

Forum Internacional
de Acción Católica

International Forum
of Catholic Action

Forum Internazionale
di Azione Cattolica

NOTICIAS NEWSLETTER NOTIZIE

2001/2

Dear friends,

I am writing this letter during the Christmas season: it is dramatically difficult to receive the angels' wish of peace before the grotto of Bethlehem today when we think of September 11th, of so many wars going on, especially that in Jesus' land.

No peace without justice, no justice without forgiveness: this is the subject of the World Day of Peace 2002. The Holy Father closes his Message saying that he wishes to announce it "to believers and unbelievers alike, to all men and women of good will who are concerned for the good of the human family and for its future".

The Pope's appeal to justice and peace through unceasing prayer, through fasting and meetings with the leaders of other religions, urges us to commit ourselves further for a more and more intense formation of lay faithful, adults and youths, who find their way to witness, to announce, to dialogue in the incarnation.

In this view I take a passage of the Message for the 2002 World Day of Peace, which underlines the primacy of spirituality in every project of peace: "To pray for peace is to pray for justice, for a right-ordering of relations within and among nations and peoples. It is to pray for freedom, especially for the religious freedom that is a basic human and civil right of every individual. To pray for peace is to seek God's forgiveness, and to implore the courage to forgive those who have trespassed against us".

With regard to IFCA, I am glad to let you know that H.E. Msgr Francesco Lambiasi, general Assistant of the Italian Catholic Action, was appointed new IFCA's Assistant by Card. Stafford, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. We welcome him with affection and wish him good work. At the sametime we thank H.E. Msgr Agostino Superbo for his service in IFCA in the jubilar years 1987/2001, when IFCA was strengthened and the Normative Document definitely approved.

I wish to remember here also H.E. Msgr Conget, Assistant of the Federation of CA Movements of Spain: he left us in October for the Father's home. He will continue to walk with us in the saints' communion, but we will miss his friendship, his support, his great confidence in the laypeople.

During the year 2002 the meetings in the various continents will be held. IFCA's Secretariat is setting them up through a preparation aiming to help IFCA's members to grow in awareness about CA's identity, in the respect of the various contexts where the Church lives in the world to announce the good news of Jesus Christ who "being in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be grasped. But he emptied himself..." (Ph 2,6).



Beatriz Buzzetti Thomson

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IFCA's new Assistant

On November 26th 2001 H.E. Msgr Francesco Lambiasi, Bishop of Anagni-Alatri and general Assistant of the Italian Catholic Action, was appointed Ecclesiastic Assistant of the International Forum of Catholic Action.

Msgr Lambiasi succeeds H.E. Msgr Agostino Superbo, former ICA's general Assistant and now Archbishop of Potenza.

Card. James F. Stafford, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, while informing the Coordinator of IFCA's Secretariat's Beatriz Buzzetti Thomson, ACA's national President, expresses Msgr Lambiasi "his warmest wishes and his readiness to be close to him in this important responsibility". Besides he thanks Msgr Superbo "for having performed his charge with generosity and effectiveness".

Beatification of the Spanish martyrs

Sunday March 11st 2001

On Sunday 11th March John Paul II beatified 233 spanish martyrs (1939-1939).

Among them José Aparicio Sanz and his 72 companions, diocesan priests (parish priests and CA Assistans) and lay faithful, CA's men and women of the archdiocese of Valencia. Also Francisco Castelló y Aleu of the diocese of Lleida and Luis Campo Gorriz, among the jesuit martyrs, belonged to CA.

It was a moment of joy for the Federation of CA Movements of Spain and for all IFCA's associations, which partecipated with some representatives of Spain and with ICA's Council and national Presidency.

On this special occasion, IFCA and ICA offerd the Holy Father the casula and the mitre for the eucharistic celebration.

We quote here below some passages of the Pope's homily and of the introduction of Msgr Superbo in a booklet giving short news about the life of the CA's martyrs.

From the homily of John Paul II

Dear brothers and sisters,

1. (...) The saint's lives and the martyrs' witness teach us that if the transfiguration of the body will occur at the end of time with the resurrection of the flesh, that of the heart takes place now on this earth with the help of the grace.

We can ask ourselves: What are "transfigured" men and women like?

The answer is very beautiful: they are people who follow Christ in living and in dying; who are inspired by him and let themselves be imbued with the grace that he gives us; whose food is to do the Father's will; who let themselves be led by the Spirit; who prefers nothing to Christ's kingdom; who love others to the point of shedding their blood for them; who are ready to give him their all without expecting anything in return; who - in a word - live loving and die forgiving.

