

## Relive the Fatima Experience

Fatima, Monday 8/18 – day 7

Dear friends, time seemed to speed up tremendously after Sunday. We had passed the midpoint here in Fatima.

The Sunday break was welcomed, we did not have to work except for about 90 minutes in the morning, but there was a sense of ambivalence and urgency that seemed to descend on the assembly today. We resumed our journey – working journey that was ☺ – and moved onto the third part of the assembly. We would work together for the next 4 days to “commit our world, regional and national communities to practical, realistic initiatives that express ever more deeply and more authentically” who we are as an apostolic body of and in the Church. The ambivalence: How would we do this?



*A photo-op with Father Nicolas: Angelique, Sylvia, Boris Araujo (Guatemala), F. Nicolas, Ramon, Liem and Ann Marie*

We opened the day with the address from Father General Nicolas to the assembly. He titled his address: *Notes for a Prophetic Lay Community guided by the Spirit of God*<sup>i</sup>. He affirmed the assembly of the position of CLC in the Church, that CLC is a lay Community of the Church, and not an extension of the Society of Jesus. He shared with the assembly his visit to Cardinal Rylko, Prefect of the Congregation for the Laity at the Vatican. The cardinal was happy about CLC “because of the serious formation they give to all its members.” We had discerned and confirmed in Itaci (1998) and Nairobi (2003) that we are “an apostolic community sharing mission in the Church.” This mission “has to be a Prophetic Mission,” he stressed. He challenged us to embrace our calling to be prophetic as a community. A body, not just a collection of individuals. How can we be prophetic? By simply living deeper our Ignatian spirituality individually and communally to ever deepen our sense of God for our world:

- SEE with the Eyes of God,

- LISTEN with the Hearing of God,
- FEEL with the Heart of God, and
- SPEAK with the Words of God.

It simply could not be more Ignatian that this, and I heard: Formation! Formation! Formation! ☺ Thanks God that this focus is precisely our effort here in CLC-USA right now, even with the works of the Diversification & Organization Committee. It's all about formation, and growth from it. As for Father Nicolas' address, I think it would be best that you read and contemplate on his message for all of us in the full text that I attached here. It is very rich! Would it be great if you could share with all of us your reflection on it? (Really, it would be so great! ☺)

But I would share here with you the Q&A session following the address. It was quite wonderful to see and feel the spirit of unity and passion between CLC (the assembly) and the Society (F. Nicolas). Here are some of the highlights<sup>ii</sup>:

1. Formation, what does it mean specifically and concretely?  
*You need to deepen your spiritual skills to see, to hear, to feel and to speak. These are practical, not theoretical skills. Formation must be realistic and practical.*
2. Collaboration between SJ and CLC in the area of youth and family.  
*"I feel powerless" in this matter. "That is where you came in," and you have to broaden your formation.*
3. Did we lose the passion for an apostolic somewhere?  
*Being a prophetic community is a process. It is important to "feel" God – see what God sees, hear that God hears, feel what God feels, and then, only then, speak what God speaks. This discernment is critical.*
4. What do we need to deepen?  
*A deepening vocation. You need to be credible on what you do.*
5. Lack of Jesuits to help in accompanying CLC members in their journey of the Exercises.  
*One-on-one is the original form but it might not be the only model to give the Exercises. Others are possible. You need to try out testing different models, and you need to evaluate them. You are free to work with people at their circumstances, but you need to evaluate.*
6. What would be a strategy to initiate a prophetic action?  
*The bishops will need your helps to understand what you are doing. You need to document the difficulties and communicate them to the Curia of the Society in Rome so that we can have official documents to convey the issues to the Vatican. This frequent communication will help to minimize and prevent conflicts. There will be difficulties, but unity is a must. You need to communicate this to more bishops as much as possible.*

I found a genuine sense of care for the development and growth of CLC in Father General, and he was very honest in his answers and very comfortable in admitting his lack of knowledge about the many aspects of CLC as a community - the areas of families trying to live the charism of CLC for example. The critical issue of having CLC and the Jesuits to understand the role of the EAs was repeatedly raised both by CLCers and Jesuits, and Father General warmly and positively received them. He acknowledged his understanding of the issue and indicated that he would bring this issue to the new governance of the Society that would convene in Rome this late September. There was a sense that the relationship between CLC and the Society was elevated to a more positive level, and that many good things would be awaiting us from a better understood collaboration between these 2 different but closely related apostolic bodies, one a religious institution, the other an apostolic community.

