

Forum Internacional
de Acción Católica

International Forum
of Catholic Action

Forum Internazionale
di Azione Cattolica

NOTICIAS NEWSLETTER NOTIZIE

2002/2

“Prayer and fasting should be accompanied by works of mercy; conversion should mean acceptance and solidarity. The ancient prophet advises us: ‘Is not this the sort of fast that pleases me: to break unjust fetters, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break all yokes?’ (Is 58, 6).

There will never be peace on earth until oppression of peoples, social injustices and unbalanced economies prevail. But to attain the big and hoped for structural changes, initiatives and external interventions are not enough; first and foremost a collective conversion of hearts towards love is essential” (John Paul II, Homily at S.Sabina, Ash Wednesday, 5th March 2003).

We are writing at a time of grave preoccupation and of intensive prayers for peace. The words of the Holy Father appeal not only to the hearts and minds of Catholics but also to those of many other Christians, believers as well as many unbelievers, and invite them to give their responsible share in all efforts undertaken in favour of justice and peace.

As leaders of a lay organization like Catholic Action and as its Ecclesiastical Assistants we feel that we are being called upon to operate in different situations in view of the Council’s appeal to us to work incessantly so that lay people may realize their particular vocation to be witnesses of hope and salvation in the diverse circumstances where the Lord wants them to work .

This is the main aim of the continental meetings which have been held and which are being planned. Catholic Action is being presented as a gift to the Church and to the world and as a means which helps us to move together towards sanctity, with our pastors and with the Pope, in our particular Churches and in the universal Church.

Catholic Action brings together lay people who work for unity and dialogue, with open eyes and hands to see and meet Christ in all persons without distinction starting from the poor in our societies in the east, west, north and south.

We would like to conclude by recalling the recent meeting which John Paul II had with ICA Ecclesiastical Assistants gathered together for a meeting on the theme;

"Renewing Catholic Action in Parishes". Referring once more to the letter addressed to them by John Paul II on the 19th February, we would like to quote a significant excerpt:

"(...) Dear brothers, give the best of your energy to promote a formative and missionary commitment: the wisdom of spiritual discernment, the sacredness of life the different theological and pastoral competences, familiarization with simple and authentic relationships.

In the diocesan and parochial associations try to be fathers and brothers able to encourage, to stimulate a desire for an evangelical reality, to support children, young people, adults, families and the elderly in the difficulties they encounter in their everyday lives. Have at heart an education aimed at developing a strong and free, wise and humble Christian personality which helps to promote a culture which favors life, justice and the common good.

The Pope is with you and encourages you not to lose heart (...)"

During this Lenten Season we invite all CA, those responsible and Ecclesiastical Assistants to pray so that we may prepare ourselves for the celebration of the greatest mystery of our faith: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.



Beatriz Buzzetti Thomson



+ Francesco Lambiasi

Index

2 nd African Meeting	pag.	3
1 st Meeting in Rwanda	pag.	4
3 rd Europe-Mediterranean Meeting	pag.	8
4 th American Meeting	pag.	10
IFCA among ICO Organizations	pag.	11
News from CA	pag.	12

2nd African Meeting

"Grand Sèminaire", Byjumbura,
August 21st-25th 2002

FINAL STATEMENT

1. From 21st to 25th August 2002, at "Le Grand Séminaire" in Bujumbura, it has been held the Second IFCA African Continental Meeting. The theme has been "You will be my witnesses in Africa. Realities, challenges and perspectives for the formation and mission of lay people. The contribution of Catholic Action."

The participants were more than 100 people: Bishops, Priests, Religious and Lay people from Zambia, Uganda, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi together with representatives of the IFCA Secretariat from Argentina, Italy, Mexico and Romania.

2. The work has started with a reading of the reality with a special attention to the Great Lakes Region where the heavy socio-political-economical difficulties cause situations of violence, hate and poverty. The Church – and the Catholic Action Movements (CAM) - live in this reality and are called to be witnesses of brotherhood to build peace and nourish hope. The participants have discussed about the real meaning of new evangelization and about the choices which qualify it: spirituality, socio-political-economical commitment, formative commitment, inculturation, faith-justice and peace.

