

Forum Internacional
de Acción Católica

International Forum
of Catholic Action

Forum Internazionale
di Azione Cattolica

NOTICIAS NEWSLETTER NOTIZIE

2000/1

Dear friends,

during the year of the Great Jubilee of 2000 we feel, all of us - in a special way - "pilgrims", in march on the roads of our countries and of our cities, sharing the journey with the men and the women of our time, with the responsibility of being witnesses to Jesus Christ and pointing out the goal of our journey: the kingdom of God after which whole humanity yearns, along the centuries and today.

During the journey, in these weeks, let us keep in our hearts the words uttered by John Paul II on March 12th in Rome, during the eucharistic celebration in the Reconciliation's Day and above all let us keep in our hearts the words, the images and the gestures of John Paul II pilgrim in the Holy Land and in Jerusalem, where the Word became flesh.

A step of our journey, as IFCA, will be the Third Assembly that we want to prepare well and together.

This issue of Newsletter reports the proposal of the itinerary of preparation. We hope that it can help the reflection of all the member-associations and of the observers and also of those who are going to participate for the first time.

Particularly important is also IFCA's first initiative in Africa.

We entrust our steps of pilgrims to Mary, *causa nostrae letitiae*.

Beatriz Buzzetti Thomson

Agostino Superbo

Pilgrims with the Pope in the Holy Land

**Telegram sent
to H.H. John Paul II in Jerusalem**

Rome, March 20th 2000

The CA associations and movements' federations, members of the International Forum of Catholic Action with all their members, leaders and assistants, participate with their prayer in the pilgrimage of Your Holiness to the Holy Land and to Jerusalem, the holy city where Jesus Christ has lived, is dead and is risen.

We entrust the Lord the jubilee days of your Holiness, pilgrim on the roads that Jesus travelled with Mary, His mother and with Joseph, with Peter and with the first disciples.

We feel particularly near the christian communities who live today in this Land and beg the Lord to grant gifts of peace for the cohabitation between the peoples who live there.

United in the prayer, we invoke Your fatherly apostolic blessing.

"Rejoice, Jerusalem...". I too have experienced, in the last days, the joy to become pilgrim from Rome to the Holy Land, building bridges between the two focal points of the Great Jubilee of 2000, Rome and Jerusalem. The spiritual joy that I bring in my heart for this grace is deep, and I thank the Lord continuously for it. I am grateful, too, to all those who have accompanied me with their prayer. In those moments, in those places, I felt present with me the whole Church.

John Paul II, Angelus - sunday april 2nd 2000

Methodological note

THIRD ORDINARY ASSEMBLY
Rome, Domus Pacis, December 2nd/6th 2000

The lasting actuality of a gift of the Holy Spirit

Catholic Action: lay faithful

who live the ever newness of the Gospel and are a sign of communion

Preparatory itinerary



Methodological note

The objective is to promote an exercise which helps us to read the real situation and to reflect on our faithfulness to our proper identity in our own country, so that then a synthesis may be sent to us, so that we may be able to compile the necessary data which will be sent in our second communication and which will provide the preparatory material.

1. The material is sent to CA's national or diocesan leaders, IFCA's members, and to the observers.
2. Both leaders and assistants are requested to involve themselves in preparing the requested contribution: at national/diocesan/parish level.
3. Every country is requested to send a synthesis - through the tables - in order to enable the secretariat to draw up the final programme of the Third Assembly.
4. Every country is also requested to send as much material as possible, which can be useful.
5. DOCUMENTS of BUENOS AIRES: only now we are able to send the DOCUMENTS: we feel sure that they will be utilized to prepare the Assembly as they can actually be a contribution for the reflection of our associations.

AVAILABLE MATERIAL

- TMA/ Ball of the JUBILEE; • VADEMECUM; • DOCUMENTS of Buenos Aires '97
- Card. Pironio's LECTURE at Wien (1994) in the booklet with texts of Card. Eduardo F. PIRONIO "*Magnificat*".

