

PROJECTS: An (extra)ordinary meeting of the W-ExCo

No.167, March 2016

Original: French

There's absolutely no room for routine in CLC. As a matter of fact, it was the 4th time that we met in Rome since the 2013 World Assembly - this year, in late February. Yet, we just cannot get bored. Sharing prayer and times of celebrations, contemplating whilst working, reviewing history and sensing the signs of times for the future, all this creates strong bonds. So much so, that the World ExCo is quite at the same time a small CLC and also a working team with a universal vocation.



Left to Right: Chris Hogan, Najat Sayegh, Edel Churu, Mauricio Lopez, Ann Marie Brennan, Herminio Rico SJ, Alwin D Macalalad, Denis Dobbelstein, Roiean C Macalalad

Herminio Rico sj had attended the previous meeting as a “special guest”. This year, we welcomed the new Herminio, as our new vice-world ecclesiastical assistant. By contrast, it was the first time that a member of our team was missing. Unfortunately, Josephine could not join us. Considering that our group is so much more than the sum of its personalities, an arrival and an absence made us even more aware that every meeting is unique. What's more, this year we were able to meet the community of the Jesuit Curia, the CLC Euroteam and a delegation of the Italian community.

To be contemplative in action: not a worn out slogan

“Being before doing, a contemplation on divine Love” was the theme of our retreat this year, in order to plunge straightaway into the Ignatian “spirit”. To be contemplative in action, is the deep desire of the world community and all members. It is through the “exercise”, that the ExCo always unifies more its way of life and its actions.

As every year, we “did the job” (ie there are indeed non-negotiable tasks to be assumed), in a climate of profound joy, punctuated by moments of special grace. It did not spare us a few circumvolutions and even awkwardness. What helps in these circumstances, is the incredible sense of humor of our team. What saves us, is the humility and the ability to say words and perform acts of reconciliation. At the

end of our meeting, we were in peace, convinced that we offered the best of our limited talents and confident that the grace of God will achieve the rest.

Great news... to tell you later!



You know that 2017 is a jubilee year, starting (officially) in October and leading us towards the next World Assembly. It has been 50 years since our community was renewed in the impetus of the Vatican II Council. We considered the path traveled, not to cultivate a kind of nostalgia, but to forge ahead in coherence with what we are already and not yet fully. The closeness of the World Assembly in Argentina (in July, 2018) urges us to prepare the next steps anyway. However, before starting on concrete preparations, we spent some time exercising our ability at visioning. We tried, on a small scale, what the World Assembly will be called to achieve in 2018, that is dreaming big whilst being rooted in reality.



We made choices with regard to the next World Assembly: we are going to suggest a theme to work on and a grace to ask for ... and vice versa. The present letter aims to whet your appetite. The theme and the grace will be revealed soon with the official convocation that our president will send to all National Communities before end of April. The coming twelve months are, moreover, to unfold with a rhythm through a series of mails to assist Assembly preparation. Stay tuned.



The Cardinal that made us cry

As every year, we wanted to be ourselves attuned to the universal Church. Indeed, it would be absurd to dream a future for CLC as if we could be disconnected from the People of God. We met the Prefect of the new Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. We were granted the opportunity to speak about the W-CLC and to evoke the challenges for every wider region of our global community. We were also

impatient to listen to Cardinal Kevin Farrell, a little worried – I admit – to discover whether our vision for the future would be confirmed or questioned.

What did we hear during this encounter? “Clericalism is a sin”. We had already heard these words from the mouth of Pope Francis. It was nevertheless impressive that a Cardinal chose these words in a small group meeting, a sign that he considered the message relevant when encouraging us to pursue our efforts within the Church as laity.

We listened with great attention. Nevertheless, each one of us regularly sought eye contact to check if he/she was hearing properly: “It is high time to put into practice some of the spirit and decrees of the Vatican II Council with regard to the People of God”. The speech of the Prefect made eminent sense and nevertheless we were incredulous: “Within two years, most of the tasks in this Dicastery will be entrusted to lay people”. Imagine: lay people asked to help the Church to promote the vocation of the laity. The future of our collaboration with the hierarchical Church cannot be covered in a single meeting, even if it was very intense. However, we can say that we lived an eternal moment. I write so with a few days’ perspective

and with lucidity: yes, there were tears of joy in front of the Prefect of the Dicastery!

May we draw from this encounter the confirmation of our desire to commit ourselves with courage and joy, personally and as community, in the advent of the Kingdom.



The World Executive Council with Cardinal Kevin Farrell

Friends in the Lord.

On behalf of the W-ExCo,

Denis Dobbstein
Consultor