2. This is how José Aparicio Sanz and his 232 companions lived and this is how they died, being killed during the terrible religious persecution which scourged Spain in the 1930s. They were men and women of all ages and states: diocesan priests, men and women religious, fathers and mothers of families, young lay people. They were killed for being Christians, for their faith in Christ, for being active members of the Church. Before dying, all of them, as stated in the canonical processes for their declaration as martyrs, forgave their executioners from their heart.

The list of those who are being raised to the glory of the altars today for confessing their faith and dying for it is long. There are 38 priests from the Archdiocese of Valencia, with a large group of men and women of Catholic Action, also from Valencia (...) and lastly Francisco Castelló y Aleu, a young member of Catholic Action in Lleida.

(...) 3. Dear brothers and sisters, on various occasions I have recalled the need to preserve the memory of the martyrs. Their witness must not be forgotten. They are the most eloquent proof of the truth of the faith which can give a human face even to the most violent death and show its beauty even in the midst of atrocious sufferings. The particular Churches must do everything possible not to forget those who suffered martyrdom.

(...) 6. May Mary, Queen of the Martyrs, help us to listen to and imitate her Son. Let us ask her, who accompanied her divine Son in his earthly life and remained faithful to him at the foot of the Cross, to teach us to be faithful to Christ at every moment without losing heart in the face of difficulties; may she grant us the same strength with which the martyrs confessed their faith.

Witnesses of the faith in the 20th century

H. E. Msgr Agostino Superbo

March 11th is a feast day for the Catholic Action all over the world: John Paul II beatifies lay people and diocesan and parish assistants of Catholic Action from the Archdiocese of Valencia, who witnessed their faith during the religious persecution which scourged Spain in the years 1936-1939.

The new Blessed join the glorious group of the Holy Mexican martyrs, canonized during the Holy Year, and the Blessed of the Italian Catholic Action.

They are lay people, men and women, engaged in many and different professions: some are young, some are older, some built already their own family; all of them are animated by apostolic spirit in their daily service to their Church and to their Country as far as to the greatest witness of love: to give out their lives for the Lord and for the freedom of their brothers.

Which example and teaching the new Blessed can offer to today's CA, to its members spread all over the world? In the martyrs' witness the whole Church receives a great gift which gives strength to faith and courage to evangelization.

Jesus Christ himself, in fact, acts in the martyr, prevails over Evil's powers and shows his faithful presence by his disciples' side.

We should then receive the martyrs' witness as Jesus Christ's witness; to follow their example means to follow Him.

In wishing Catholic Action a renewed vitality, I pray the Lord that it may continue to be above all a school of sanctity for the lay people, wherever it is and whatever form of organization it takes.

I wish to express my admiration and my gratitude to the priests: may the Lord help us to live our ministry in supporting lay people's common priesthood as a qualifying point of our pastoral service, and in cultivating in ourselves also a specific readiness to become assistants of Catholic Action.

(from the presentation)

Those who are interested in this booklet, in Italian, may apply to IFCA's Secretariat. For other information you may consult the site of Valencia archdiocese:
www.archivalencia.org/archidioceis/santos/martires/Martires2001.htm
or the postulator directly:
Silvia Correale silvia.correale@tiscalinet.it
and Rev. Ramon Fita, causasantosval@arrakis.es

List of the martyrs

José Aparicio Sanz and 73 companions diocesan priests, lay faithful and lay people of the Catholic Action

1. Don José Aparicio Sanz
2. Don Fernando Gonzalez Añón
3. Don Juan Ventura Solsona
4. Don José Ramón Ruiz Bruixola
5. Don Ramón José Martí Soriano
6. Don Joaquín Vilanova Camallonga
7. Don Enrique Morant Pellicer
8. Don Carmelo Sastre Sastre
9. Don Vicente Ballester Far
10. Don Ramón Esteban Bou Pascual
11. Don José Ramón Pascual Ferrer Botella
12. Don Enrique Juan Requena
13. Don Elfes Carbonell Mollá
14. Don Juan Bautista Carbonell Molla
15. Don Pascual Penadés Jornet
16. Don Salvador Ferrandis Seguí
17. Don José Toledo Pellicer
18. Don Fernando García Sendra
19. Don José García Más
20. Don José María Segura Paradés
21. Don Salvador Estrugo Solves
22. Don Vicente Sicluna Hernández
23. Don Vicente María Izquierdo Alarcón
24. Don José María Ferrándiz Hernández
25. Don Francisco de Paula Ibañez Ibañez
26. Don José González Huguet
27. Don José Fenollosa Alcaina
28. Don Félix Yuste Cava
29. Don Vicente Pelufo Corts
30. Don José María Canet Giner
31. Don Francisco Sendra Ivars
32. Don Diego Llorca Llopis
33. Don Alfonso Sebastia Viñals
34. Don German Gosalvo Andreu
35. Don Gonzalo Jesús Viñes Masip