We are waiting for the tables duly filled within JUNE 30th 2000.

Introduction

We have started the year of the Great Jubilee of the Incarnation.

The Jubilee is a special call for interior reconciliation. It is a call to conversion, on a personal basis, as an association, as a Church. It is a deep review of our life, of our behaviour in view of what the Lord is expecting of us, so that this authentic discernment may lead us to a greater commitment.

In this context we are going to celebrate our Third IFCA general ordinary Assembly, from the 2nd to the 6th December, with the theme:

*The lasting actuality of a gift of the Holy Spirit
Catholic Action: lay faithful who live the ever newness of the Gospel
and are a sign of communion.*

It is important therefore to work out together preparatory guide-lines to this Assembly, which will help us to review, with the utmost sincerity, our faithfulness to this gift received from the Holy Spirit, and our faithfulness to the conciliar identity of Catholic Action and to the present historical situation.

We propose that all Catholic Action members reflect on these points together, helped by the extraordinary blessings of the Great Jubilee.

"The Holy Door of the Jubilee of the Year 2000 should be symbolically wider than those of previous Jubilees, because humanity, upon reaching this goal, will leave behind not just a century but a millennium. It is fitting that the Church should make

this passage with a clear awareness of what has happened to her during the last ten centuries. She cannot cross the threshold of the new millennium without encouraging her children to purify themselves, through repentance, of past errors and instances of infidelity, inconsistency, and slowness to act. Acknowledging the weakness of the past is an act of honesty and courage which helps us to strengthen our faith, which alerts us to face today's temptations and challenges and prepares us to face them" (TMA 33).

The Assembly takes place at 35 days after the the Ecumenical Vatican Council II (December 8th 1965) and aims to become a privileged moment of examination in the jubilar spirit, according to John Paul II's directions, of renewal in the light of the Council and of purification from a path of "infidelity, inconsistency, slowness" during these years, also as CA.

Starting from John Paul II's consideration, that "the Second Vatican Council was a providential event, whereby the Church began the more immediate preparation for the jubilee of the Second Millennium" (TMA 18).

This is IFCA Third ordinary Assembly and requires therefore a reflection on the very identity of our organism as well as a specific review of the commitments assumed by all of us together as well as by every association during the Second Assembly in Buenos Aires in 1997 - the relevant DOCUMENTS are available.

The Third Assembly opens the new millennium and demands from us an extra commitment to look at the three following years which are inserted in a vast context, both retrospective (see 1) and in perspective: to prepare this meeting an "exceptional" time of prayer and work is needed, which may enable us to look at IFCA's future with trust, with hope, with courage and with joy.

Let us beg the Lord, through the intercession of so many saints, blessed and friends in the communion of the saints, to grant us a great heart, an open intelligence, love for the humanity and the history of our time, in order to participate in the life of the Church, to be Church, with that peculiar form of ministeriality which qualifies us and by which we were inspired in working out the theme of this "jubilar" assembly, on the threshold of the third millennium: *The lasting actuality of a gift of the Holy Spirit. Catholic Action: lay faithful who live the ever newness of the Gospel and are a sign of communion.*

Part I - Looking at reality

Aim: reading the signs of the times.

Preparation is necessary to enable us to see the true situation. In order to achieve this we should ask our Lord to give us a clear vision and an unprejudiced heart, so that we may be able to understand the real situation, to look at the world discovering the hidden seeds of the Word at the beginning of this millennium.

We suggest that this exercise be worked in groups, focusing on an analysis of the real situation in the world, in the country, in the community, in the universal and in the particular Church so that christian values and worldly values, lights and shades, positive and negative aspects, opportunities and difficulties may be identified.

STARTING POINT

The lecture by V. Espeche GIL at the Second Assembly of Buenos Aires, with the theme "The world we live in", subdivided into the following chapters:

1. The issue of globalization.
2. The issue of validity of values in the contemporary culture.
3. The world in which we want to live.

