

Forum Internacional
de Acción Católica

International Forum
of Catholic Action

Forum Internazionale
di Azione Cattolica

NOTICIAS NEWSLETTER NOTIZIE

2001/1

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Dear friends,

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It is the season of Easter and with great joy we greet you and wish you and your families, your associations, your particular Churches, the peace of the risen Christ.

Among the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we wish to remember with you our Third ordinary Assembly held in Rome on December 2th-6th.

The words that the Holy Father addressed to us will be the point of reference during the coming three years. This time will be devoted to deepen our own identity in the various contexts where we live, always returning to "the springs of the Vatican Council II" which is a "sure compass", as John Paul II says in his encyclical after the Jubilee Novo Millennio ineunte, for which we wish to thank him.

We thought to share with all of you – those present in the Assembly and those absent – the Pope's address, the final communication and the Assembly's report as well as the report of the preparatory itinerary (the answers to the questionnaire) and the reports of the various workshops.

Catholic Action is characterized by its associative ministeriality, which we take on ourselves "together" in order to serve, to make the gifts of everyone bear fruit at the service of the Christian community where we should be a sign of communion. It seemed to us that this first material, preceding the "Documents", can express our working together, with Peter's successor and with the Pastors, our efforts to

voice needs and expectations of so many people who long for our announcement of the resurrection of the Lord for the salvation of the world.

We wish to remember with you a very beautiful event we lived on March 11th and which made us recall a similar occurrence celebrated on 20th May 2000: on this occasion three blessed Mexican laymen of CA were canonized; so on 11th March 2001, 76 men and women of CA, martyrs of the faith in Spain, were beatified together with their assistants. Further news about this event follow in the next issue of Newsletter.

We repeat our Easter greetings and remain united in the prayer like the early Christian communities who, in the name of Jesus, opened to mission to announce him (with a simple style and with the great joy of the resurrection in their hearts).

Beatriz Buzzetti Thomson

† Agostino Superbo

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Third ordinary Assembly

Rome, 2nd-6th December 2000

John Paul II

Audience to the International Forum of CA

I first greet you, dear brothers and sisters of the International Forum of Catholic Action, holding an Assembly during these days here in Rome. I greet the Bishops present and the national Presidents who have gathered for the Assembly. I extend a special greeting to Bishop Agostino Superbo, whom I thank for the courteous words he just addressed to me, expressing the sentiments shared by the other participants.

Your presence today is meant as a sign of renewed fidelity to the Church and a commitment to continue with ever greater enthusiasm on the path of the new evangelization. Catholic Action, like every other group, association and ecclesial movement, is called to be an authentic school of Christian perfection. That is it is called to be that "school of faith" which, as I said to the young participants in the unforgettable Prayer Vigil at Tor Vergata, during World Youth Day, helps to form true disciples and apostles of the Lord. Continue, dear friends, to deepen your search for God. May your hearts always be open to the great apostolic expectations and challenges of our time. Grow in an authentic ecclesial spirit, nourished by the study of the Council documents, whose teaching is always timely. Be faithful to the guidelines I set down in the Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici*.

Thus you will be an ever greater resource for the whole Church on her way to the third Christian millennium.

By returning to the sources of the Second Vatican Council, you will be able to grasp more clearly the characteristic features of your Association, espe-

cially its ecclesial, secular and organic nature, in constant collaboration with your respective Pastors. These are the essential traits that define the face of Catholic Action, despite its various acronyms and names in so many parts of the world.

If the progress of the communities in which you work sometimes seems slow or difficult to you, do not be discouraged, but increase your love and your efforts to make the Church's image ever more splendid by your holiness of life and apostolic zeal.

In your mission as humble servants of the unity of God's People, be constantly inspired by the examples and teachings of the saints and blessed who were formed within your Association: I am thinking in particular of the holy Mexican martyrs, of the Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati, Gianna Beretta Molla, Pierina Morosini, Antonia Mesina and Sr Gabriella of Unity.

May you be guided and protected by Mary, the Immaculate Virgin, whom you are especially honoured to invoke as Mother and Queen of Catholic Action.

December 4th 2000 – Paul VI Hall

The "Documents" concerning IFCA's Third Assembly are going to be prepared.

Meanwhile as soon as the basic lectures (Buzzetti, Petrella, Porras Cardoso) in the different languages are ready, you will find them in the following sites: ICA (www.azionecattolica.it) and ACA (www.accioncatolica.org.ar).

