

EXTRACTS FROM FR NICOLAS'S TALK TO THE WORLD CLC ASSEMBLY AUGUST 2008

'We felt confirmed that God wants us to be "an apostolic community sharing mission in the Church". But this mission, in good Biblical and Church Tradition, has to be a Prophetic Mission, done and carried out in the name of God and under His Guidance. And we can meaningfully ask ourselves: Can we be really prophetic? Not long ago several scripture and spiritual writers were writing books and articles in which the big question was: "Where are the Prophets?" This question is particularly relevant when addressing a community. Can a Community — like an institution — afford to be prophetic?

Most probably the answer is here, in our midst, in your midst. You have chosen as one of the key phrases of this Assembly: "The Disciples rejoined Jesus and told him all they had done and taught" (Mk 6:30)

Of course, not all are prophets. Maybe some among you... Or, at least, sometime, at certain times ... Not always ..., not on all fronts ...

But maybe — and this is far more important — this is the time for Prophetic Communities ... and I feel that you are decidedly moving in this direction.

And if this is the case, we can say again that Saint Ignatius is the Master that we need at this time. Let us consider some points around the question: What is it that makes or defines a Prophet? What does the Bible tell us about Prophets?

- The Prophet SEES the world with the Eyes of God. --- We have seen and contemplated this in the Incarnation. "The Three Divine Persons..." (Now I am in the right page!) Ignatius is not timid at all when he contemplates the world ...
 - The Prophet LISTENS with the Ears, the Hearing of God. God listens to the voice, the crying out, the anguished clamour, the outcry of the people. God hears the people when they ask for justice, when they suffer pain and loneliness and oppression...
 - The Prophet FEELS with the Heart of God. We see how Jesus' insides churn, how he is moved to the depths... And the same we read about the God of the Old Testament... He cries and suffers with the sufferings of, (and here we can evoke the language of the Bible) "My Daughter", "My people", "My beloved", "My Family"... God is near, feels empathy and communion with his poor people. Compassion is his first response.
 - Then the Prophet SPEAKS the Word of God. And we know that this is a word of mercy, of compassion for those who suffer... and a word of Conversion and Solidarity for those who can do something about that suffering. (We leave for another time to make a deeper analysis of this Word, which is not only an utterance with the mouth, but a living word that affects reality and changes it)."
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"The whole process of the Exercises on which we feed our hearts prepares the person (the soul, he would say) to come close to Jesus and do his doings:

- It prepares us to SEE as we were saying that the prophets see.
- It prepares us to HEAR what the Lord hears from the poor and the suffering
- It brings us to FEEL what Christ and God feels of reality, of good and evil
- It teaches us how to DISCERN in the middle of so much and such intense feelings with human and historical reality
- It sustains us as we come to DECISIONS about how to respond and contribute to that reality that we have become a part of
- It moves us to ACT, to DO according to what the Spirit has moved in us
- And it opens our mouths so that we can SPEAK what is happening.

– Tell him what we have done and taught, and tell people of the sweetness and Goodness of the Lord"

SOME SCRIPTURAL TEXTS TO ILLUSTRATE THE PROPHETIC MISSION

Isaiah: 40, vv 1-11: the calling of the prophet;
Isaiah: 61, vv 1-6: the mission of the prophet;
Isaiah: 6, vv 1-10: the calling of Isaiah;
Jeremiah: 1, vv 1-10: the calling of Jeremiah;
Ezekiel: 37, vv1-14: Shall these dry bones live?

Luke: 3, vv1-6: the prophetic mission of John the Baptist;
Luke: 4, vv 16-24: Jesus announces his own prophetic mission;
Matthew: 5, 6, 7: Jesus' prophetic teaching.
Matthew: 10, vv 1-42: Jesus missions the twelve apostles;
Luke: 10, vv 1-20: Jesus missions the 72 other disciples.

GENERAL PRINCIPLE 1

The Three Divine Persons, contemplating the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions, decide to give themselves completely to all men and women and liberate them from all their chains. Out of love, the Word was incarnated and born from Mary, the poor Virgin of Nazareth.

Inserted among the poor and sharing with them their condition, Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity within our human family. This gift of God to us, and our response, continues to this day through the influence of the Holy Spirit in all our particular circumstances.

Therefore we, members of the Christian Life Community, have composed these General Principles to aid us in making our own the options of Jesus Christ and taking part through Him, with Him and in Him in this loving initiative which expresses God's promise of faithfulness forever.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What stirs in me as I read and pray this material? these words? How am I touched, moved, inspired, disturbed, ...?
2. In my inner response, is there a sense of 'more'? Or resistance? Do I/we feel called to return to any points/inner movements?
3. Jesus' starting point is seeing, listening to, feeling with and then speaking to others from the heart of God. How am I experiencing this in my life/our lives? And responding? How are we as community?
4. CLC members often speak of the gift of coming together as community and going out renewed and encouraged to daily life and sharing in Christ's mission in the here and now. "The Disciples rejoined Jesus and told him all they had done and taught" (Mk 6:30).
5. *"One of the most significant moments for me was the address by Fr Adolfo Nicolas SJ where 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 that already in place".* President of CLC England and Wales Evelyn Maloret) . Where do I/we see these signs in our local/wider CLC?

We invite your one page response by 17 March 2009 to Nat CLC Formation Group