

The Many Faces of CLC



A Report to
The Arrupe Trust Fund
on the Experience
of CLC
at Encuentro 2000
Los Angeles, CA
July 6-9, 2000

Sites and Sounds from Encuentro 2000

The full text of the major talks as well as other photos from Encuentro can be found at www.nccbuscc.org/encuentro2000



Unlearning 'habits of the heart'

I would now like to explore with you two "habits of the heart" to which we need to pay careful attention. They are related to our assumptions about power and abundance out of which we live daily and uncritically....

I have this awareness of an undeniable connection between transformation and power that is relational....

I began to understand fleetingly what Parker Palmer means when he says that scarcity and abundance are not merely economical or political issues. They are deeply spiritual conditions connected with assumptions and choice.

*Excerpts from **Now is the Moment for Conversion of Mind and Heart**, Marie Chin RSM*



Dear Friends,

I should like to share a unique experience with you: how I met Christ in prison, where I spent more than thirteen years,...

My dear friends, I am sharing a very personal secret with you: I met the living Jesus; he fascinated me. I followed him - because I love the defects of Jesus. I could name at least ten of them, but since time is short, I shall tell you about only five of these defects of Jesus.

*Excerpt from: **An Encounter with the Living Jesus Christ**, Archbishop Francois-Xavier Nguyễn Van Thuân, President, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace*

We live in a world desperately in need of reconciliation; we are consumed with unresolved wrongs, unresolved sorrow and incredible woundedness. We are all wounded, rich and poor, of every ethnic and cultural group, but as followers of Jesus Christ we are all called to be wounded healers. How can we become wounded healers? I believe we become wounded healers by being true to our most authentic selves, which means we come before God with all of our history, our cultural world views, our darkness and our light. When we honor ourselves and the Christ within, we cannot help but bring life to our wounded world.

*Excerpt from: **Personal Witness to Encountering the Living Jesus Christ**, Georgiana Valoyce Sanchez, California State University —Long Beach*

Globalization is a complex reality of a wide range of social, political, cultural and economic phenomena and processes. There are many ways in which the impact and the effects of globalization are very positive, providing a quality of life never before imagined and opening up an almost infinity of possibilities for future development and productivity. At the same time, there are subtle and not so subtle, insidious and pervasive negative impacts of globalization that directly challenge us as Christians in our mission and ministry and the focus of this reflection of **solidarity, standing as one, united in the Spirit.**

*Excerpt from: **Standing as One, United in the Spirit**, Sr. Carolee Chanona, RSM Coordinator of Small Christian Communities Diocese of Belize*



You see, Church, the devil doesn't want us to gather like this. He would much rather have us fussing and fighting with each other, all divided up into our separate groups, each one thinking they were the whole body of Christ all by themselves, and nobody sharing with one another.

*Excerpt from: **Encounter with the Living Christ**, Rev. Msgr. Raymond East Pastor, Nativity Church, Washington, DC*



To help reduce world hunger, the industrialized countries should fully implement debt relief and further reform the IMF and the World Trade Organization. We should also increase poverty-focused development assistance, especially for agriculture, health and girls' education in Africa. The best way to reduce hunger is to reduce poverty and powerlessness. So if we can get the nations of the world to mobilize against hunger, we'll achieve progress against poverty and injustice generally.

*Excerpt from: **Talk to Encuentro 2000**, Dr. David Beckmann, President, Bread for the World*



Report on Encuentro 2000

Encuentro 2000 was a gathering called by the National Council of Catholic Bishops inviting persons of all ethnic backgrounds to celebrate the Church's diversity. An Encuentro (Encounter) has been sponsored by the bishops previously to gather the Catholic Hispanic community. For the Jubilee Year this invitation was extended to all Catholics. It was held in Los Angeles at the convention center on July 6-9 and drew about 5,000 people including 88 bishops.

Encuentro is a deliberate attempt to bring people together with the intention of building up the Body of Christ. It involves sharing their lived experience, understanding those experiences in light of Gospel values, and taking action to advance the common good. Leaders seek new perspectives, experience community building, and acquire a deeper understanding of their own faith and Catholic teaching. *Encuentro 2000* built on the previous *encuentros* of the Hispanic community and expanded the experience to include Catholics of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Previous Encuentros were held in 1972, 1977, and 1985.



commissioned by the Archdiocese of New York for the Pope's visit in 1994.

The agenda for the conference included general conferences, liturgies, workshops, breakout sessions which included one small group faith sharing experience, one session with an individual bishop, and workshops. The dynamic of the conference flowed from encountering the living Christ, to conversion, to communion, to solidarity, to mission.



All the prayer sessions and liturgies incorporated music, dance and art from various cultures. Music and dance was going on almost constantly at various venues where ethnic groups would perform. Individual displays of religious traditions of the different cultures from every continent were represented in the Gathering Hall.

The Conference: The conference began on July 6 at 2:30 with a gathering in the Gathering Hall where all general sessions and liturgies were held. Participants had been invited to bring a sample of water from their home and co-mingle it with the water from others in a fountain in the back of the hall. This plus a large tapestry, "The Family of Christ," that provided the backdrop for the stage formed the visual focal points of the gathering hall. The tapestry had a large cross composed of people, families actually, of all colors and modes. It had been



The CLC Presence: CLC was represented by 9 CLCers: 2 from Miami, 2 from the Missouri Region, 1 from Upper MidWest Region, 1 from the MidAtlantic Region, 2 from California Region, and 1 from Argentina! Of these 4 are on NCC. There were 2 persons involved with youth. We were a mixture of Hispanics and Anglos.

CLC had a booth, a typical 10x10 space, with materials and posters. This served as a more visible presence of CLC at the conference as well as a basic contact point for the CLCers present.