IFCA's Secretariat is going to put further material in Internet.

This issue of Newsweek is ready on ICA's and ACA's sites and further news follow later on.

Assembly's Report

Saturday 2nd December

The Assembly started at 15.30 with the celebration of the Word of God, presided over by H.E. Mgr Josef Michalik, Archbishop of Prezmit - Poland and Delegate for the Laity in the European Episcopal Conference Council (EECC).

Paola Bignardi, national President of Italian Catholic Action, gave an address of welcome to the delegations and all those present, particularly to the special guests invited for the opening session.

Beatriz Buzzetti Thomson, the Secretariat's coordinator and national President of Argentinian Catholic Action, then presented IFCA's Secretariat member-countries and gave detailed information about IFCA's activities in the various countries during the last three years 1997-2000 as well as about the different activities organized at continental level in which IFCA participated.

Mgr Agostino Superbo, IFCA's ecclesiastical Assistant and ICA's general Assistant, intervened to stress that Catholic Action is called to be a school of formation of laypeople and to create a new culture of relationship with the hierarchy.

A lecture on "Globalizing solidarity in the third millennium - the many ways of globalization: how to choose", was given by Prof. Riccardo PETRELLA, Councillor in the European Commission for Science and Technology and lecturer on Mondialization at the Catholic University of Louvain.

Among the various interventions made in the afternoon, were those given by J. Pirson, ICO's President and by F. Ibrahim Faltas, Catholic Action's Assistant in Bethlehem.

After dinner the participants went back to the assembly hall for the presentation of the delegations from the different countries.

Sunday 3rd December

The day started with the morning prayer.

The morning session was coordinated by Laurentiu Moisin, Romania's representative in the Secretariat.

"Looking at reality". A summary of the answers to the questionnaire sent in preparation of the Assembly, drawn up by Beatriz Pascual, secretary of the

Federation of Catholic Action Movements of Spain, was presented. Then a presentation of the real situations in the individual countries: Argentina, Italy, Malta, Mexico, Spain, Romania, Switzerland, Colombia, Poland, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela, Burundi, Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia, Senegal, Nigeria, Togo, Portugal, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Cuba followed.

The session was concluded with a proposal to have mixed workshops.

A Eucharistic Celebration presided over by H.E. Mgr Bernard Bududira, Bishop of Bururi in Burundi, who replaced H.E. Mgr Marcello Zago, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, who was unavoidably absent due to ill-health, followed.

In the afternoon, Maria Eugenia Diaz de Pfennich, representative of Mexican Catholic Action in the Secretariat, introduced and coordinated the session which dealt with the study of the identity of Catholic Action. The lecture on the theme "*Catholic Action, a lasting gift of the Holy Spirit, in the conciliar ecclesiology of Communion and Mission*" was given by H.E. Mgr Balthasar Porras Cardoso, Archbishop of Mérida, President of the Episcopal Conference of Venezuela.

Necessary guidelines for proceeding in the mixed workshops were given. Jaime Esparrach Hernández was asked to gather the recommendations resulting from these groups and will present a written synthesis to the Assembly's Secretariat.

Monday 4th December

The day started with a Eucharistic Celebration presided over by H.E. Card. James Francis Stafford, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

Afterwards the participants left for Paul VI Hall where they had a special audience with John Paul II. This moment of joy and universality was shared with representatives from the Scottish College in Rome and with the general chapter of a female religious Congregation.

The national presidents and a representative from every country were presented to the Pope by H.E. Mgr Agostino Superbo and had the opportunity to greet him.

In the afternoon, Beatriz Pascual introduced and coordinated the session during which the groups dealt with the themes: *formation, children, youth, adults, socio-political commitment and Catholic Action promotion*. The delegates divided themselves up into groups in such a way as to share experiences, material and ideas.

After the thematic groups, continental workshops were formed: European, American and African continents. The plan of action for the

coming three years should be drawn up from the synthesis of the interventions made by these workshops.

Beatriz Buzzetti Thomson introduced and coordinated the institutional session: evaluation of the three-year period 1997-2000, prospects for the years 2000-2003 and election of the members of the Secretariat 2000-2003.