36. Don Vicente Gregorio Rubiols Castelló
 37. Don Antonio Silvestre Moya
 38. Rafael Alonso Gutiérrez
 39. Marino Blanes Giner
 40. José María Corbín Ferrer
 41. Carlos Díaz Gandía
 42. Salvador Engiux Garés
 43. Ismael Escrihuela Esteve
 44. Juan Bautista Faubel Cano
 45. José Ferragud Girbés
 46. Vicente Galbis Gironés
 47. Juan Gongga Martínez
 48. Carlos López Vidal
 49. José Ramón Medes Ferris
 50. L. Pablo Meléndez Gonzalo
 51. José Perpiña Nácher
 52. Arturo Ros Montalt
 53. Pascual Torres Lloret
 54. Manuel Torró García
 55. José María Zabal Blasco
 56. Amalia Abad Casasempere
 57. Ana María Aranda Riera
 58. Florencia Caerols Martínez
 59. María Climent
 60. Tarsila Córdoba Belda
 61. Francisca Cualladó Baixauli
 62. María Teresa Ferragud Roig
 63. Luisa María Frías Cañizares
 64. Encarnación Gil Valls
 65. María Jordá Botella
 66. Herminia Martínez Amigó
 67. María Luisa Montesinos Orduña
 68. Josefa Moscardó Montalba
 69. María del Olvido Noguera Albelda
 70. Crescencia Valls Espí
 71. María de la Purificación Vidal Pastor
 72. María del Carmen Viel Ferrando
 73. Pilar Villalonga Villalba
 74. Sofia Ximénez Ximénez
- Francisco de Paula Castelló y Aleu
Luis Campos Gorriz

Meetings of IFCA's Secretariat

IFCA's Secretariat elected during the Third general Assembly, met for the first time in Madrid on February 22nd-25th 2001.

This first meeting was attended by: Msgr Agostino Superbo, Beatriz Buzzetti Thomson (Argentina), Paola Bignardi (Italy), Beatriz Pascual and Msgr José Maria Conget (Spain), Ricardo Martínez Trujillo (Mexico) and Rev. Salvatore Niciteretse (Burundi, as Sébastien Rizi could not get the visa for coming).

First of all the Secretariat proceeded with confirming Beatriz Buzzetti Thomson as IFCA's Coordinator for the years 2000-2003.

During the stay there was the opportunity also to visit the Headoffice of the Spanish Catholic Action.

The second meeting was held in Rome on October 18th-20th 2001.

Besides various items concerning IFCA's ordinary work, a reflection upon CA's identity was started with the help of the theologians f. Alfonso Fernandez-Casamayor of Spanish Catholic Action and Msgr Ignazio Sanna of Italian Catholic Action, with the aim to draw up a text to be used during the Continental meetings.

While we were working, came the sad news about the death of Msgr José Maria Conget.

We had also a warm meeting with Msgr Rylko and Dr Guzman Carriquiry, secretary and undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

Approximate dates for the Continental meetings

EUROPE	July 4th-7th 2002 - Preparatory meeting to the third Continental Meeting in 2003
AFRICA	21st-25th August - Bujumbura in Burundi - Second African Continental Meeting
AMERICA	October 30th-November 3rd 2002 - Fourth American Continental Meeting

Guidelines for the years 2000/2003

After the Third Assembly ... *Duc in altum!*

• *The first steps in the new millennium*

The guidelines of the next three years have their point of reference in the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (NMI), after the Holy Year 2000, in the material of the Assembly (Newsletter 2001/1 and DOCUMENTS) especially in the Message of John Paul II of December 4th 2000.

They are in continuation with the former Assemblies and collect the new hints from the Third Assembly.

