

Relive the Fatima Experience

Fatima, Tuesday 8/13: Day 2



Today the assembly continued to listen to stories.

It was WEXCO's turn to tell its story to the world community of the path that have been taken between Nairobi (2003) and Fatima¹. The story was comprehensive, focusing on efforts on formation, leadership, CLC's presence in the Church, collaboration with SJ, apostolic initiatives and various international presences as NGO. It reported to the world body the development of communities in all areas of the world. The story was matter-of-fact-like and it was received in that manner until the story got to the financial situation; World CLC has been operating with a deficit for the last 5 years. The positive thing was that WEXCO managed to reduce the deficit from 19,000 Euro (\$27,000) to about just less than 5,000 Euro (\$7,500) with a budget of less than 150,000 Euro (\$225,000) for the year 2008. This sent a shock wave thought the assembly; a sense of consternation was felt in the mind and hearts of many. But it was not the time to discuss about financial solutions, and so we moved on to other matters of the day. Desolation started to set into me.



Clare from Zambia and Zella from Lebanon

All seemed to regain their footing when WEXCO presented communities from Rwanda and Hungary and asked the assembly to incorporate these communities into the World Community. We were

so happy! The Cuban delegates were not able to secure exit visa yet to leave Cuba for Fatima. We decided to wait for them for the incorporation of CLC-Cuba; the joy was not yet complete.



A “yes” for Rwanda and Hungary from CLC-USA.

The assembly was then presented with a proposal from an African community to change GN #4 to include an option for a 8-day retreat, reasoning that in certain countries it is impossible for a member to undertake the Exercises in 30 day retreat to fulfill the requirement for permanent commitment. The assembly overwhelmingly rejected the proposal.

Next were proposals from Canada, the USA, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Kenya to change the GN#21a. Canada, the USA and the Philippines proposed to change the norm for terms served in WEXCO from 2 to 3 terms without restriction. Kenya also proposed 3 terms but with restriction; only 2 terms in the same office. Hong Kong proposed an 8 term limit. The assembly was sent to another level of desolation when the Portuguese delegation suggested that there might be a violation of GN#28 regarding the nomination of Daniela Frank, since she was serving her second term with WEXCO. The assembly seemed to simultaneously break into discussions among the national delegates; confusion reigned. Thanks to God that lunch time saved us all as the executive secretary asked the assembly to give WEXCO time to study and clarify the issue presented.



Beatrice (Edel) of Kenya and Father Pugin from South Africa in the foreground in the assembly hall

The afternoon was for reflection and sharing in language groups. It did wonder for us all to have time to do personal examen: what happened in the morning and where these sentiments were leading us. The sharing was really wonderful, and I sat and shared with people from England, South Africa, Belgium, Philippines, Lithuania, Taiwan, Uruguay and Zimbabwe. It was such a wonderful to experience the universality of CLC; deep in each sharing is the common concern for CLC. It is indeed a “precious stone.” I found myself entrusting matters into these newly found brothers and sisters and that God would somehow bring things to a happy conclusion.

Mass was the highlight of the day. It brought us back and around Christ. Canada and the USA presented mass in the theme of the tradition of Native Americans. The soothing sound of nature greeted and settled people into their inner self. The purification ritual before mass further helped everyone to come deeper into their hearts. Mt 18:15-20 was just perfect for today: if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. The chapel was bursting with chants and singing. In a few moment of solitude after receiving Communion, my thought was with the delegates from Rwanda and Zimbabwe. I wonder if the realization of the life and hope that CLC can bring through their experience will be left here in Fatima, and I will be immersed back into my own reality when I get back home, where no one would force me into any choice, where I am free to make my own choice. If it would be forgotten amidst of my busyness, then this grace will fade and I would bring nothing back to our community. If we are just ONE BODY, what is calling us? It is not that we are called to find a political or social solution, but it is rather how we are to embrace their pain and suffering and struggles. Maybe when we take them into our hearts, we would realize deeper how Christ is embracing us.

Brothers and sisters, the grace of today was not as sweet as it was yesterday, but it brought into me much more energy, passion, hope and trust. Below the surface of desolation and disturbances there was deep consolation for me. Indeed God was leading the assembly like an apostolic community in the mission of Christ. How do we respond?

In Christ
Liem

ⁱ See “Report of the World Executive Council” attached in PDF format.