



CLC In Europe Bulletin

Issue No. 48 November, 2008
www.clc-europe.org

In this Bulletin...

News from Euroteam

Preparation of the
European Assembly

News from the
National Communities

Dear European friends,

Thank you very much for your contributions to this bulletin, it was very enriching for us to have your personal impressions as well as inputs in two voices. Mary from Ireland wrote us a small message: *“The three delegates from Ireland who went to Fatima were Mary O’Meara, Fionnuala Howard and Fr. Michael Gallagher sj. They were very happy with the meeting. They have gone to regions reporting what happened in Fatima. We’re having a day of prayer on 6th December where we will be developing insights of Fatima. All documents, talk and homilies of Fr. General have been passed on to all members”*.

It is really wonderful to know that this important event comes to everybody.

And now the next step: Alicante 2009.

In union of prayer,
Agnès, Martina, Monika

News from Euroteam

We are just coming back from our meeting in Malta, which took place in Mount St. Josephs' House in November 6th – 9th 2009; Father Alfred Micallef sj welcomed us warmly. We prayed with the input of Father Nicolàs in Fatimà, our way to integrate this very enriching speech. We met leaders and members of CLC Malta who invited us in a nice restaurant and had a wonderful diner in Joseanne Peregrins' house, the president of CLC Malta. We even worked one afternoon on the sunny beach...

We read your bulletin, looked to the finances, spoke about formation, the next youth meeting, the migration meeting which takes place in the Spiritual Center of CLC France in Lille in November 28th – 30th 2008.

But the most important point was the next European Assembly in Alicante (Spain) in Pentecost 2009 (May 28-31). The invitation will go out very soon. We worked with Edward Warrington who already guided our meeting in Lille 2004. It was very inspiring to prepare the meeting with him, we worked with the Operating Procedures of Celje 1999.

Our next meeting will take place in Rome in February 20-23 where we will meet to new ExCo.

Highlights from Fatimà

CLC Austria

This time our delegation of two – Andi Laimer and Albert Holzknacht SJ – was made up of newcomers to CLC, which gave them the advantage of an unbiased approach.

The first thing both **Andi** and **Albert** mentioned is the experience of the world-wide dimension of CLC, its unity in diversity. And both were deeply moved by the delegates from Zimbabwe and how they cope with their difficult situation. Andi added "I hope that some day we will really be *one* community which would no longer need a world assembly to realise how badly our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe are off." And he hopes that we will find ways and means to help them.

I will go on with **Andi**. He sums up his most touching impression under the aspect of 'apostolic body' and let me quote him: "... During the Open Space I joined a group titled 'CLC for the poor'. It is obvious that this perception of CLC for the poor or vice versa, 'the poor as CLCers' goes far beyond our final document.

In the Open Space we saw that CLC is in reality not as comprehensive as stated in our GP 4: 'Our Community is made up of Christians: men and women, adults and youth, of all social conditions...'. Most of us are well educated middleclass or from the richer part of society. Why are the poor (including the marginalised, unpossessing and migrants) not part of our community, or only to a very limited extent? Most likely this is because we do not speak their language. We present our formation and the Exercises in a manner and language they do not understand. But we felt sure that these people would go with CLC just as well, they would even enhance our community by their specific experiences and viewpoints. ..."

Andi mentions Chile as an example where this strategy is already being followed and Exercises for the poor have led to new groups in the sense of more – Magis. For Europe Andi hopes that perhaps the 'Forced migration Group' and the Geneva UN-Group may some day lead us to welcome people with other backgrounds than our own in CLC.

Albert was impressed by the diversity which showed in the liturgies of the regions and the colourful national costumes. He experienced the ignatian spirituality as a common basis and was deeply impressed by the encounter with Fr. General Adolfo Nicolás.

Gertrud Zeller

CLC Flemish speaking Belgium

Coming from the cold and rainy North of Belgium we (Pieter-Paul s.j. and myself) expected to find a very nice hot summer we can only dream of. Although prepared by the weather forecast some days before temperature was still a disillusion. But the hearty welcome, enthusiasm and of the Portuguese host team, all in red - blue for the top management – could warm us all much more than any sunshine would be able to.

Some impressions which rise up to me now, 2 months later:

- The presentation and welcoming of Cuba, Zimbabwe and Hungary as new members of our World community made my eyes filled with tears.
- Computer has become as important as prayer! Prayer for the heart, computer for the brains, reports, photos, presentations, and even as prayer-guide...
- Two people making us laughing: Antoine of Syria as our great animator – I remember especially the open space presentations of all his workshops he tried to sell us as a real trade man on the market and Stephen from India with his left and right pocket
- Father General Adolph Nicholas impressing us with his modesty and surprising us with the respect and the importance he emphasised of our mission as lay people in Ignation Spirituality.
- The Japanese tea ceremony, probably the most successful event of the feast day.
- The amazing final document ‘falling down from heaven’ after having been completely disapproved the day before.
- The days of uncertainty about the candidature of Daniela as president and the relief afterwards.