The presidents of the member-countries were asked to proceed to the first row. The acceptance procedure of new members followed. There were Burundi: Catholic Action from the dioceses of Gitega and Ruyigi; Rwanda: Catholic Action from the diocese of Kibungo; and national Catholic Action of Poland. These joined IFCA's 16 members-countries of which 13 were present for the Assembly. Some minutes were allowed for the delegations to discuss the availability of their country to form part of the Secretariat for 2000-2003. Ten countries - and this was positively stressed - confirmed their availability, namely: Spain, Mexico, Romania, Malta, Switzerland (Lugano), Italy, Argentina, Paraguay, Burundi and Peru.

The electoral commission was made up of delegates from Venezuela and Colombia. The following countries were elected: Italy (14 votes), Argentina (13 votes), Spain (11 votes), Burundi (10 votes) and Mexico (8 votes).

A penitential service led by H.E. Mgr José Maria Conget, ecclesiastical Assistant of Spanish Catholic Action, in preparation for the jubilee day, was held after dinner.

Tuesday 5th December

Jubilee day: "*Pilgrims with Peter on the roads of reconciliation, dialogue and peace*".

Our pilgrimage started in the morning with a Eucharistic Celebration held in St Peter's Basilica and presided over by H.E. Card. Roger Etchegaray, President of the Holy Year's Central Committee. The homily was given by H.E. Mgr Carlos Talavera Ramirez, President of the Episcopal Commission for the Laity and Catholic Action in Mexico.

A short break for lunch and a little rest at the Italian Catholic Action's Head office in Via Conciliazione followed.

Also at via Conciliazione, Mgr Superbo met all the ecclesiastical Assistants present.

In the early afternoon we left towards San Giovanni in Laterano, where H.E. Mgr Matthias Ssekamanya, Bishop of Lugazi, Uganda, presided over a celebration of the Word.

As pilgrims we walked along via Merulana until we reached Santa Maria Maggiore, where H.E. Mgr Piotr Jarecki, national Assistant of Polish

Catholic Action and Auxiliary of Warsaw, presided over a Marian celebration. In the evening we set out towards St Peter's Square where through the Bronze Door we reached the Sistina Chapel, masterpiece of Michelangelo.

H.E. Mgr Piero Marini, the Pope's master of ceremonies, led the evening prayer. After the prayer, Mgr Crispino Valenziano, expert in art and liturgy, gave us a most interesting explanation of the symbolism and history of this unique place in the world.

We returned to Domus Pacis and ended the day feasting together.

Wednesday 6th December

The morning prayer was led by H.E. Mgr George Carrion Pavlich, Bishop of Puno, Peru.

Paola Bignardi introduced and coordinated the final session during which she presented the new Secretariat and called the members to take a place on the Presidency table. She asked Beatriz Buzzetti Thomson to present the suggested priorities for the following three-year period. The final document prepared by the Assembly's secretariat was read. A vote of thanks was passed to all those who worked for the success of the Assembly, to Mgr Superbo, the Bishops and the ecclesiastic Assistants present and above all to Italian Catholic Action for the hospitality offered.

Uganda, Argentina, Spain and Italy intervened, underlining some of IFCA's priorities, enriching further this closing session. Mgr Superbo suggested that IFCA should participate in the forthcoming beatification of the Spanish martyrs who were Catholic Action members (11th March 2001) through prayers and by donating sacred vestiments to John Paul II to be used on this special occasion. H.E. Mgr Marcuzzo, Auxiliary Bishop of Nazareth, sent a moving message about the witness of the lay Christians in the Holy Land in these difficult times for the whole population and for Christians themselves. We started and ended this Assembly with a reference to the Holy Land.

We left for the Basilica of San Paolo fuori-le-mura for the concluding Eucharistic Celebration presided over by H.E. Mgr Superbo. At the end of the celebration each delegate was presented with the missionary Crucifix of St Francis to announce the Gospel in all the world.

The Assembly came to an end with a special lunch at Domus Pacis, with greetings of hope and joy for IFCA's and Catholic Action's journey in the third millennium.

Ricardo Martínez Trujillo

National President of Mexican Catholic Action

Rome, 8th December 2000

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary

Summary of the preparatory itinerary

Countries: Argentina, Perú, Switzerland, Venezuela, Paraguay, France, Burundi, Italy, Rumania (greek catholic rite), and Spain.

A look at reality

Positive Aspects Opportunities

WORLD

- Globalization and the development of the global village as a possibility for changing reality and developing a sense of solidarity,
- the need for a sense of religion and transcendence,
- realization that money cannot buy happiness,
- greater possibilities for exercising charity,
- progress of science and technology, development and speed of modern means of communication (Internet).
- Alertness to the respect of fundamental rights and sensitization to world problems (ecology, nuclear threat, racism, violation of human rights).
- Greater opportunities in education and a lessening of illiteracy.
- Development of democracy.