The Secretariat and the members-Associations commit themselves:

• *to promote the knowledge of the conciliar CA*

WITH REGARD TO AN ECCESIOLOGICAL-PASTORAL STUDY

- seminar as a basis for the journey towards the 4th Assembly involving the CA-Associations and the Churches where they are present

WITH REGARD TO PRACTICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL:

- to support new realities
- to follow those realities which are being renewed and the observer-countries
- to increase the contacts with new observer-countries.

WITH REGARD TO FORMATION:

- to offer material and meetings to leaders
- to favour meetings for Priests and to meet the Bishops.

• *To favour the relations between IFCA's countries with new or potential CA Associations*

to live solidarity between the countries as regards formation and exchange of gifts:

- continental meetings: AFRICA, EUROPE, AMERICA.

- To intensify the mutual invitations to initiatives undertaken by CA national Associations (assemblies, seminars, prayers, feasts) and twinings between diocesan Associations.

Please point out leaders ready to hold courses of formation, when requested.

- To support the YOUTHS coordination through initiatives of formation and exchange at continental and world level (WYD 2002).
- To better and update COMMUNICATION for information and for exchange of materials and experiences via Internet as well as through Newsletter (*Noticias*).
- To intensify the relations with the Bishops both of member and observer-countries and with the Bishops charged with the Lay Apostolate.
- To keep close contacts with the Pontifical Council for the Laity and to start a constant communication with other departments of the Holy See.
- To qualify the relations with other ICO: WUCWO, ICCM, MIDADE, JEC, VMI...

Third Week of Formation for Youths

Miromir, 25th - 31st August 2001

The Week was held at Villa Sichem, a house for meetings of the diocese Sofia-Plodviv in the parish of Miromir.

The participants were about 100 - youths and priests assistants - who came from 6 countries of Europe.

Aim of this Week:

1. going on with the Weeks of formation for the Youths in Europe with a particular attention to the Eastern countries, involving the diocese where the initiative is held and with the possibility to know the real situation in Bulgaria.
2. Presenting the Church of the Ecumenical Vatican Council II, with a special reference to laypeople's vocation in society and in the Church, through the proposal of an ecclesial association such as CA.
3. Offering an experience of friendship of youths in the Church.

The meeting was attended by the Bishop of Bulgaria, the papal Nuncio and H.E. Msgr Agostino Superbo, IFCA's Ecclesiastic Assistant.

The next step is the World Youth Day 2002 in Toronto, with the view of the 4th Week of Formation in 2003, probably in Ukraina.

Final Document

Let your hearts be always open to the great apostolic expectations and challenges of our times. Deepen your authentic ecclesial spirit by studying the Council documents. You will thus be all the more a richness for the Church on her entering the third Christian millennium.

(John Paul II - IFCA General Assembly - Rome, 4th December 2000)

Following the request of the holy Father and our desire to renew the spirit of fraternity which we experienced during World Youth Day in Rome, we, young people from Bulgaria, Italy, Malta, Moldavia, Romania and

Ukraine have met at Miromir (Plovdiv, BG) to compare and share our experience of Church through study and prayers and to discover new ways as to how we can be witnesses of the Risen Christ.

During these days our main task has been that of looking at our work as against the documents of Vatican Council II, particularly Apostolicam Actuositatem n. 20. This has helped us to evaluate our experiences in the associations to which we belong and in the Church. Through various ways (biblical-spiritual, ecclesial, associative, ecumenical-missionary) we have identified areas wherein we should renew our missionary commitment namely:

- ecumenism
- education of the very young
- ordinary spirituality
- environments in which we live (school, work, cities)
- parishes.

We wish to be truly "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" in these environments. We achieve this by cultivating our spirituality and formation by listening to the Word of God and also to the everyday questions put by men and women of our times. We have to keep looking for new means of communicating and concretizing the Good News and of living in a truly ecumenical and universal fraternity.

Thus, once again, as pilgrims, we have celebrated the Eucharist in Plovdiv Cathedral and in Sofia and we have been to the Orthodox Monastery in Rila.

Confirmed in our faith in the Lord.

BULGARIA (diocese of Sofia - Plovdiv and Russe, Exarchate of Sofia)

ITALY (Catholic Action Youth Section)

MALTA (Catholic Action Youth)

ROMANIA (Oradea and Bucarest ASTRU, Iasi Catholic Action)

Observers: REP. OF MOLDOVA and UKRAINE (Youth for Christ)

NEWS FROM CA

Argentina

DECLARATION

of the Argentine Catholic Action

Faced with the present serious situation

... We are not well, no doubt.

