

Eurolinks Meeting – Plenary conclusions on Formation in Europe

Limburg, 14 October 2005

1. WHAT HAS HELPED ME THE MOST IN MY OWN PERSONAL FORMATION IN CLC/CVX?

- Experience of the Spiritual Exercises
- Formation programmes
- Companionship (acceptance, respect)
- Contact with wider community, both at national and world levels
- Witness of experienced members
- Being part of a local community: scope for challenge, encouragement, positive relationships, common discernment and freedom to grow
- Spiritual direction and group guidance
- Service within CLC as a catalyst for further commitment to formation
- Lived experience of justice issues (poverty, forced migrants, etc), which was then evaluated
- CLC Commitment
- Ignatian Examen, evaluation process, helps for discernment
- Creative forms of prayer
- Gentle invitation to CLC - never forced
- Formation in prayer guiding and giving the Spiritual Exercises
- Integration in daily life

2. IN YOUR NATIONAL COMMUNITY, WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES / DIFFICULTIES WITH REGARD TO FORMATION?

Difficulties

- Lack of leaders / guides / people to give spiritual direction / to accompany young groups
- Lack of time
- Groups closed to the ideas of needing guides / recognition of wider community
- Apathy towards the commitment to do Spiritual Exercises / CLC formation process / commitment
- Fear of being changed by the Spiritual Exercises

Challenges

- Formation of young people
- Process of starting new groups – motivating those who have experienced the first steps (eg Weeks of Guided Prayer)
- Lifelong formation - ongoing process, including in times of personal changes / difficulties
- Formation for families (young in particular)
- Recognising the reality of a group (different development / deepening stages)
- Offering different ways of experiencing the Spiritual Exercises

- Helping local communities to understand, appreciate and adopt:
the four-step process
national formation programmes (where available)
sharing the vision of the World CLC Assemblies
- To help people experience that time spent for spiritual life enhances / improves the quality of family / professional / social life

3. IN YOUR NATIONAL COMMUNITY, WHAT HAS BEEN HELPFUL WITH REGARD TO FORMATION?

- Definite formation programs
- A strong and competent formation team – that is able to form as well as reflect on the formation process
- Integration of faith and life
- Experience of the Spiritual Exercises in its different forms (eg 30 days, 19th Annotation, short retreats)
- CLC documents / preparation for and implementation of World Assembly materials
- Courses / support, including written material, for group guides (supported also by their own group)
- Cross border sharing and support
- The apostolic discernment process of a community
- Formation courses on various aspects of Ignatian Spirituality / using professional expertise
- Spiritual direction
- Pilgrimages / open door activities / Weeks of Guided Prayer / Parish retreats for teenagers
- Passionate, loving relationship between National ExCo and Formation Teams (♥!!!)
- Viewing the local group as ‘The’ place for formation
- Regular meetings for group coordinators (where this role exists)
- Offering opportunities for mission / service to young CLCers
- PATIENCE – Rome was not built in a day!...