Finally what impressed me most of all was the growth I experienced as a World Community, as one ‘body’ in most understandable atmosphere and respect for diversity and particular problems. So many answers rose on themes as mission, commitment, leadership...acceptable for all nations and continents. Since Nairobi we became much closer towards each other...very strange how the Spirit is working throughout the 5 years from one assembly to the next, bringing us closer in unity. Amazing how we are growing and getting stronger as one apostolic body united in prayer and same Ignation Spirituality.

Ann Siew

CLC French speaking Belgium

The World Assembly was carefully and remarkably prepared by the Portuguese CLC in Fatima, just near the Virgin Sanctuary.

The first remarkable fact consisted in the different sessions or occasions devoted - either per language or per theme – to exchange the history and experience of each of us (from 60 different countries) since the last Assembly in Nairobi. This was done formally in dedicated sessions or informally around cups of coffee.

Emotion was also present when hearing some delegates who explained the political or religious difficulties they encountered in their own country.

We were impressed when hearing the different steps set down by some countries to support and strengthen CLC communities in difficulty, to develop the social engagements and/or to share their faith and their (also our) wealth.

Sharing our own spiritual experience, our own CLC life was fruitful for everybody and helped us in having a better understanding of each other life, of each specificity, of human or financial resource difficulties occurring in some CLC countries,

One of the most important events was without doubt the visit of Padre Nicola, our World Assistant, during the assembly: to hear him his trust of seeing Ignacio's spirituality sprayed and developed among the laics, to hear his exhortation for the CLC to become more and more prophets in today's world was a great moment of hope and of Joy for everybody.

By being witnesses in this assembly, we really felt a "spirit" spread on all the CLC, based on a deep spiritual heritage as given by our Father Ignacio.

During the assembly, we really lived the CLC as being a gift of God for His Church. Gift, but also challenge, challenge of being one body of laics in move, of being messengers in our today's activities, listening to the Spirit and keeping Ignacio's intuition: "Discern, Send, Sustain and Assess"

Marc Dubois

CLC Croatia

It was good to be at the Word Assembly in Fatima. Croatian delegation consisted of two delegates. Since we are a world organisation it was necessary that we encounter on the world level. Therefore it was great that we were together in Fatima, to talk, have meals together, learn about each other. It is good to notice that we obviously have the same questions in different parts of the world and in this kind of meetings we are in position to notice it. Few things stood out for us. The very organisation of the Assembly was outstanding. The host team was excellent. They were great help, friendly, open and kind :) Also the guide of the Assembly Edward Warrington was great. He kept us on the right track, capturing the most out of what we were saying. He has been a true guide. Every day showed us our diversity in language, culture, yet similarity in our questions, yearnings and desires.

Days of the special graces were the ones we were honoured by the presence of our ecclesial assistant p. Nicholas, his prayer with us in the Sanctuary of Fatima, his speech to the Assembly, and the mass on Sunday when we were joined by other members of CLC. Joyful moments were those sharing about our national symbols and receiving new members to the Word Community.

The words we heard echoed from different sides were formation, formation, formation. We hope that this experience and the contacts that we made can deepen our CLC way of life here in Croatia.

Dunja Juras

CLC England and Wales

From 11 to 22 August over 200 delegates from 66 countries gathered in Fatima, Portugal for the CLC World Assembly. The assembly happens every five years and is an opportunity for the World Community to meet together, pray about and reflect on where the Holy Spirit is at work.

The first three days were spent sharing the stories and experiences of the diverse national communities. This was followed by three days exchanging and discussing the issues important in CLC throughout the world. The final few days were a time for discerning the challenges ahead, making plans, and electing leaders for the World Executive.

The four delegates from England and Wales: Evolene Maloret (President), John O'Sullivan (National Secretary), Alan Harrison (our new Ecclesial Assistant) and Paul Parmenter and Una Buckley who volunteered at the Assembly shared their impressions of Fatima 2008.

Evelyn Maloret "For me one of the most significant moments, was the address by Fr Adolfo Nicolas, the Jesuit General, in which he challenged us to live a prophetic vocation.....to become a prophetic community! What does this mean in practice? It means being a community that SEES with the eyes of God, LISTENS with the hearing of God, FEELS with the heart of God and SPEAKS the Word of God. As I reflect on these words and the assembly itself there were so many signs of this already in place. In the sharing of our stories on the opening day we heard not only the joys and successes of some national communities but also the incredible sufferings and struggles of others in the face of oppression and difficulties within their own countries, not least among them Rwanda and Zimbabwe. Yet in spite of this, CLC continues to flourish and look for ways to help those within their communities, particularly the poor and marginalized."

John O Sullivan “What remains with me, is the sense of welcome and belonging, the diverse communities represented in CLC and what they bring and represent. There were so many people from so many different countries all with different perspectives and experiences and yet many of the themes we felt were important were shared. Energy and enthusiasm for growing CLC, Gratitude for God’s gifts to us, a sense of belonging in diversity, a desire to develop our understanding of mission, and above all the phrase ‘Do not be afraid’.”