3. The CAM have stressed that the essential element for the life of each believer consists in meeting Christ; this meeting roots us in the Church which is missionary communion, makes all of us brothers and sisters and calls us to announce the Gospel and to solidarity. The CAM have renewed their apostolical commitment both in the local Churches, cooperating with their Pastors, and in the society which is waiting for their witness of holiness.

In a particular way, the participants have underlined the need and urgency of a deep spirituality, of an integral and missionary formation, of an absolutely necessary inculturation of faith, of a wider and wider awareness of the contribution as lay people to the socio-political life and to the construction of the civilization of love in justice and peace.

4. One day of the meeting has been dedicated to the reflexion about the identity and the formative and missionary proposal of Catholic Action as shown in the Ecumenical Council Vatican II and in the Magisterium of Pope John Paul II.

Together with the four peculiar notes (ecclesiality, laity, organicity and cooperation with the hierarchy), they have dealt with the formative and methodological choices related to the reality and addressees (adults, family, youth, children, students...).

In particular the participants have underlined the necessity and the urgency of:

- * assistants priests who can participate and accompany the life of lay people,
- * responsables to be formed and qualified,
- * an associative life more dynamic, thanks to new members and to an - at least minimum - availability of resources, of moments of exchange as this one, to walk together in an atmosphere of dialogue, exchange and mutual support.

5. IFCA Second African Continental Meeting has closed with a wide prospect upon the way of CA in the third millennium enlightened by the invitation of John Paul II addressed to Italian Catholic Action on April 26th 2002: "*Duc in altum*, Catholic Action! Look to the future with courage, be a prophetic presence in the world, be humble and daring enough to fix your eyes on Jesus! ...".

1st Meeting in Rwanda

Meeting of the Commission of Bishops for Lay Apostolate (CBLA), of the representatives of Catholic Action Movements in Rwanda (CAM) with the delegation from the International Forum of Catholic Action (IFCA)

A. FINAL COMMUNICATE

An important meeting between the representatives of CAM in Rwanda and the IFCA delegation was held in Kabgayi from the 27th to the 29th August 2002.

Objective: to get to know each other, to exchange experiences and to reflect on the new evangelization which favours solidarity in Africa and in the world.

The exchange sessions were based on the Word of God, the Council Documents (LG 33, Ad G 15, AA 20 and 24, the post synodal exhortation *Christifideles Laici* and other Church Document, always in the light of the experience of the Jubilee of the year 2000.

Everybody stressed the importance of the commitment of lay people in the Church and in the world. The fraternal atmosphere which prevailed during the meeting helped to make this a very pleasant meeting and made it possible for participants to appreciate the different initiatives of CAM and also to understand some of its difficulties.

If CAM want to contribute towards the implantation of the Church (*implantio Ecclesiae*) it should continue to work for unity, reconciliation, charitable deeds and evangelization; if it is a school of prayer, of Bible reading and of christian living, it should be able to confront the many prevalent challenges such as the lack of finance, the proliferation of sects, the AIDS epidemic, the lack of knowledge of doctrinal and human matters,...

PROSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE

- To remain faithful to the mission of the Church
- To discover its proper identity and to continue working for the transformation and sanctification of the world
- To intensify its activities
- To plan and develop projects which can render money to finance its activities
- To promote unity and reconciliation
- To work hard so as to make the world more human, just, fraternal and united.

WISHES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- A strong doctrinal, spiritual and moral formation, particularly formation on the Social Teachings of the Church.

Thanks

Kabgayi, August 28th 2002, Saint Augustin

B. SYNTHESIS OF THE 71 CARDS RECEIVED BY THE PARTICIPANTS

*How good and delightful it is
To live as brothers together (Psalm 133)*

EVALUATION OF THE MEETING

- A. This first meeting was a very positive occasion for the people present to get to know each other and the Associations and Movements represented for the sharing of experiences for an indepth study of the vocation and mission of the laity through Catholic Action in the Church and in the world, particularly through Catholic Action in Rwanda
- B. The meeting, although positive, was too short and therefore it is suggested that the next meeting should last at least three days allowing more time for prayer and working together both in small groups and in assembly as well as for free time.
- C. The meeting was attended by Bishops, lay people, religious and priest assistants: the possibility of experiencing living together as a Church in such an intense and significant way is very positive.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PROMOTING THE RESPONSIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION OF THE LAITY