There are brothers who are hungry, there are retired people who have no possibility to buy any medicines, we miss job; poverty is growing as well as disenchantment and discouragement. We miss reliable projects on our political leaders' side.

This is our real situation today.

We may complain, keep still or engender injustices which only lead to a senseless spiral.

We cannot choose the way of a clash between brothers, which may deepen the differences and open new wounds. We cannot steal one another, adding evil to evil. We cannot repair the social fabric by tearing it into pieces through actions of violence and vandalism.

... May the tender Child of Bethlehem appease the violent spirits and touch the hardened hearts, so that it is possible to live in peace, build a more fraternal present and dream of a more prosperous future for this Argentine land.

Christmas 2001

PRESS RELEASE

For a fraternal Argentine

As believers, in front of the serious events occurring in our Country, we feel the necessity to express our commitment to building a Country where fraternity fosters and supports steady ties of cohesion around a common project which gives priority to freedom and dignity of all those who live in this Argentine land.

As representatives of many lay Associations, Movements and Organizations of the Catholic Church, of the Baptist Confederation, of the Inter-religious Table of Youths, of the Argentine Table of Women Organizations, called together by the Lay Department of the Argentine Bishops' Conference, we engage ourselves to participate in building a more fraternal Argentine, founded upon:

Austerity as an expression of service
Justice as a guarantee of the common good
Respect for democratic institutions
Responsible participation without any violence
Prayer for peace.

To this aim we invite all believers to pray for peace in the world and especially in our Country, in accordance with the World Day of Peace with the theme "No peace without justice, no justice without forgiveness".

We will join in prayer for the Legislative Assembly begging God to help our legislators and those who are to take upon themselves the responsibility of the Executive Power, so that, in this historical hour, we assume - all together - a responsible commitment to a fraternal, just Country, finally in peace.

We invite, therefore, all citizens, men and women of good will, to participate in the meeting organized for January 6th 2002 at 18.00 in the cathedrals, in the parishes and in the centers of faith of the various religions in order to share a moment of silence, prayer and reflection, which will be closed by the National Anthem.

Foods for the needy will be brought, which will be distributed through the campaign "My little grain of sand" (organized by Caritas, Israelitic Union, Anglican Church, Islamic Center, Solidarity Net and Clarín Group).

All Churches will be asked to ring their bells at that time.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Catholic Action of Argentina will hold the national Assembly on August 17th-19th 2002.

Colombia

The CA of Colombia in October 5th-10th held its 18th national Assembly in Bucaramanga with the theme "Catholic Action a sign of communion for Colombia".

These days were lived in deep prayer, in deep study and in rich exchanges.

The Assembly was attended by about 100 ladies from 11 dioceses. Other ladies of the city

came and also 4 Assistants were present.

F. Gustavo Baena sj held the theological lecture and Prof. Moreno an intervention concerning methodology

Then followed the workshops, the information from the dioceses, the reform of the statutes and the election.

Amelita de Pardo was elected President for further 3 years until the next Assembly which will be held in Barranquilla, a diocese where Catholic Action is lively and where a promisig group of youths is present.

Italy

XIth NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Italian Catholic Action will hold its XIth national Assembly from 25th to 28th April 2002 with the theme: "With our gaze set on Christ's face. A face to contemplate. Faces to meet".

Mexico

The CA of Mexico held its National Assembly in Monterrey November 17th-20th with the theme "Christ's peace in Christ's Kingdom".

The basic lectures referred both to the Bishops' Document "From meeting Christ to solidarity to all". One was held by Msgr Raúl Vera López upon "The challenges of today's world and the response of the Church", and the othr by Elena Alvarez Vicencio upon the theme "Formation for solidarity".

The participants in the Assembly paid their homage to the Mexican Martyrs.

Then followed the Workshops from which rose the guidelines for the next years, and the national Assemblies of the various sections.

The Assembly close with the eucharitic celebration presided by Msgr Carlos Talavera Ramírez, President of the Commission for the Lay Apostolate and charged with the Mexican CA.

Paraguay

CA Assembly was held at the end of April 2001 in the Archdiocese of Asunción.

The Archbishop appointed Blanca Gonzales as President.

The Council of CA Women works together with the Board and the President appointed a coordinator for the Youths. Also the men have started their activities again. All together they have drawn up a working plan, at the service of the diocesan Synod.