Alan Harrison SJ “It was the very best of introductions to the CLC World Community with its wealth of human warmth and the rich diversity of encountering God in multiform cultures and numerous languages. The breadth and depth of Ignatian Spirituality which drives forward CLC was evident at every stage of the carefully organised proceedings but particularly in times of prayer and at the high points of daily Eucharistic celebration. This was affirmed in the presence of Fr Adolfo Nicolas, the Jesuit General, whose dynamic personality reminded us of our essential Ignatian call to be prophetic witnesses.

Paul Parmenter: Almost immediately I felt part of a community despite our diversity being from 66 different national communities, and working in 3 languages. After the introductions and reports I was challenged by Alfredo Sfeir-Younis sharing his spirituality, influenced by Buddhism and the Spiritual Exercises, for healing the world. During the main work of the assembly I became involved in issues of the financing of World CLC, the challenge of CLC reaching out to the poor, and the issues of membership and commitment in CLC, and even spoke in the plenary session as I became passionate about the financial difficulties facing World CLC.

Una Buckley “As a volunteer I was helping to ensure the assembly ran smoothly. The work was varied...sorting out lost luggage, finding mobile phone chargers, serving coffee, scrubbing chairs, counting votes in the elections... My main task was to help with content for the website. This involved writing summaries of the day’s activities, taking photos and video and audio interviews with the delegates and speakers. It was such a privilege to be able to serve the assembly and to get to know CLCers from so many different countries. The world now feels like a much smaller place!”

Joe Egerton

CLC France

Back from Fatima, I keep printed in my heart some strong images:

- First, the delegates of Zimbabwe presenting their symbol to the Assembly: a broken jar, from which they removed the pieces, one after the other, saying: “this is the starving children who are dying, but we are still alive”, “this is the fixed elections, but we are still alive”, “this is the growing inflation, but we are still alive”... And the last day, at the airport, the smile on the Jesuit assistant’s face.

- The late arrival of two delegates of Cuba, because they couldn’t obtain their visas in time, and the difficult conditions in which CLC has grown, as for Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and of course Zimbabwe.

- “Stephen’s pocket”: after the ExCo’s account about the lack of funds for operating expenses, Stephen, an Indian delegate, proposed his pocket to collect money for the ExCo. Later on, linked with South Africa and Zambia, he proposed his other pocket to collect money for Zimbabwe: this CLC Community had their national meeting a few days after the Assembly, and no money to give food for all the participants; with Stephen’s pocket, we could collect 900 euros: a concrete sign of co-responsibility and union of hearts.

- The “open day”, and the meeting with a great part of Portuguese CLC; young families with many children sleeping in their push chair during the afternoon. The Portuguese were in charge of the lunch for everybody: each of them had brought food for several persons, and we all ate very well, even if we were more than 1000!

- The presence of Father Nicolàs, very simple and strong at the same time, through the homely and the address to the Assembly.

- The Eucharist, animated by the different continents, namely the last Eucharist, animated by Europe: the lectures and the intentions for prayer were read, each time, in one of the 14 languages spoken by the participants; this diversity, on such a little territory (if you look at a map) is at the same time a richness and a difficulty, with the paradox that the 3 official languages are European, but none was common to all of us. Contrast with the other continents, namely Latin America, with one language (if you except Brazilian), which makes more simple communication and formation for the 16 CLC countries of that continent.

- And at last, Alison, a delegate of Malta, telling to a small group the big difficulties they have with the great number of refugees on their small island. That seems to me a very big challenge for Europe, especially in those times where the European politics for migrations is very restrictive.

Noëlle Hiesse,
French delegate at Fatima

CLC Germany

Fascinating: The variety – people from 67 nations, all in one place, who, even though being so diverse in many aspects, have a common base, talk and listen to each other, work, struggle, laugh, celebrate and pray together – in three official languages – and by the means of hands, feet, gestures and facial expressions.

A very special moment for us was when our godcommunity Hungary was received into the CLC world community. During the last few years we have developed intensive and heartfelt relations which surely are going to stay alive.

Impressive: The three-minute introductory appetizers of 65 delegations ranging from hilarious to moving to tears (those from Zimbabwe and Ruanda) - the hospitality of the Portuguese CLC – the sharing in language groups – the "Open Space" method and how it worked, although everything had to be explained in three languages – the visitor's day with guests from as far as Japan, Taiwan and Latin America! – Father Nicolás, when he said mass under green leaves and the way he addressed the assembly. We, in our delegation, decided immediately that we wanted to translate his speech. We are experiencing now in Germany how good this speech is being received and how many people are being inspired by his words – the masses prepared by the different CLC regions.