Negative Aspects Difficulties

- Negative effects of globalization, armed conflicts, genocide, terrorism, drug trafficking, destruction of the environment, corruption,
- dependence on the market, economic considerations, unrestrained new version of liberalism,
- increasing inequality between nations (north-south, east-west, foreign debts), unjust distribution of wealth (40% of the population in South America lives in poverty)
- A culture of individualism, hedonism, of having over that of being, a 'post-modern' culture, resulting in dissatisfaction, disillusionment, and depression.
- Manipulation of information, genetic engineering.
- Secularism and a lack of moral principles, relativism. Crisis in the family.

Positive Aspects
Opportunities

Negative Aspects
Difficulties

UNIVERSAL CHURCH

- Faithfulness to the Gospel, to her mission and teaching. The appropriate time for evangelising culture and for adapting the teaching of the Gospel to the various cultures. A Church with eyes open to reality and committed to face it, with a special preference for the poor and the outcast. John Paul II as a pilgrim who takes the Gospel to all parts of the world.
- Appreciation of the witness borne by many Christians. Moral witnessing in the civil and political spheres and where human rights are concerned.
- Reputation, respect and international presence. Greater possibility of collaboration and exchanges between Churches, ecumenical dialogue.
- The rise of new movements and unity between ecclesial movements. Structures which help humanity, openness to dialogue and renewal.
- Dynamism of the Church (Councils, Synods, Episcopal Conferences)
- Greater awareness of the role of lay people within the Church and of their formation.

- Lack of dialogue: culture, education, sexuality... A doctrine too focused on moral aspects, affected by prevailing secularism. Priests who have not understood the vocation and mission of the laity, clericalism, the need for reviewing the formation of priests starting from the seminaries. The limiting of faith to the personal level. Separation between faith and living.
- Tension between conservatives and progressives leading to a general confusion. Expansion of religious fundamentalism.
- Failure to take a stronger position in international issues regarding social justice and solidarity. Slow development with regard to the role of the laity as laid down by Vatican II and attachment to pre-conciliar ideas. A structure that is slow to react to quick changes. Lack of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Imbalance in relations between universal and local Church. Poor formation of the laity and lack of in-depth study and implementation of the major documents of the Church (Council, Social Teaching, Catechism).

Positive Aspects
Opportunities

Negative Aspects
Difficulties

COUNTRY

- Concern for progress and the betterment of living conditions. Greater solidarity and development of existing organizations. Progress in democracy and improvement in the conditions for social participation. Opportunities for greater action in the educational field and in the face of poverty and problems related with immigration.

- Self-centred attitude. A rise in employment and insecurity of work. Lack of social justice and an alarming increase in poverty. People losing sense of life.

NATIONAL CHURCH

- Better communion at the national level.
- Commitment for the poor and missionary pastoral plans.
- Involvement, voicing opinion and mediation in social problems.
- Responsibility of the laity.
- Ecumenical dynamism.
- Fervour shown in popular religious manifestation.
- A theoretic commitment towards Catholic Action principles.
- Some improvement in participation by the laity in the national Church.

- Development of pastoral plans without taking into account all God's People.
- Rigid structures.
- Lack of austerity.
- Lack of support from the hierarchy
- Need for a genuinely new Evangelization.
- Excessive criticism of the Vatican.
- Shortage of priests.
- Pastoral plans not developed at all levels.
- Church centred on the sacramental life.

**Positive Aspects
Opportunities**

LOCAL CHURCH

- Improved co-responsibility and possibility of working together. Creation of awareness in local spheres as a result of the respect enjoyed by the Church through her witness.
- Commitment to evangelization in the diocese and in individual parishes. Improved formation. Active involvement of youth in the local Church. Organization of the different specific pastoral activities.

CIVIL COMMUNITY

- Increasing participation through the voluntary service and the 3rd sector for cooperation and development.
- Deeper sense of community and greater awareness of everyman's responsibility as citizen with regard to civil problems and rights.
- Opportunities to gain access to new technologies to awaken public opinion.

**Negative Aspects
Difficulties**

- Little scope and opportunity for lay participation. Locally oriented Church policies and parishes that are practically closed, due to the dominance of clericalism.
- Excessive concern for initiatives involving mass of people.
- Lack of formation on social and ecclesial aspects. Scarce originality in evangelization and in the commitment of lay people in real life situations.