As a result of this exercise we expect a synthesis including three positive and three negative aspects which are to be noted in the table which follows.

If the work is carried out in different groups, a final version which is arrived at by common consensus and which is the country's final contribution, is to be sent to the secretariat, together with the exercised proposed in the second part, within JUNE 30th 2000.

Part I - Looking at reality

COUNTRY:

<i>The real aspects</i>	<i>Positive aspects Opportunities</i>	<i>Negative aspects Difficulties</i>
World		
Universal Church		

Part I - Looking at reality

<i>The real aspects</i>	<i>Positive aspects Opportunities</i>	<i>Negative aspects Difficulties</i>
Country		
Church - Pastoral plans at national level		

Part I - Looking at reality

<i>The real aspects</i>	<i>Positive aspects Opportunities</i>	<i>Negative aspects Difficulties</i>
Local Church		
Civil community		

Part II - Reflection on how we live our identity

The Holy Spirit has donated Catholic Action, with a specific identity, as a gift to the Church.

Catholic Action's identity is defined in the conciliar ecclesiology of communion and mission, in the 4 fundamental notes: it is ecclesial, lay, organic, and collaborates with the Hierarchy (cf AA 20). The four notes gathers the richness of tradition and experience of all preconciliar Catholic Action.

The birth of the many lay movements after the Council has given a new impetus to the Church and has led to a great richness in the variety of charisms bestowed by the Holy Spirit.

The Synod on laypeople, whose recommendations are found in the apostolic exhortation on laypeople's role in the Church and in the world, was held in this context. In this document John Paul II explains clearly these conciliar teachings and among all the ecclesial movements places Catholic Action as that association called to work, with loyalty and fatigue, for the enlargement of the whole christian community, the pastoral plans, the evangelic animation of all spheres of life (CFL 31).

It is in the light of our identity that we initiate this reflections so that we may review our faithfulness to the gift we have received, so that we may be able to turn to the Lord and express more precisely our answer as a Catholic Action which is faithful to its conciliar identity and to the present historical situation.

We suggest that this exercise should first of all be carried out individually and then shared in study-groups.

We recommend to start with the reading of I Cor 12,4-11, where Saint Paul expresses clearly that there is a diversity of gifts but the one Spirit and that every manifestation of the Spirit is for the common good.

STARTING POINT

The lecture by H.E. Mons. Stanislaw RYLKO, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, at the Second Assembly in Buenos Aires, with the theme:

"The Church and the world: dialogue and path of salvation.

CA LAY PEOPLE FROM THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL towards the third millennium",

subdivided into the following chapters:

1. Living the mystery of the Church
2. Understanding the reality of the world
3. A Church in solidarity with the world
4. The dialogue of salvation
5. "It is time for action..."

Questions to help in the reflection

1. Is Catholic Action looked upon by its members and regarded by the community as a gift of the Holy Spirit?

2. How does Catholic Action take upon itself this reality which characterizes it internally?

Which are the opportunities? Which are the difficulties?

3. How does Catholic Action participate in the Church's mission?

How is the priority to that which is spiritual expressed?

How does it participate concretely in pastoral care, in the new evangelization, in the mission *ad gentes*?

Do Catholic Action members live the good news of the Gospel in the world? How is the evangelic animation of the various spheres of life shown concretely?

4. Does the organic set up of Catholic Action, its organization and its structure help in building relations among people of different ages and different life conditions?

Is there any risk to let ourselves be conditioned by the structure so that the organization makes it difficult for us to act?

How is Catholic Action present and what is its relation as an organization in the life of the Church and in social life?

5. How is the collaboration with the Hierarchy carried out concretely?

What kind of dialogue exists with the Pastors?

In what way does Catholic Action participate in the working out and carrying out of pastoral plans?

In what way do Ecclesiastic Assistants contribute towards the life of the association?

6. Is Catholic Action a sign of communion?

How is this shown concretely?

Does the community look upon it as a contributor towards the promotion of communion?