Lasting: The presentation of the Zimbabwean Delegation: We invited their Ecclesiastical Assistant Konrad Landsberg to join the meeting of our national "Forum Promotion" at the end of September to learn more from each other and to start building a closer relation between our two countries, possibly in cooperation with Austria! The translation of "apostolic body" and "apostolic community" into German will surely keep us busy for quite a while. Back in Fatima we already had lively discussions about the term and its meaning.

Simply good and rewarding: The easiness we experienced when we got to talk to each other – the meetings with the delegations of our twinning and neighbour communities – the common preparations of the morning prayer and the European mass, the compilation of a thanksgiving book for the outgoing ExCo, our little top secret that would make us insiders smile and interconnect us – the European Assembly one morning – the meals with many vitamins and the possibility to have our meals in silence in a separate dining room.

And now? We delegates are concerned about how to convey, tell and pass on everything we lived in Fatima. We wish that the experience to be a worldwide community may have an effect in the many countries and communities and have many people "infected", in order to move them to get and keep in touch with CLCers of other countries. There will be one such opportunity in Europe: We are planning a week of European holidays in the south of Germany at the beginning of August 2010 and we would like to invite you already to think about this option. To journey as an apostolic body follows a certain rhythm: Stop over and over again and tell HIM

everything that happened. See, listen, feel as Jesus sees, listens, feels. Discern and decide and go and act as HE sends and asks us to, His community, in the various countries, in Europe and worldwide!

Inge Hoepfl

CLC – HUNGARY, KÉK

Géza Pakot SJ: "I was very much struck by the Ignatian atmosphere, which characterized the whole assembly. In fact, at times I even forgot that I am not with my fellow Jesuits, and could talk, as Fr. Nicolás also expressed, as if I was with Jesuits, openly, honestly and creatively. It was touching to experience the influence of the Spiritual Exercises and that of the Ignatian inspiration, which overflow in the life of Christians all over the world. I was very much inspired by their witnesses to take a new look at the Ignatian inspiration as the root of my spiritual life, and also implement it more boldly in my mission. Thus, I found a new source of strength to help others in their becoming part of CLC and in their experiencing the Ignatian vision and mission, which is carried by the Christian Life Community. May God bless us with the graces we need in this enterprise."

Zsófia Ercsey, Eurolink: „World Assembly in Fatima was a great and unique experience for me. It confirmed my CLC identity. I discovered the basic Saint Ignatian words again and I read the book of Willi Lambert SJ again. Group sharings were encouraging for me. Since then I am talking about my experiences to my friends in my group and community. I am very grateful for this experience! This World Assembly was a historical one for us, because the Hungarian CLC, KÉK has officially become the part of World CLC. Thanks to God and our patron, the German GCL!”

CLC Lithuania

CLC Lithuania was an observer community in this General Assembly in Fatima. There were 3 delegates: Ecclesiastical Assistant father Stasys Kazėnas sj, Community President Jūratė Stučinskaitė and Community member Salvija Jurčienė. Of course they came back with lots of impressions. We've heard already their joy and some first impressions during the meeting in occasion of the visit of father Adolfo Nicolas in Lithuania. But they organized 3 regional meetings too, for the members of our national CLC to share their experiences. So I'll try to resume some of them.

At first they were impressed by diversity and authenticity of each national CLC with their different experiences of life. They were touched by those CLC who comes from the poor and suffering regions as CLC Zambia or CLC Rwanda. These Communities brought a testimony of hope and strength. In the face of their hardships and poverty we feel helpless and poor, but this sentence from their dialog shows one direction: "We can not reduce the misery of the world, but we can share our love".

During the free discussions time the experiences of life of the others CLC gave some light and support too. For example: CLC Korea gives a big support to the Society of Jesus by giving the Spiritual Exercises (there about 1 000 participants per year). It is encouraging for us too for searching our common mission. CLC Japan and most CLC of the region of Asia gave a testimony of their practice of engagement for CLC. It invites us to hear this experience more deeply. CLC Japan shared also their practice about the work of their National service group (each time they gather in a different place to be able to meet some communities of that town, village or region after their work together). We hope to apply it to the National Service group of CLC Lithuania. A lot of documents on formation from CLC Kenya, CLC Australia, CLC Great Britain, CLC Spain or CLC Zambia and other Communities will support our Community on this way. The meeting with CLC French (our "God parents") was joyful and concrete: they previewed some common projects next year concerning formation.

Father Adolfo Nicolas made a great impression by his simplicity.

They admired the method of "open space" and all the process of creation of the final document where each sentence contains a real human experience of life with its joys, sufferings, needs and hopes. They were the witnesses of amazing work of the Holy Spirit too.

Some highlights were affirmed in Fatima that must be deepened by everybody (personally and in local/national community): CLC is a vocation; the sense of what the mission is; the importance to learn how to discern and to practice it in our lives; the importance to feel the community dimension, to have a sense of a "body" of CLC, that invites us to communicate with each others.

Finally despite the busy days there were always lots of beautiful moments as liturgical celebrations (with the traditions from Africa, Asia or Lebanon), the dance evenings and silent prayer at the basilica of Fatima.