- Society oppressed by problems and at the same time disenchanted and pessimistic in searching possible escapes from this situation.
- There is not a solid social fabric and the individual good comes before the common good.
- The means of social communication manipulate public opinion.
- Lack of real democracy.
- Crisis in education.

Our Identity

Aspects

Commitments

Ecclesial Communion Close association between the various Catholic Action movements as well as with other lay apostolate movements. Greater dialogue and improved relations with pastors and priests. Inclusion and spiritual union with the parish community; taking part in drawing up of pastoral plans within the diocese. Aiding the growth and development of co-responsibility of lay people in the life of the Church. Encouraging ecumenical dialogue by creating occasions of meeting and sharing.

Evangelization Presenting and offering Catholic Action to the Church in order to promote mature laypeople ready to evangelize and liven up parish communities. Establishing a plan of action with clear priorities for evangelization. Striking a balance between commitment within the church and the mission of taking the gospel to the whole world. Inspiring Christian dialogue both within the Church and in society. Searching ways and means of giving Christian solutions to people's problems in everyday life. Stepping up the services available for human promotion.

Formation Laying down a common plan for formation in Catholic Action movements starting from children up to adults. Stressing the identity and spirituality of Catholic Action, growing in consistency between faith and life. Working towards a formation built on Church documents (Social teachings, Council Documents, Bible, Liturgy). A formation leading to a real belonging to the Church. Formation of leaders and persons responsible for groups who are prepared to meet the demands both of society and of the Church.

Organization An articulation of Catholic Action for its common aim and inclusion in parishes. Structural consolidation of Catholic Action in the dioceses. Encouraging the movement of members from one group to another in the various stages of life.

A practical structure which is not oppressive, but always at the service of humanity, a structure which lends itself to involvement and works on democratic lines. Easy communication between the various levels. Active participation in international organizations. Consolidation of structures and renewal of statute.

Challenges

Evangelize today's culture, characterized as it is by an increasing loss of a sense of life. Work towards a greater presence in the means of social communication. Take part in social and political life developing dialogue with the world. Portray a modern and incarnate image of Catholic Action and of Christ's message. Re-attract young adult members and develop the youth section. Make members aware of present-day culture and of its influence on society. Systematic and permanent formation of all members stressing priorities and urgency in the formation of lay people. Try and improve our influence both in extent and in quality so as to reach all types of surroundings. Strengthen the Christian family. Work towards greater unity within Catholic Action. Define the role of Catholic Action in an ecclesial panorama that is liable to continual change.

Commitments

Seek our own conversion, in order to be witnesses of Jesus Christ throughout the world. Seek contacts and ties with NGO's. Make available the services of formation, abilities and publications of Catholic Action to the whole community. Work with parish priests towards the presence of Catholic Action in all pastoral activity. Keep faithful to the four notes that give Catholic Action its identity. Stress the importance of study, spirituality and action. Study in depth the more important documents of Vatican Council II (LG, GS, AA and GE). Aim at evangelizing all members of the family. Parish work in all districts and in the communities. Plan to reach and influence all. Be present in all social spheres. Work towards a situation where all associations and movements find their place in the pastoral work of the Church, and Catholic Action is integrated in ecclesial life, with a missionary proposal. Formation with a deep spiritual life, and a commitment to instil the values of the Gospel in society as a whole. Prepare prospective future leaders with proper formation in the spheres of economics, politics, and education.

Synthesis of the mixed workshops

QUESTION 1.

Which are the challenges facing CA in this millennium?

1. To grow in consistency between faith and life, incarnating the Gospel into reality to make it more human, thanks also to our commitment in socio-political and economic sphere.
2. To grow in solidarity and in the option for the poorest; always defending human rights, life and the dignity of human life.
3. To grow in a formation which allows us to face the challenges of our time, starting from a deep and incarnate spirituality.
4. To increase CA's presence in the media.

Other challenges:

- to pay a special attention to CA's Youth sectors.
- To increase the communion with the catholic movements and organizations.
- To recall laypeople's leading role and their mission in the Church and in society.