The head-office was renewed, where meetings at diocesan level can be held.

Now they have to work hard for reviving CA - which in Paraguay is born in 1932 - in the parishes and also in other dioceses, so that it may celebrate its 70 years fully renewed.

Poland

The Polish Catholic Action held its First national Congress, after the fall of the communist regime, in November 23rd-25th in Poznan.

The basic lectures were held by Msgr Stanislaw Rylko on the topic "Spirituality of lay people in Catholic Action", by Msgr Stanislaw Wielgus upon "Christians and today's ideological challenges" and by Prof. Marek Ziókowski upon "The responsibility of lay people and the State - Social solidarity".

Also the question concerning "The Catholic Church in Poland on the turn of the 20th century - the challenge for the priests and the lay people, especially for Catholic Action" was dealt with.

The Congress closed with a pilgrimage with St Adalberto's relics to the parish church in Poznan, where Card. Josef Glemp presided over the eucharistic celebration, and with the final message.

Joy and gratefulness, zeal and hope

We, the participants of the 1st Congress of the Catholic Action in Poland, on reaching the culminating point of this historical event in the Church and in the Polish society, wish to direct to all members of our apostolic organisation of the laity and to all people of good will, the message of joy and gratefulness, zeal and hope.

At the Congress, through prayer and reflection, the group of one thousand delegates from all Polish dioceses transformed itself into a community overwhelmed with joy, faith and gratitude for the Church, and for the renewed Catholic Action which has been working in it for the last five years.

We are turning our grateful thought to the Holy Father John Paul II. It is due to His inspiration, teaching and blessing that we exist on Polish soil. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the Polish Episcopate who lent us spiritual and ecclesiastical assistance. During the Congress, we reaffirmed our call for the possibly closest co-operation between the laity and the Church hierarchy in order to fulfil the apostolic mission that Christ entrusted us with. In times when the social, economic, cultural and political situation does not afford much joy, causing rather a feeling of dejection, we wish to share with all our brothers and sisters the internal joy arising out of living and authentic faith.

We also realised what a great boon for every man the Christ's Church is, and the movements and associations which exist in it, including the Catholic Action. We render our grateful thanks to God and to people, recognising that a salvational environment was created in which every baptised man can achieve an intimate unity with God, as well as a profound community with another man. This way, man can learn to live a more meaningful life, touching on the very core of it. We share this gratefulness with all members of our association. Led by this gratitude, we fervently wish to build spiritual, organisational and apostolic viability of our association. The joy of faith and the gratefulness for the Church and for the Catholic Action cherished by the participants of the 1st Congress took final shape in the appeal to renew the apostolic zeal.

The days spent at the Congress strengthened our conviction that authentic faith should be constantly translated into a youthful zeal in testifying to

the good, truth and beauty. Faith has not lost its internal power today. As it was in the past, also nowadays, it can emerge as a force capable of transforming man and the world alike. Also nowadays, faith can and should "renew everything in Christ".

We appeal to all baptised people in Poland, to clergy and laity alike, to find a new zeal of faith and apostolate

Above all, the 1st Congress of the Catholic Action should be a ray of hope. This hope does not spring from the diagnosis of the contemporary reality; nor can it be derived from the ideas or ideologies of today. The hope experienced by the participants of the 1st Congress of the Catholic Action is founded on the Person of Jesus Christ.

It is He Who is the only Hope, also for the contemporary man and world... It is only He and His teaching that is an opportunity to the contemporary society, which should find wisdom to open to Him the gates of its structures, systems, law, culture, economy and politics... By receiving Christ, we offer man and civilisation the sparkle of hope, which gives rise to a mature personality of an individual, and to a just society.

Indeed, as the Congress slogan has it, "Christ is the hope of the future".

Romania - Iasi

During the diocesan Council for preparing the associative year 2001-2002 which will be devoted to the main theme "Sanctity", the CA of IASI set itself the following objectives:

- fostering spirituality as the spring of all activities
- increasing communication between CA members and with the other groups as well as with priests and religious
- encouraging CA members' spirit of undertaking and working together.

The main activities will be:

- spiritual retreats
- interparish camps
- prayer
- preparation of the diocesan meeting of the Youths.

On November 9th-11th the CA held its general Assembly in Traian.

At present CA is in 49 parishes of Iasi diocese (the parishes in total are 121) with:

- 135 Adults
- 616 Youths
- 860 Children.

