ministry for young adults of CLC-USA.

The Spiritual Exercises in Life Program (SEDL)

In the summer of 2018, on his way to retirement in Spain, fr. Elizalde Thành stopped by the United States and introduced the Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life (SEDL) to the Đồng Hành community. The SEDL program began at the Đắc Lộ center in Saigon from 2015 to 2018, led by Fr. Elizalde Thành and several associates who translated the SEDL book series from Spanish (Iniciación a la experiencia de Dios, Profundización en la experiencia de Dios & Ejercicios Espirituales de san Ignacio de Loyola), which includes five "itineraries" from the Ignacio de Loyola Spirituality Center in Salamanca, Spain. After several training sessions for coordinators in the summer of 2018, the SEDL program officially started in Fall 2018 in the three regions of the Northeast, Midwest, and Southwest.

Itineraries 1 & 2 of SEDL introduce participants to the 'Introduction to Experience of God', while Itineraries 3 & 4 guide them into the process of 'Deepening the Experience of God'. The SEDL books have also been translated into English thanks to the collaboration of Fr. Elizalde Thanh, Fr. Alan Yost, SJ from the Western Province of the Society of Jesus, and Fr. William Noe, SJ from the Maryland Province. With the English translation, young adults can also participate in SEDL. On average, about 120 - 150 people join SEDL through Zoom each year, with participants coming from the United States, Europe, Australia, and even Vietnam. In the last two years, the Đồng Hành community has initiated Itinerary 5, which is the complete Spiritual Exercises for those who want to make the entire Spiritual Exercises in their daily lives.



The Five "Itineraries" of Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life (SEDL)

In Gratitude

In May 2024, on the occasion of the Dong Hanh National Assembly in Los Altos, via online Zoom, Fr. Elizalde Thành, 87 years old from Salamanca, Spain, shared his reflections in a story titled 'The Love Story Between God and Me and My Fellow Dong Hanh' through YouTube posted on the website: 'Donghanh.org'.



Đồng Hành - CLC Assenby in Los Altos, CA 2024

Celebrating our 40th anniversary in America & 20th anniversary since becoming part of Christian Life Community

Looking back at the graced history of Dong Hanh CLC , a small, financially unstable team with more goodwill than experience, has formed and continues to grow within the Church, serving God's people in various places, especially among Vietnamese communities. Relying upon the love of Christ and the Holy Spirit, the Dong Hanh CLC community has continued to work with CLC-USA to initiate and support many faith-sharing groups, retreats, the Bible Project, and various ministries for family, youth, and young adults. The Dong-Hanh CLC community truly resonates with Mary's words in her Magnificat, giving thanks to God for having graciously called, chosen, and sent us despite our humble, unworthy, and sinful condition.

*"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name."*

Summary of the History of the Dong-Hanh Christian Life Community (DH-CLC) to contribute to the Commemorative Book for the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam Catholic Community in the USA.

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