CA's characteristics

CA is a gift of the Holy Spirit for the Church and for the world and is characterized by its four notes:

1. It has the same end as the Church: evangelization
 - Announcing the Gospel starting from life and building God's Kingdom by fighting against injustice.
 - Approaching those realities which mostly need to be evangelized in our time.
 - Carrying out this task in communion with the whole Church.
2. It is organized
 - Keeping different ages and environments always into unity.
3. Through the laypeople's leading role
 - the laypeople organize and direct the association and are the agents of the evangelization, the apostles.
4. With a special bond with the hierarchy
 - Working in cooperation and collaboration with the Pastors, with their support and in constant dialogue with them.

To the above fourth notes it is to be added the characteristic of the Formation that CA offers to look at reality in the light of the Gospel and to be apostles and witnesses there.

Proposals of the continental groups

EUROPE

1. CA should reflect on its role to foster communion with the different ecclesial movements.
2. We need to reflect seriously on the pastoral and theological aspects of our work, trying to draw up CA's task in the pastoral action of the new millennium.
3. We should determine priorities in the pastoral field, with a special attention to urgent and significant realities such as family, politics etc.
4. We should push the coordination of CA's youths, using also the new means of communication such as Internet.
5. We should keep in touch with the Bishops, so that now and then they receive information about IFCA.
6. To find out ways and means in order to familiarize the young priests coming to Rome for studying with CA.
7. To develop the international work in web with the member-countries of IFCA.
8. To assure a formation which takes always into account the signs of the times to all countries where CA is present.
9. To set up centers of coordination in the different countries.
10. To organize sessions of study with the members of the different countries in order to know and to share the work of CA. Also sessions of formation for the leaders might be realized. In both cases we should take into great account the way in which economic problems in some countries are dealt with. (Spain is ready for a possible session of study).
11. To spread and set up CA in other countries of Europe.

AMERICA

1. To go on with the continental meetings.
2. To carry on the promotion of the ecumenical-interreligious dialogue.
3. To analyse, as IFCA, the economic-political-social situation of our continent, in order to work out and give an immediate and correct answer which can support a possible action.
4. To support those countries which need to strengthen CA.
5. To promote a continental meeting for the youths to encourage these groups to be formed in the countries where there are not... A youth of every country attending the Assembly was appointed to this aim.
6. To promote all kinds of communication which can enrich us as CA and can help to promote it.
7. To keep exchanges with WUCWO and IFCM.
8. To continue promoting CA in the countries where it does not exist and to try to keep in contact with the CA of the countries which are not yet IFCA's members.
9. To spread the magisterium of the Pope, the Bishops and the priests upon CA.

AFRICA

1. To organize sessions in all countries of the continent to get to know CA.
2. To organize seminars at regional level to reflect upon IFCA's Third Assembly.
3. IFCA's team ought to visit the Western Region in Africa with the aim to launch the idea of CA.
4. Some countries like Burundi, which already have CA, should work for getting a national coordinator.

5. IFCA's team ought to start a programme in order to let CA be known according the following plan:

First year: at national level

Second year: at regional level

Third year: at continental level.

The programme should be based on CA's identity.

6. To promote CA among the Bishops of the african countries in order to let them know it so that they can introduce it in their dioceses.

YOUTHS

Coming from 16 countries: Ital, Switzerland, Argentina, Malta, Italy, Paraguay, Hungary, Portugal, Bosnia-Erzegovina, Romania (greek and latin rite), Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Zambia, Burundi, Uganda and Spain.

We met, youths and those who accompanied them, with the aim to share our experience.

Final communication

IFCA's Third Assembly was held in Rome between the 2nd and the 6th December 2000 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". The aim of the meeting was: to celebrate the Great Jubilee of the Incarnation of the year 2000 and to draw up guidelines for action for the coming three years 2000 - 2003.

The assembly was attended by representatives from: Argentina, Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burundi, Colombia, Cuba, Italy, Kenya, Malta, Mexico, Moldova Rep., Myanmar, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Romania (Greek and Latin rites), Rwanda, Senegal, Spain, Switzerland (Canton Ticino) Holy Land (CA Bethlehem), Togo, Uganda, Hungary, USA, Venezuela, Zambia, as well as by representatives of other international organizations, namely, MIDADE, OIC, UMOFC, UNUN OMNES, and Vie Montante.

During the Assembly, Poland and Rwanda were accepted as new members. The new Secretariat, composed of Argentina, Burundi, Italy, Mexico and Spain was elected. The fact that ten countries stood for election and were disposed to take on this responsibility shows the maturity and co-responsibility that exists among IFCA's members.