The sense of urgency immersed the assembly after Father Nicolas' address as we moved to resume our "working" journey. All the topics from Open Spaces were diligently categorized into 9 main areas<sup>iii</sup>:

1. Experience of the Spiritual Exercises
2. Formation
3. Membership
4. Commitment to the CLC way of life
5. Leadership
6. Collaboration between the Society of Jesus and CLC
7. Networking of apostolic initiatives
8. Financial co-responsibility
9. Families in CLC.

The area of Families in CLC was added during the confirmation session, and it was championed by Angelique.

We had one overall goal: What does the World Community – that is all of us in CLC - need to do? The process had 3 parts: 1) personal reflection on experiences, 2 ) sharing of the experiences in small groups of 3 or 4, 3) sharing in full workshop group, and 4) document the discussion as comprehensive and precisely as possible on 1 page. The reports would be turned in to WEXCO to be synthesized into the final Fatima Document<sup>iv</sup> The national delegations were invited to discuss and strategize their participation in the workshop groups so would best respond to the needs of each national community. Today we would tackle Formation (2), Collaboration (6), Networking (7), and Financial (8). Ann Marie would join the workshop on Networking, Angelique – Formation, and I signed up for Collaboration. Ann Marie was invited to facilitate the English workshop for Networking. We would start working right after lunch.

And working we were! The first part of the workshop did not require much thinking; that was good for my tiring head. ☺ But when it came to second part, a sense of fatigue descended upon me. My brain seemed to stop working. I felt physically exhausted. We had about 20 people in the English workshop for Collaboration, 15 CLCers and 5 Jesuits. The sharing and contributions were so heartfelt and honest. But I was getting more tired at the end. Everything required such quick thinking and dedication. The facilitators were invited and summoned right after lunch for a crash course on the process of the workshop – 15 minutes<sup>v</sup>. Some philosopher said that crisis is the best opportunity, and that was so true. The ambivalence of the process, because no one knew it, turned into the proof of sincere collaboration among us to work toward a good document at the end of the workshop. It seemed that everyone was really tired.

My head was thinking of “REST! REST! REST!” but there was no time for that, because we had a meeting between the delegations of Rwanda and USA right afterward. It was our first meeting. We shared with each other our journey that led us to this meeting. Each one of us felt at peace of the sense that the Holy Spirit moved the 2 delegations in his mysterious way; there was also a sense that a new horizon is unfolding for the 2 communities even though we did not have much clarity in what we would do concretely. We all were enthusiastic and agreed to have lunch together to share more before we depart from Fatima.

Mass today had the flare of Asian cultures. Father Satkunanayagan S.J. of Sri Lanka gave the homily on The Young Ruler<sup>vi</sup>. Of the young ruler, Father Satkunanayagan said: “He wants eternal life for himself. Just himself! He cares only about himself... but Jesus asked us to give each one of us totally.” It was simple but it jolted me into my own state of being. I let my own fatigue become my focus today. I only thought of myself. While everyone pitched in the best that they could, my head tempted me of the pleasure of just lying down on bed. It took me away from seeing and listening to the signs of the presence of God in all the activities of the day. I was duped by the seemingly reasonable of my need to rest; it started with logic and true needs and proceeded to send me into the state of selfishness without me even realizing it. Thanks be to God for these simple words from Father Satkunanayagan. With these words, I

heard: "Come and rest in me, my son!" God's grace is truly mysterious. Just simply being aware of the invitation was already a sincere response. I felt an instantaneous restoration of energy, living energy. All my senses came back alive, like someone just turned on the ignition of a car. I remembered the contemplation on Pentecost on Friday morning: A sudden and total impact that one would not mistake the presence of God. Listening deeply! That was what Father Nicolas invited us to do. Dear friends, what are you seeing and hearing of the signs of God being working in your small communities, in our community of CLC-USA?

The grace of the day was truly Listening deeply indeed.

In Christ,  
Liem

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<sup>i</sup> See attached in PDF for the full text of the address.

<sup>ii</sup> These are paraphrases taken from my notes. They are not verbatim quotes.

<sup>iii</sup> See attached in PDF.

<sup>iv</sup> A copy of this document was emailed to the NCC before the start of the reflection series. It will be attached again at the end of the series.

<sup>v</sup> I assume that it sounds unprepared but the reality was that WEXCO did not know who would sign up for which workshop ahead of time. Well, the topics were the synthesizing results of about 100 topics and issues in Open Space. So it happened the way it supposed to, even appearing chaotic and unstructured.

<sup>vi</sup> Matthew 19:16-22

And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"

And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." Then he said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS; HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?"

Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.