Kristina Rankelytė

CLC Luxemburg

The Christian Life Community: Can it live like a prophetic lay community?

PIERRE MEYERS SJ, NATIONAL ECCLESIASTICAL ASSISTANT TO CLC LU, EVOKES SOME PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS OF THIS EVENT.

I shall mention ¹ certain key experiences:

- the welcome
- sharing of national histories ("the history of our graces")
- an inspiring space of ideas and experiences
- orientations and an EXCO for the future

1. The welcome

At our arrival at Lisbon airport, right at the exit of the customs: smiling faces, welcoming hands, the logo of Fatima, ..., everything to tell us *"be welcome"*! A very simple complicity can be sensed *"we will take you by bus, after the arrival of the Belgian and Irish delegations, to your accommodation in Fatima"*. – This very cordial, initial welcome will accompany us during the whole of our stay. CLC-Portugal (CVX POR) had set up a generous and efficient task force of volunteers, all members or friends of CLC, in order to provide a sympathetic, personal and simple framework for the 220 delegates coming from every continent to the WA. Their welcome would culminate in the "visitors' day", when, instead of hiring a catering firm, members (friends and relatives) of CLC POR had prepared succulent, varied and opulent dishes for600 people gathering for the feast! In the words of one person in charge, *"Fatima 2008 was for us CLC POR a real challenge that has helped us to find ourselves again !"*

2. sharing of our histories ("the history of our graces")

"We rejoice in being united under the loving eyes of God" this was the experience of the first days of the WA. The delegations shared their respective routes since Nairobi (2003), by means of their symbols and/or words: very beautiful and profound testimonies, not without humour, sometimes mysterious, but questioning and challenging, opening vistas beyond words on the joys, the suffering, the hopes of the communities. Two reports touched me particularly:

* CLC in Ruanda *"has found its way"* by enabling Tutsis and Hutus (mortal enemies during the genocide) to share and pray together, to build a centre of medical care for the victims of AIDS, to distribute meals to the famished, to send children to school whose families had been decimated by war, disease or famine...

* CLC in Zimbabwe had chosen as its symbol a *chipped terra cotta cooking pot*: *"this is our country, torn by wars, greed and the jealousy of some powerful politicians and international companies,*

¹ The Luxembourgish delegation was supposed to be made up of Guy Schuller, Josée Barthel and myself. Guy was unable to attend owing to a grave illness.

ruined by famine, an astronomical inflation.... Yet, it is also the place where we have been granted to guide retreats, to organise social support, to carry a burning torch of hope ".

It was also thanks to the presentation and the approval of the succinct report of the world EXCO that we could comprehend the horizon in front of which our meeting in Fatima was to take place.

3. An inspiring space of ideas and experiences

The second stage of our enterprise consisted in “playing” a game of communication (with strict rules that were explained and accepted in advance). For two days, this procedure enabled every member to initiate (or participate in) a sharing of ideas and experiences of CLC that were dear to him or her. At the beginning, Eddy Mercieca sj invited us to adopt an attitude of great spiritual receptiveness (based on detachment and the intention to listen) towards each other. Thus, we were able to welcome what the Holy Spirit could inspire in us through sharing and reflection. More than 60 workshops were thus constituted according to the inspirations and dispositions of everybody. Examples:

- How can we articulate together "common mission" – "personal mission" – "private life"?
- Cooperation between Jesuits and CLC : reasons for failures – the conditions for success ?
- Central Europe and the east : an assessment of our situation
- How can we fix priorities in our daily lives ?
- How can we invite young people to experience the Spiritual Exercises and to embark on a CLC way?
- How can we foster the development of groups from the stage of sharing faith to apostolic action?

Everybody had the opportunity to share very « down-to-earth» concerns and aspirations of CLC life, our success stories and our projects. I was particularly happy to share on our project “Group GO” (young adults) and to hear other delegations (Hong-Kong, English-speaking Canada, Portugal, Slovenia) speaking on the same topic. On the whole, “open space” helped us talk about our experiences, our reflections, our appeals, our projects...all of which would open out into an inspiring text for the future (final document).

4. Orientations and an EXCO for the future.

Would the editorial group, responsible for the drafting of the final document, (so wisely constituted with respect to cultural and linguistic areas) be up to this exploit/feat? Mission impossible in fact! We needed time (spiritual frustration and desolations) in order to understand it, and to confer to a person, witness of the WA, the licence to formulate an “inspiring text”, a text...

- that would *echo our communal discernments*,

- that would set certain road makers (balises, Leitplanken) in order to *"live more profoundly and act more efficiently as an apostolic body after Fatima 2008"*.

But, what is the use of a *Final Document*, if it is not translated into the concrete realities of everyday life by actual people? The task of the newly elected EXCO will be to help the different national CLCs to implement it in accordance with local practices and sensibilities. Its election took place in a serene and peaceful atmosphere after the admission (which had caused many “inner motions”) of the candidature of Daniela Frank, who was elected as president of World CLC by 57 out of 60 votes.