1. The BISHOPS ARE BEING REQUESTED:
- A. to encourage and have trust in lay people's apostolic work "solid bases for the life of the Church", especially with the coordination of the different movements and associations.
- B. to nominate assistants for the movements and associations, individualizing priests who can afford time and have a special formation
- C. to promote the presence of lay people in all pastoral spheres at diocesan, parochial and national levels allowing space for decentralized occasions of formation and exchange.
2. AN INDEPTH STUDY OF THE FORMATION OF THE LAITY
- A. The formation of lay people, of the assistants of movements and associations and in general of all lay people in the parishes and of the community at the base is very important.

- B. Some specific themes have been identified:
- Biblical and missionary formation
 - Formation of those responsible
 - Special attention to countries in war
 - Involvement in the education of children
 - New ways of evangelization in every day life
 - Formation in social work with special attention to young people
 - Involvement of lay people in worldly spheres

3. THE CONTRIBUTION BY CAM (Catholic Action Movements)

- A. Catholic Action Movements should rediscover and promote their identity, for example establishing a structure for meetings (for young people and adults both separately and together) and organizing programmes of formation both on general and specialized themes.
- B. The suggestions in Point 3 should be taken as a sign of the participation of Rwanda CAM in the pastoral work of the Church and of the service given by Catholic Action within the particular Church, towards unity and towards the conscientious and missionary formation of the laity
- C. CAM should dedicate their time and energy to the formation of their members starting from a lived spirituality

3. COLLABORATION WITH IFCA

- A. Through the initiative of IFCA, with the collaboration of ECLA, it has been possible to hold this first meeting. It is hoped that other meetings will be organized, at least at national level
- More information about IFCA and its activities as well as material on the formation of the laity is requested.
- B. RWANDA'S CAM have asked to become members of IFCA
- They would like to have meetings with CAM in other neighbouring countries
- They are willing to have twinnings with Catholic Action Groups in other countries in the world
- C. IFCA is being asked to consider the contribution it could make to countries in conflict.

3rd Europe-Mediterranean Meeting

Meeting of the Secretariat with the Catholic Action in Poland and preparation

Warsaw, September 20th-22nd 2002

Representatives of the countries members of the Secretariat and of the European IFCA member countries met in Warsaw from the 20th to the 22nd September as hosts of the CA President Jan Stefanek, and of the Ecclesiastical Assistant H.E.Mgr. Piotr Jarecki and all the other CA friends.

Representatives from Argentina, Burundi, Mexico, Italy, Spain, Malta, Poland, Rumania (latin rite), Rumania (byzantine rite) and Italian Switzerland took part in the meeting. Austria and Sarajevo were not represented.

A meeting in Poland had been desired for quite some time, especially after the III IFCA Assembly during which Poland was accepted as a member of IFCA.

The meeting proved to be a good opportunity for exchanging information and for establishing friendship with some of those responsible for Catholic Action in Poland. Preparations were also made for the III European-Mediterranean Meeting.

On Friday 20th September in the afternoon we were able to visit the historical centre of Warsaw and were also cordially received by H.E.Card.Jozef Glemp. We carried on with our work on Friday evening and for two hours on Saturday morning. Afterwards we were very pleased to go to Czestochowa and to be able to participate in the Eucharistic Celebration presided over by the Bishop of the Diocese in the Chapel of the Black Madonna of Jasna Gora.

The meeting came to an end on Sunday morning with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist presided over by H.E. Mgr.Jarecki and further proposals in view of the meeting in Sarajevo.

Provisional Programm

For a fraternal Europe
Catholic Action's contribution
Sarajevo, September 3rd-7th 2003

WEDNESDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER 2003

Arrival

THURSDAY 4th SEPTEMBER 2003

Morning OPENING

Presentation of the meeting and of the participants
Presentation of the local Church hosting the meeting and of the Church in Bosnia Hercegovina
Eucharistic Celebration in the Seminary

Afternoon Lecture about the actual situation: *"The problems which unite us"*
Introduction and coordination by CEBC
Interventions by a Representative of West Europe and by a Representative of Eastern Europe

FRIDAY 5th SEPTEMBER 2003

Morning The future is in our roots – The novelty of the Gospel in Europe of the III millennium
"... were looked up to by everyone" (Acts 2,47)

Eucharistic Celebration

Afternoon small groups / Adults and Youths Assembly

SATURDAY 6th SEPTEMBER 2003

"Duc in altum, Catholic Action!"
Have courage of the future. Be a prophetic presence in the world...
Have the humble courage to gaze on Jesus..."

