



REFLECTIONS ON ASSEMBLY DAY 6; “To touch the Frontiers that challenge and beckon us today”

This was indeed a day of looking beyond ourselves and into ourselves. It was stimulating, challenging, encouraging, and INSPIRATIONAL...

We started with prayerful viewing of a short movie on a unique community intervention in Paraguay. Who will forget the youth orchestra whose instruments were made from items collected from the landfill site! It is amazing how such an initiative changed the young peoples' views on life, gave them expression, a voice and most of all a confidence to live a life of worth! What a change it made in the man who became a manufacturer of musical instruments! This was an inspirational start to the day!

I could have listened to Fr Nicolas for another hour! He said some challenging things but in a way that left me feeling affirmed and enriched! He warned us against getting caught up in the globalisation of superficiality, and encouraged us to keep going to the depths through reflection. I was touched by his call for us to use the Language of Wisdom, in addition to the languages of history and prophecy. At the frontiers you have to touch the reality of that frontier, and speak the language of wisdom, a language that comes from the heart and is what everybody at that frontier understands. So it is something familiar to us, the wisdom of daily life, discovered in reflection!

We are called to many frontiers to-day. We have the visible frontiers, the materially poor, the migrants, the outcasts. There is also the frontier of the digital world and every professional has to cross into that one, where our young people are “natives” and we are “immigrants”, or aliens. He pointed to an even more difficult frontier and that is the frontier of growing as human beings in a world that is less and less considerate of human values. The consolation and affirmation is in his assurance that the tools of Ignatian Spirituality, facing reality, reading the signs of the times, discerning, seeing with the eye of God are relevant and appropriate for to-day.

Jesus said “I am the way, the truth, and the life” Fr Nicolas reflected that Western religions seemed to emphasise “the truth”, Eastern religions “the way” and Africa and Latin America “the life” and said that in CLC we are blessed to have the 3 strands, as they are all needed for living out our vocation!

The talk by Leonel Matar on Globalization and Poverty was an eye opener and left me with many areas for further thought. We touched on the subtle or not so subtle transfer of power to multi-nationals, and the effect of social networks in controlling their freedom. Human dignity violations in labour practices or rape of the environment are now easily broadcast to the world. We will still have much debate about how CLC can intervene in any way against the negative effects of globalization and work to enhance the positive. I was touched by his remarks that to counter the negative effect of “the profit at all costs” code of capitalism, we need to “humanize” capitalism! This linked for me with Fr Nicolas' frontier of growing as human beings. It also connected to the belief that one reason why “the poor” are so important, is because they call out our compassion, and religious living is living with compassion. In a small group we heard stories of how people are robbed of their land and livelihood, for a small payment, while some international attraction or such is built on the land!

For me it was a day of changing feelings and emotions. There was sadness at how peoples' lives are ruined for “progress”, and joy of the change that can come from a great desire and creative thought. (Paraguay story).



XVIth World CLC General Assembly
From our Roots to the Frontiers
“This is my son, The Beloved. Listen to what He says” (Mk 9:7)
Lebanon 2013



So after the afternoon session we had the rich, joyous and colourful celebration of Eucharist by the Africa delegations. This was alive, vibrant, joyous and beautiful!

This took me back to the quote this a.m. “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”

After supper we were again called to compassion as we heard accounts of the life experiences of our CLC brothers and sisters from Syria. I can only begin to comprehend what it feels like to have lost not only one’s house, home, with its souvenirs, one’s livelihood, but also all hope of ever going back! The spoke of going forward in hope as there is no time to go back, no time to stop and analyze, no time to draw breath between consolation and desolation, just making decisions day by day, and able to do this because of a strong awareness of God! To say I was moved is superficial! It is more accurate to say moved to awe at the depth of faith that enables them to continue to experience God in the kindness of others, the work with refugees, and other daily life expressions of caring. Can we not be moved?

South Africa delegation