The opening lecture by Prof. Riccardo PETRELLA dealt with the very actual topic of globalization and its effect on the cultural, economic, sociopolitical, technological and environmental aspects of life. This is a process which is affecting us all and as such we cannot remain indifferent. Living in this day and age means that, as Christians, we should feel the responsibility to imbue this whole process with evangelical values which put stress on the dignity of the human person, on common good and on solidarity with the most needy.

During his audience to participants, the Pope reaffirmed Catholic Action's conciliar identity for the third millennium and stated that if Catholic Action wants to be a lasting gift of the Holy Spirit, it has "to grow in an authentic ecclesial spirit, nourished by the study of the Council Documents whose teachings is always timely".

By following the conciliar ecclesiology, as explained by H.E. Mgr. Balthazar PORRAS CARDOSO, we will be able to be an instrument of communion among the various ecclesial groups and to work together in our particular Churches on the roads of mission in the different situations in the world in which each Association works.

The assembly re-confirmed the objectives drawn up at the Assembly in Buenos Aires. As a result of a confrontation upon themes which qualify CA's proposal and of an evaluation at continental level, the following plan of action for the next three years was decided:

1. Give priority to problematic areas such as the family, politics, economy, education etc.
2. Intensify the missionary formation and the formation towards sanctity of CA's members keeping in mind their age and their condition in life.
3. Reflect on Catholic Action's role to work for collaboration and communion with other movements and associations,
4. Resume work towards further ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue
5. Foster better communication and exchange among CA Youths' groups in the different countries at national, continental and international level.
6. Promote Catholic Action in countries where it does not exist and give support to countries which need to strengthen Catholic Action
7. Strengthen the network among Catholic Action in the different countries and promote Catholic Action through the new means of communication.
8. Encourage exchange with other Catholic organizations (WUCWO, IFCM, MIDADE etc.)
9. Exchange formative material of the various national and/or local associations with Catholic Action in other places.

We place our commitment under the protection of the Immaculate Conception - Catholic Action's Mother and queen, so that we may not be discouraged, but, as the Holy Father exhorted us, we may increase our love and efforts, so that by our holiness of life and apostolic zeal, the Church's image may become ever more splendid.

Rome, December 6th 2000

NEWS FROM CA

Malta

Diocesan Synod

Together with other Catholic Lay Movements, Malta Catholic Action is taking part actively in the Synod currently being held by the Diocese of Malta. Catholic Action members have been actively involved at parish level in the consultation phase which started in September 1999. The second phase, that of studying and analyzing the comments and suggestions received, is now under way.

Ecumenical Meetings

On the Occasion of the Octave of Christian Unity, on January 18 members of Malta Catholic Action had an active part in an Ecumenical Service held at St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral in Valletta.

On the 2nd March, women members of Malta Catholic Action were this year responsible for the organisation of an interdenominational service on the occasion of "World Women's Day of Prayer". This year's theme, suggested by the Christian women of Samoa was "Informed Prayer, Prayerful Action". The meeting was held at Sarria Church, a Catholic church in Floriana.

ZAK - (Catholic Action Youth Groups)

Several Live-In Encounters for Catholic Action Youth Parish Groups have been organised. The participation of Young people from Malta in the World Day of Youth at Tor Vergata last August has been a great help in instilling fresh enthusiasm in our youth.

Spain

Jubilee of the Spanish Catholic Action

March 4th 2000 has been a very important celebration in the life of the Federation of Spanish Catholic Action Movements, deeply felt by all. 2.000 members - children, youths and adults come from 45 dioceses - met in

the Jubilee Year to express their joy publicly for the gift of Jesus Christ's incarnation and to re-affirm their engagement to continue in announcing the Good News to the world.

It has been a day in which there has been time for meeting, rejoicing and celebrating our faith in the Risen Jesus Christ. The day opened with the prayer, followed by an interesting lecture, addressed to both youths and adults, held by Mons. Elías Yanes; then the "Jubilee play" for the children, the witnesses of Christian solidarity presented by four laypeople, the celebration of the Eucharist, center of our meeting. Then we shared the lunch and at night the jubilee gesture: a long human chain as far as the Senate, in favour of the reception and integration of the immigrants arriving from the Southern countries into our society. The CA of Spain chose commitment with justice and solidarity with the poor and oppressed as a relevant aspect of our jubilee day.