Conclusion

Simply: thank you and a wish !

Thank you to CLC in Luxembourg, who let me take part in this deeply enriching experience of Fatima; of which I have only selected some snapshots.

My wish is that the members of CLC Lu may discover (individually or collectively):

- The wealth which an apostolic exchange and discernment beyond the local group or the national borders represents.
- The strength of trust, love and hope that the texts of world CLC can inspire, if they are received for what they are: not as stale documents to be archived, but as traces of a shared, apostolic life, a spiritual process that should be deepened beyond national borders, a “gift that God makes us and that we make God in our specific circumstances” (cf. GP 1) as members of one apostolic body.

Pierre Meyers SJ
October 2008

CLC Luxemburg

To live more deeply as an apostolic body and to act in a more efficient way

For me, *Fatima* started with the preparation for the election of the delegates. From 18th November 2007 (*National group day with the election and the sending of the delegates; Journée des Equipes avec les élections et l'envoi des délégués*) *Fatima* became for me the audacity to advance into deep waters, risking an unknown path, a new experience, an adventure.

I am very happy and infinitely grateful to have been able to make this experience and I thank the whole of CLC Luxembourg for the trust, the support and the prayers that accompanied us all through the Assembly.

The news of the severe illness of Guy, our president, a fortnight before our departure shook me deeply. I felt a great sorrow because he could not participate in this Assembly, which he had prepared with so much dedication and which he was looking forward to with great joy and confidence.

Pierre, our Ecclesiastical assistant, and I left on 11th August. Some of our members came to the airport to say good-bye. Guy's state preoccupied all of us, but it was also he who encouraged us by his mails and prayers to leave with a light and open heart at the same time.

Fatima was for me :

- faces
- colours
- languages

Yet, moreover :

- encounters
- exchange/sharing
- testimonies
- demanding discernments
- shared joys and sorrow
- histories of grace, histories of war
- festive Eucharists
- moments of joy, moments of grief and desolation

Fatima was the opportunity to:

- establish links with all the national communities
- reinforce existing links and friendships
- live moments of joy with people from all over the world
- discover the global dimension of CLC

- live the unity of the spiritual vision, despite the political, cultural and linguistic diversities

Fatima was :

- the call to advance deeper,
- the invitation to discover the path and the means to advance as an apostolic body,
- the challenge to grow spiritually and as a human being to follow Christ in today's world.

Open space

In order to explore the dimension of apostolic body, we ventured along according to the method called «open space». This method invited us to put together our experiences, our knowledge, our wisdom, our talents and skills, to highlight the initiatives, the reflections, the challenges, the commitments, to encourage each other to reflect, to share our experiences, to speak up about our realities...

It reminded me of a fair (market) : one advertises, approaches a question, identifies it, writes it on a sheet of paper, posts it on a notice board, indicates a time and venue where those who are interested may meet around the suggested topic.

(Four principles and one law govern the communication in « open space »:
the principles :

- 1) The people who participate are the right ones.
- 2) What happens is the only thing which should happen.
- 3) When it starts, the time is right.
- 4) When it's over, it's over.

The law of mobility or the law of the two feet:

I am responsible of my two feet, i.e. I decide where I'm going...

There are bees and butterflies. Like the *bees* that fly from flower to flower, the participants move from one group to another, create links, enrich or disrupt with what they bring. The *butterflies* adopt a dreamy attitude of non-action, outside the discussion and do not contribute to the group dynamics.

The « host team » worked all night to photocopy the 64 topics that were proposed and worked on in the groups. The next day, every delegate was handed a booklet of a hundred pages. The topics were grouped and discussed in different languages.

The, we faced the question :

How do we put the theory into practice ? What projects, what actions would we like to implement?

The Assembly identified 9 topics for orientation, notably :

- the experience of the *Spiritual Exercises*
- formation
- membership
- commitment to CLC lifestyle
- leadership
- cooperation between the Society of Jesus and CLC
- networking of apostolic initiatives
- financial co-responsibility
- the nature and the processes of the apostolic body

The World Assembly ended on 21st August with the approval of the Recommendations and the election of the new World EXCO. During the final Eucharist, the new EXCO and all the delegates were sent on mission. Encouraged and « dynamized » by the graces we have received and by the profound experience of being an apostolic body, we must now implement what we have lived in Fatima.

Josée Barthel
Vice-president of CLC Luxembourg

CLC Poland

The World Assembly was a great experience and a grace of touching different and rich cultures and nations, which live in one Community and Church. Exactly we rejoiced the meeting with delegates from the middle and east Europe, but also an important experience were the contacts and conversation with the representatives from different continents.

We are sure that the meeting with General Assistant – fr. Adolfo Nicolas was a very important moment for us. He called us to create CLC community as a prophetic community, which sees the world with the Eyes of God, listens to with the Hearing of God, feels with the Heart of God, speaks the Word of God. The place of the General Assembly – Fatima, the place of revelation of Mary – Mother of God was also important for our delegation. We sometimes participated in the evening prayers on the large square in the front of the sanctuary and we were confirmed in our mission in CLC.