CLC met as a group on Friday afternoon from 1:30 to 2:30 and again on Sunday morning from 9:30 to about 11:00. On Friday we shared our experience of the conference to that point. On Sunday, we looked also at what this experience would mean for us personally as well as implications for CLC. At the Sunday gathering we were joined by 2 Korean CLCers from the LA area.

Materials Displayed: Three posters with photos of CLCers, including some from the World Assembly, were displayed with the title, the "Many Faces of CLC," which mirrored the title of the conference "The Many Faces in God's House." (See cover of this report. Gigi Cannon took these with her from the NCC meeting to be used for a regional gathering in her region.)

At the ExCo meeting in May, it was decided that an interim brochure would be put together that would be available at Encuentro. This was done and a response card was also included if they wanted more information. (See enclosures.)

The Regina Mundi members, Mimi Leon and Clarita Baloyra, brought materials in Spanish. (Spanish brochure enclosed.)

Previous issues of Harvest were available including the one's on the World Assembly, our National Assembly, and Formation. Ramon Calzada, SJ, and Sara Bauermeister arrived a day early to set up the booth.

Implications for CLC:

Experience: The experience of being among 5,000 committed Catholics involved in so many ministries in the Church and the workplace was a real affirmation of the Spirit working in the People of God. The diversity of cultures and of works was evidence of the immensity of a God whose expression cannot be reflected in only one cultural experience, but requires the richness of many cultures and ways of approaching God's reality to begin to reveal that reality. Being at the booth brought the opportunity to interact with a great many people including: the director of lay ministry from the Archdiocese of St. Louis who had been in the Bridges program, a daughter of old-time CLCers (Terry Brown) who is currently the Associate Director of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry in Washington, DC.

Visiting other booths also brought about opportunities for networking.



Pat Carter was also able to meet with Augustine Won and Dorothy Chong, members of the Korean CLC in Los Angeles, and listen to their story of forming and developing CLC. Ramon was able to join her for part of this conversation. Dorothy and another Korean CLCer, joined us for the Sunday morning CLC gathering.

The workshops provided another opportunity to share about our experiences of CLC and just let people hear the name and have some awareness of our existence. It was an often-repeated statement that this gathering was a prophetic vision of the church with its diversity. An additional side comment to that was that in this prophetic church, the laity were in front and the bishops in back referring to how we were seated: the bishops were usually in a back section with the laity in front of them. Another underlying current through the whole celebration was, of course, justice. In several ways the Church's social teachings were brought to the forefront.

Ramon and Sara's presence at the Youth & Young Adult sessions helped to spread the word to that age group.



Reflection: This gathering seemed to be a confirmation of our decision to put energy into regional events and participation in national gatherings of other groups. It was a reminder of Greg Boyle, SJ's advice from LA National Assembly: Just show up and learn they're name. If we want to spread the good news of CLC, we have to go where the people are and relate to them in a way that is collaborative. The vitality of the lay experience there spoke to the importance of lay ministry in the world that is rooted in a deep relationship with God. CLC can be a source of empowering lay people both in ecclesial activities and all aspects of their daily life.

Action:

1) *Within US CLC, we need to become more aware of our cultural diversity and celebrate it.* While the different cultural groups find support among their own groupings, they also seem eager to connect to the larger national presence. This was especially true in Pat's discussions with the Korean CLC in LA. While they gained a lot of support from the Korean CLC in New York, they did want to connect with other CLCs to share experiences and formation materials. The members of Regina Mundi were also generous in their willingness to do whatever was needed to help spread the word and share their resources and experiences.

2) *To foster a deeper awareness of the social justice teachings of the church.* One example of this was a forum that Regina Mundi in Miami does every election year which presents the social justice teachings of the Church that is open to everyone. Without endorsing any particular candidate they give people the information they need to make informed decisions about who to vote for. There are many more opportunities available to us.

One of the specific ones mentioned were relief of debt in impoverished nations, the Jubilee 2000 initiative.

3) *When in multi-cultural settings, a more empowering approach to faith-sharing may need to be used.* In our faith sharing groups a process that is outlined in *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lambs*, a book by Eric Law, that gave equal opportunity to everyone in the group to speak without feeling uncomfortable. Those of European descent are more comfortable in initiating sharing in a group, but those of many other cultures feel it is impolite to speak until invited to. This process helps to bridge that difference in cultures and allow everyone to feel more comfortable in the sharing process. The use of the word, "minority," was discouraged because it implies something less than. A copy of the process used at Encuentro is included with this report. (See related enclosed article by Bishop Braxton published in the June 3-10, 2000 issue of *America*.)

4) *It is becoming more urgent for our web site to be updated* adding materials for meetings so that people that interact with us at these types of gatherings will be able to follow up more easily. As the various ethnic groups in CLC develop web sites, they could be linked e.g. Vietnamese (already have a site), Hispanic, Filipino, Korean, etc. Augustine Won (Korean) reacted favorably to this suggestion.

Encuentro 2000 opened up CLC-USA to the opportunity to experience ourselves as part of the larger Church, to exhibit our desire to be more connected to a multi-cultural experience, to develop networking with other like-minded groups, and to live out one aspect of GP6 which calls us "to union with the the Church..." which "impels us to creative and concrete collaboration...".



Additional Resources

www.nccbuscc.org/statements.htm: This section of the eb site of the US Council of Catholic Bishops, contains the bishop's statements from 1992 on.

www.nccbuscc.org/encuentro2000: The web site of the Conference which has the major talks and photos from the conference.

The **US Catholic Magazine**, July 2000 issue, is a special issue on multiculturalism.

The ***Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community***, Eric H.F. Law, 1993, Chalice Press