Myanmar

10th Annual Meeting for the Catholic Action - April 12-14, 2000

The 10th annual CA Meeting was held in Dautada attended by 103 members representing all the parishes in the diocese in which the following decisions were made:

1. Doumyalay is selected to be the next place of meeting.
2. The members of CA should be trained in leadership skill.
3. There should be a full time office worker for CA and for the support 50 per cent of income from each parish should be solicited.

Advanced Leadership Course for Catholic Youth - Loikaw, April 12-17 2000

Wishing to promote more the leadership quality of the youth in the diocese, Bishop Sotero directed the Youth Committee to run another course to be conducted by the Salesian Fathers. Hence Rev. Fr. Bosco Bo Bo, Fr. Edward, Fr. Michael and Bro. David all Salesians respectively conducted a course on Leadership skill, Sacred Scripture, the Great Jubilee and Family Life.

The official closing of the ceremony of the workshops was held on April 17th. Bishop Sotero conferred the certificates of achievement to all the participants.

Argentina

At the end of the Jubilee of the Holy Year 2000, on the occasion of Christmas, the Argentine Catholic Action addressed the Church and the Argentines of good will a message in deep accordance with the spirit of conversion of the Jubilee Year 2000.

After the example of the Pope John Paul II and the Argentine Bishops, the members of ACA's national Council wished to make public the result of their reflection upon faults and sins committed during almost 70 years of ACA's life, begging forgiveness to the members of the Church and to all Argentines of good will.

The declaration ends with the firm determination to be faithful to their lay vocation, to commit themselves to solidarity, to act for repairing the social fabric of today's Argentine society and to work together with all the lay faithful, priests and Bishops for unity and communion in the Church.

The full text can be read on <http://www.accioncatolica.org.ar>

All CA associations and all organisms which receive IFCA's Newsletter are kindly invited to send us their own material to be published, translated in different languages if possible.

Thanks for your cooperation.

In memory of H.E. Mons. Marcello Zago

H.E. Mons. Marcello Zago died on February 28th 2001.

He was always close to IFCA and will continue to follow us in the communion of saints. He followed the African Meeting in Nairobi and our Assembly. Unfortunately he could not participate in it owing to his illness. He sent us however this letter which we like to share with you as his testament for IFCA.

I am very grateful to you for sending me the Final Communication drawn up by the participants in the Third Assembly of the International Forum of Catholic Action (IFCA), held in Rome last December 2-6, as well as for the kind words you have addressed to me.

The whole Church, and this Department in particular, relies very much on the contribution that Catholic Action has been giving since a century to the Catholic Church.

The identity and the specificity of this Association are well resumed in the project worked out by the participants, that is in the commitment to be "an instrument of communion among the various ecclesial groups, and to work together in our particular Churches on the roads of mission in the different situations in which each Association works".

I do know how missionary commitment is important for Catholic Action, especially that carried out by laypeople, often in extreme conditions.

I trust that a new apostolic line may spring from the Forum for Catholic Action, so that it may be a precious support to the workers of the Gospel everywhere.

I am grateful to you also for your service to *Missio ad Gentes* and avail myself of this opportunity to express you my warmest esteem and best regards,

+ Marcello Zago omi

Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples

Rome, January 4th 2001

Members of IFCA's Secretariat

of H.E. Mons. S. Ntamawana
2000/2003

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Burundi

Rev. Salvatore Niciteretse of the diocese of Bururi in Burundi, at present in Rome, is the point of reference for the communication with Sébastien Rizi and H.S. Mons. S. Ntamawana, President of the Commission for the Lay Apostolate.

The new Secretariat met for the first time in Madrid on February 22-25th 2001, with the following agenda:

- Coordinator of the Secretariat
- After the Third Assembly: programme 2001-2003
- Secretariat's engagements and continental activities
- Youth's coordination
- Cooperation with ICO
- Communication: *Newsletter*, web.

Election of the Coordinator 2000-2003

Beatriz Buzzetti Thomson was confirmed Coordinator of IFCA's Secretariat 2000-2003.

H.E. Mons. Agostino Superbo, at present Archbishop of Potenza, is continuing his service as IFCA's ecclesiastic Assistant as long as his mandate expires (November 2001).

The new department was for the first time in history in 1998
2001 with the following goals:

- Continuation of the department
- After the Third Assembly program 1001-1003
- Department's expansion and contractual activities
- Joint's coordination
- Cooperation with ICD
- Communication, Marketing, web

Election of the Coordinator 2000-2003

After the 1001-1003 program, the election of the Coordinator was held in 2000.

The 1001-1003 program was a success and the department was able to expand its activities.