Margaret Sosińska

CLC Portugal

First of all the World Assembly was an unforgettable moment, showing that besides the differences between every participant, we are all united by the Spirit and the desire of being His companion.

The presentations took place in the first two days, first the presentations of all the communities and then the presentation of the World Ex-Co.

At the fourth day an explosion happened, a sort of Pentecost, through the dynamic of the open space - everybody was invited to bring questions and propose subjects to discussion on CLC. The result was a 70 pages "book", each page with a theme. Consolation was felt everywhere!

The great emotion was the open day, almost 600 people from all over the world, sharing a common spirituality and united in a celebration in the middle of the trees in an atmosphere of total serenity. Add the fascinating character of Father General Adolfo Nicolás and it seems you in a dream...

This day was a great inspiration for the final week of the Assembly.

The last days were dedicated to make the final document. In an environment of great discernment all the ideas that resulted from the open space dynamic were discussed in small work groups with the mission of making concrete proposals for each of them.

In the last day the new World Ex-Co was elected.

We cannot leave aside the liturgical celebrations, always moments of great joy and sense of communion. Of true unity in the diversity.

For the Portuguese community this was an important event, not only for its organization, but specially for the compliments received by most of the participants.

Filipe Figueiredo

CLC SLOVENIA

As the majority of the countries gathered in Fatima also Slovenian CLC sent three delegates: ecclesiastical assistant (p. Damjan Ristic), president of Slovenian CLC (Mateja Hajsek) and Eurolink (myself).

After Fatima we three got together at Matejas and looked in prayer what we experienced in Fatima and especially how can we transmit this special experience and message to our community. In Fatima we found as the most touching the situation in some CLC communities in Africa (p.e. Zimbabwe). We asked ourselves how we can help. We helped in Fatima already shot terms, but we would like to help more. In Fatima we all found interesting and helping the open space method, we liked exchange of life and experience with others CLC communities, the visitors day touched us also, we felt very blessed to be in Fatima with delegates (and also Jesuits) from ca. 70 countries.

During the Fatima assembly we reported from there with the help of a blog (www.sskz.blogspot.com) that you too are invited to see.

Thanks God our national community hold in September a community weekend (almost 90 members/with families came) where we could present all we thought was important for the members and possible for them to understand because the Fatima experience was for us delegates so unique that

we knew that we can not let feel others the same we do or did. So we focused on the participants i.e. delegates in Fatima and experience lived in the national communities but also on there personal experience, the final document and some tourist impressions. With that we provoked a debate about how we can deepen our CLC way of life and what it is and how can we be an apostolic body. We decided that we continue that discussion in March in our national assembly with the help of open space method.

Damjan, Metka and I reported about Fatima also in four different articles in Slovenian CLC monthly bulletin.

Let Lord help us to follow Him more closely.

Tomaz Smid

CLC Spain

FATIMA 08: An Experience of Communion

The preparation of any World Assembly begins long before its actual beginning. In our Assembly, one thing was certain: all the participants arrived to Lisbon airport with a common feeling, despite the warmth welcome of the locals and their sincere smiles; we were all overwhelmed by the high responsibility of the mission placed upon my own shoulders and upon those of my fellow delegates of CLC Spain.

Being sent to this mission, the only response we could offer was placing our trust upon the Lord and not upon our own efforts. We had to pray the Lord to grant us enough sensibility, disposition, openness of heart and the great gift of listening to others and to whatever He had to tell us.

Once in Fatima we received the impact of the richness of the Christian Life Community throughout the world: a grand and precious variety of cultural and linguistic diversity, enriched by colours and rhythms and, indeed, of great apostolic variety as well. Nevertheless, as days passed, the diversity became unity, that is how I experienced it. Amongst us, the sentiment of unity gave sense to plurality and diversity. Undoubtedly, supporting this fact were the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and the treasure of Ignatian spirituality, incarnated and lived throughout our world in common unity.

I felt a great consolation and gratitude for being a member of the CLC and, at the same time, I felt myself at home, rightly in the place were I should be, the place within the Church God had prepared for me. I felt deeply united by my fellow delegates, touched and amazed by their particular and personal situations and truly learning from them all. I had been called together with them to the same and unique vocation known as CLC and convoked to this intense and crucial moment for the Community, the World Assembly. The aim was to search the Will of God for His Community. As a matter of fact, from the very day we arrived and met ourselves as a group of unknown people, we turned to be and feel as a sole world community, ready to advance as a lay apostolic body that thrives to serve and build in a common mission. Thus, thanks to this “common feeling” easily recognizable amongst the delegates, joy was likewise the common mood of the Assembly, lifted up and intensified at the mass held at the end of every day, an especially that of the visitor’s day. That day had a special guest, Fr. Nicolas, our World Assistant who encouraged us all with his true modesty and kindness to be a prophetic community.