What is its relation with the other lay movements and associations?

7. Does Catholic Action provide a formation programme for the different age groups?

What is Catholic Action doing to create an awareness towards the lay vocation and towards the commitment to build a world according to evangelic values?

How is it contributing towards the missionary formation of laypeople?

8. In the contexts where the Church has undergone martyrdom and now - in "freedom" - must face secularization and crisis of Christianity, how does CA witness the faith without yielding to the culture of consumism, individualism, relativism and how does it help the Church to live in the world "without being of the world"?

At the end of this reflection, we express our thanks to the Spirit for the gift we have received, and ask for strength for a change of heart and to accomplish our mission more faithfully. We also express our commitments, note them in the table which follows and send them to IFCA's Secretariat within JUNE 30th 2000.

**Part II - Reflection on how we live
our identity**

COUNTRY:

Aspect	Commitments
Ecclesial communion	
Evangelization	
Formation	
Organization	

After having done the section dealing with "looking at reality" (first part) and after having reflected on our faithfulness to the gift we have received (second part) we define:

- the challenges which we have to face today to be faithful to our Catholic Action identity
- our commitments in front of these challenges.

The conclusions are to be noted on the following table:

COUNTRY:

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Commitments</i>

Seminar in Africa

Nairobi (Kenya), Resurrection Garden/Dimesse Sisters

April 26th-29th 2000

You will be witnesses in Africa

Real situation, challenges and prospects for the layfaithful's formation
which is Catholic Actions's contribution

Programme

ARRIVAL and accomodations
tuesday 25th and wednesday 26th

WORKS

wednesday april 26th at 15,30 - **OPENING OF THE SEMINAR**

Presentation of the participants

Welcome and interventions to be determined

IFCA's presentation and introduction to the seminar: Beatriz Buzzetti

Thomson - H.E. Mons. Agostino Superbo

Eucharistic celebration

THE SCHEDULE WILL BE DRAWN UP TOGETHER

Eucharistic celebration

Morning and evening prayer

Interventions of the countries participants

Meals

Saturday april 29th: man foresees to end with the lunch - **DEPARTURES**

Thursday april 27th - Time to listen: exchange of experiences (A)

Friday april 28th - Time of confrontation and dialogue upon the theme of
the seminar (B)

Saturday april 29th - The common prospects (C).

A.B.C. - see the enclosed questionnaire to prepare your intervention.

Meetings, in particular with the laypeople of the particular Church in NAIROBI, are going to be organized.

Themes, aims, style

The International Forum of Catholic Action promotes this seminary according to its goals, among which that of animating and promoting the "new evangelization" with full respect to the different pastoral and structural context of every CA and in accordance to its aims, among which that of promoting initiatives in order to deepen the problems concerning the life and the mission of the Church, at universal, continental or regional level.

The seminar is held

at 35 years from the Vatican Council II; at 10 years from Christifideles Laici at 5 years from Ecclesia in Africa; in the year of the Great Jubilee of 2000.

The seminar aims to reflect upon some essential themes:

"Laypeople, laity, Catholic Action, identity, participation and responsibility of the laity in the Church and in society"

starting from the concrete situation of some Churches in Africa, to focus challenges and prospects for the formation of the lay faithful, called to be witnesses and to become more and more co-responsible in the evangelizing mission of the Church in Africa in the third millenary.

The seminary aims to become, through the participants' contribution, a moment of prayer, friendship and sharing

a time of listening, of knowing the different realities (A)

a time of confrontation, exchange and dialogue upon the theme of formation (B)

to search priorities and common prospects, at middle and medium term (C).

Index

Telegram to H.H. John Paul II	pag.	II
Third Assembly - Preparatory itinerary		
Methodological notes	pag.	2
Introduction	pag.	3
Part one - Looking at reality	pag.	5
Part two- Reflection on how we live our identity	pag.	9
Questions to help the reflection	pag.	11
Seminar in Africa	pag.	IV