Morning Eucharistic Celebration
Interventions by responsables for the various Catholic Action Groups present

The characteristics of CA after the Council for the III millennium

The missionary formation and the participation of the laity in the life of the Church and in society

Afternoon

Workshops on the four characteristic notes on some priorities (to check / finalize): the family, youth, the common good, dialogue, corresponsibility within the particular Church, the associative choice on the planning for IFCA at European level, the weeks of formation for youth...

FINAL ASSEMBLY

Prayer Vigil

SUNDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2003

Morning

Presentation of the Final Document (Seminary)
Eucharistic Celebration (Cathedral)
Departures

4th American Meeting

Lima, November 6th-9th 2003

“Duc in Altum”: a challenge for Catholic Action

Invited: all CA in America and all those interested in CA

We rely on the presence of CA in America and of the members of the Secretariat. It will certainly be an opportunity to discover and strengthen our mission and to listen to the Holy Spirit which is continually enlightening us as regards our vocation as lay people in CA.

Objective

To reflect about CA's mission in the III millennium to renew and sustain its commitment to work for a Civilization of Love, starting from the four characteristic notes.

Concretely:

-Analyze the social, political and economical realities and carry on the reflection on globalization started during IFCA's III Assembly.

The difficult situations in many countries in our continent and in the world makes it necessary for us to have a clear picture of the situation in order to discern on the different ways of evangelization in America.

To study in depth the challenges which the Church in America faces in its mission in the light of NMI

Presenting CA as a gift of the Spirit to the Church and to the world.

To promote and sustain the activities of CA Youth in our continent

To exchange informations on the life and the activities of CA and of lay apostolate in each country

Place

Casa de Espiritualidad "Santa Rosa" (Padres Dominicos), Jr. Chancay 223; Lima 1.

IFCA among ICO Organizations

The World Assembly of ICO (International Catholic Organizations) was held in Bangkok from the 2nd to the 9th December, 2001.

IFCA was represented by Eduardo Ramirez Cato, ex-coordinator of IFCA's secretariat.

During the Assembly, IFCA – which had asked to become a member – was in fact accepted as a member of ICO.

Information about the ICO Conference may be found on web-site (<http://www.oic-ico.org> Coordinating committee, list of members, activities).

IFCA has been working with other ICO organizations for a number of years: WUCWO, ICCM and MIDADE.

Recently contacts have been established with in order to promote more collaboration and coordination in their work among young people. The fact that IFCA is now a member of CICO opens new horizons.

IFCA and ICO normally collaborate by inviting each other to participate in each others various national and continental activities.

The ICO World Assembly will be held in Rome in December 2003.

NEWS FROM CA

Malte

- The Annual general Assembly, marking the beginning of the Social Year, was held on the 6th October 2001. The motto chosen for this year was: "Go and teach... Catholic Action on the footsteps of the first three Maltese to be beatified".
- Ninette Borg Grech has been confirmed as the National President for another four-year term.
- ZAK (Catholic Action Youth Group) is going through an exciting time. New groups have been set up and these are very active in their parishes. ZAK has also this summer established contact with young people from other countries. Exchange visits have been organized. A group of young people from ZAK took part in the World Youth Day 2002 in Toronto. On their return they organized a Summer Camp to share their experience with other ZAK members who were not lucky enough to go to Toronto.

Venezuela

In 2002 CA in Venezuela celebrated its 75th anniversary!

To commemorate this important occasion CA organized a pilgrimage to the national Sanctuary dedicated to Our Lady of Coromoto in Guanare and a concert of Venezuelan instrumental music and other groups of singers.

The national Assembly was held between the 3rd and 6th October with a Eucharistic Celebration of thanksgiving for the 75 years of existence and the updating of the Statute.

March 2003