The Fatima experience has truly meant a transformation. One came with the purpose of being a member of your national community, and became the ears and the words, the heart and the word of a wider and more universal aim: the World Community. This project leads us to live as an apostolic body leaned to follow the path of Christ, poor and humble, and committed to the service of the Church and the World.

Aurora Camps
CVX Spanish Delegate

The Ignatian Pilgrimage in the aftermath of Fatima

Nonetheless time has run away unfortunately fast, there still remains the sweet flavour of the Ignatian Pilgrimage of this late summer. When I say that the recollections are very much alive, I really mean it. One fair proof of that are the everyday mails between the pilgrims navigating from north to south and from east to west through the virtual ocean of internet which still share the experiences and gratitude of those days.

Just five days, no more or less, but intensive, radiant and truly joyful for all, included guide and driver; no exempt from tiredness and exhaustion at the end of everyday's schedule, but filled with charm and beauty. Someone said our Fr. St Ignatius, as one pilgrim more, accompanied us in the journey, leading us from the old Castilian town of Salamanca, where he was despised and rejected, to the prosperous Mediterranean Barcelona whose harbour once said farewell to the saint in his trip to Jerusalem, where he had the hope to endure Christ's Calvary as Christ himself did.

Thirty eight pilgrims plus a driver from eighteen countries, amongst which only four or five came from European countries; the rest made their ways from overseas to the land where Ignatius was born as spent his junior years. Needless to say that Salamanca, Loyola, Xavier, Zaragoza, Montserrat, Manresa and Barcelona, all of these sites had plenty of meaning for the Ignatian Family. Being a Jesuit, as nine of our pilgrims were, had almost surely offered a previous chance for a visit, true guarantee of the formation expected for the sons of St. Ignatius. However, for all the rest of the group, members of the Christian Life Community, this pilgrimage-tour to the 'holy' places was a bird in the hand, a unique opportunity. So it was. Praise, prayer, friendship and unity were the ingredients to the recipe. Our Lady, mother of all, no matter if Fatima, Pilar, Montserrat, Vega or whatever her advocacy, kept us safe throughout the five days, for she was our true guide and our true star. She led us to her beloved son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for whom the Assembly and the pilgrimage were both held, for the building of His Church and for His Love and Mercy. He was all time amongst us as He is with His Church, and within His Church with His Christian Life Community where men and women strive to be like him and to find him in all things. AMDG.

Benito Marín
CVX-Salamanca (Spain)

CLC Switzerland

In the second part of the Assembly, one late evening at 11 p.m., just at the end of a "Latin evening" with a magic Cuban Jesuit and Latin dances, Daniela Frank came to me with a surprise: She asked me in the name of the World ExCo to participate in the so called "writing team" for the final document of the Assembly. The writing team was built by five delegates, me as the only woman and only European delegate.

For me this "vocation" was the expression of a special grace. I gave my "Yes" to Daniela's answer also with the idea, that it would be an enormous work to do in the last days of the Assembly.

Until now I don't really know the reason of my "vocation". It will remain a secret of God's love... But it became an important experience for me. In those days I learned to feel very close to Mary in her "Yes" to the angel's message. I had said "Yes" to something what would surely go far beyond my physical and spiritual capacities. It was a "Yes" to something what with human eyes would be impossible to do.

We first had to collect and structure all the material elaborated in the days of the Assembly, especially in the "open space" and in several workshops. We had to feel and to find words to express the process of the Assembly and the graces received. Speak about something what can't be described in human words...

And we had to do this after one full week of living the community in Fatima, after short nights and busy days. We never had worked together before in this team. And we had two nights and two days to write down the document which would be the guideline for the whole World CLC for the next five years...

We worked out a first proposal, presented it to the Assembly, listened to the feedbacks and also very critical comments. After that it was necessary to rewrite most parts. This procedure was repeated two times.

In this dialogue we experienced the strong desire of all the delegates to receive a document inspiring the way of the World CLC and the national work. But we also experienced painfully the diversity of our community. Each one of the delegates read and listened with his/her national and cultural background. Out of that surged several different understandings and priorities. For example all the questions around "apostolic body", who are the poor to live with, how to contact with Christians of other churches...

In the whole process of writing the final document the writing team passed through very difficult moments. What kept us on the way was the confidence that it was our service to do for the World CLC united in Fatima.

And we were supported in various ways: by very warm-hearted words of encouragement from many delegates, by the humorous atmosphere of the World ExCo gathered at midnight with our writing team, by the continuous presence and availability of Edward Warrington, our process guide, by concrete offers of sweets and fruits from different countries and – most important – by the intensive prayer of all delegates.

I was sure: without the help of the Holy Spirit we could not fulfil our mission.

As I can see and estimate now the final document really became the instrument which is needed for CLC to go further.

And I experienced that God could do his work through and even in spite of my human limits. This helps me to repeat my "Yes" in the various situations of my daily life and in my service for CLC in Switzerland.

Deo gratias!

Dorothee Fischer