On December 8th the CA of Iasi has celebrated its 10th anniversary.

News - invitation

CARDINAL EDUARDO F. PIRONIO

A witness of hope

Buenos Aires, April 5th-8th 2002

Catholic University

In memory of Card. Eduardo F. Pironio, a conference is going to be organized, under the auspices of Pontifical Council for the Laity, Union of General Men Superiors and International Union of General Women Superiors, CELAM, Argentine Bishops' Conference, Archdioceses of Buenos Aires and Mercedes-Luján, Diocese of Mar del Plata and Catholic University.

The organization is entrusted to Argentine Catholic Action.

The opening of the conference is foreseen on Friday April 5th 2002 at 18.00.

THEMES

- Cardinal Pironio's life: a witness of love and fidelity
- Cardinal Pironio and the Church
- Cardinal Pironio and the priests
- Cardinal Pironio and the men and women religious
- Cardinal Pironio and the lay people
- Cardinal Pironio and the youths.

The conference closes on Monday 8th April 2002 with the eucharistic celebration in the Basilica of Luján.

For any information please apply to ACA:

tel. and fax 0054 11 4331-6323 - email: aca_nac@overnet.com.ar

In memory of H.E. Msgr Conget

Like the Good Pastor

On October 18th 2001 Mgr José Maria Conget went back to our Father's home. He was Bishop Assistant of the Catholic Action of Spain (ACE) and said of himself that he was "a Christian engaged in a different world: fitter to live in and more fraternal, more just and hospitable. A world that believes in peace and not in violence, that has its heart and eyes open to the poorest's life...".

Some days after his episcopal ordination, he wrote his first message to the diocesan priests: "I believe in the Church. This was my first word as Bishop. There is the Church: Bishops, priests, women and men religious, lay Christians, the whole People of God, united, enthusiastic, believing. The bishop is a Christian, a member of the Church whom God wanted to choose for this service to community".

On April 1990 he received with joy from the Spanish Bishops' Conference the charge of ACE's Bishop Assistant. He was convinced that one of the Bishop's primary task was to promote the laypeople and their apostolic activity and considered CA as a gift of the Spirit to the People of God, that the Bishops should cultivate.

Rev. José Maria was a distinguished protagonist of the new stage lived in ACE, a stage he qualified as a journey of communion, a journey of hope, that he himself lived with great enthusiasm, generosity and discretion. It is so much what we owe to him as ACE.

Like the Good Pastor, Rev. José Maria tried to know every person and every Movement directly, always offering the good bread of ecclesial communion. He helped us to disentangle difficulties and gave us serenity, he helped us to discover the others as a gift of God. Like the pilgrim of

Emmaus, he walked at our side, starting from life, enlightening with the Word, stirring up hope, diffusing joy, offering friendship, sharing the bread at the Mass, teaching the mystery of the Church.

He was very fond of the universal Church. He considered IFCA as a privileged instrument to promote the "new evangelization" all over the world. He always attended the international Meetings with a great enthusiasm and followed IFCA's journey from very close.

Let us gather some concerns and hopes of Rev. José Maria. During Easter in 1995, in addressing a group of priests he said: "the word 'missionary' is always part of our language: missionary parish, missionary movement, missionary Christian... mission in the world is an endless commitment and to this regard it may be that we, the priests, are the first ones who should become aware of it, if we wish to pass from a Church who conserves to a Church who enlightens. If we really wish a missionary Church, a missionary Parish, the laypeople's presence is urgently required. Not only owing to short-term reasons - because priests are missing - but owing to theological reasons, that is because the world is the specific place of the laypeople's mission... where there is a priest who views the Church as a Mystery of missionary communion and has discovered the laypeople's vocation and mission, there consequently Apostolic Movements rise that enrich his priestly life, help him to fulfil his ecclesial vocation and guarantee pastoral projects to be steadily carried on. The Church and the secular Apostolate do suffer when one makes the whole apostolic life depend from the priest, from his charism, from his ecclesial preferences...".

On January 1999 he greeted the members of the CA's diocesan Councils with these words: "We are people of hope, who rely on the Spirit's strength and are not afraid of any tasks - though difficult they may be. We should however keep our eyes open wide and live in a deep communion, in order to response to the challenges the Church has to face in these moments: to give strength to the whole missionary sense of men and women who live in the world, 'in the heart of the world'. They should be present, lucid witnesses, capable to transform reality. A voice of God in the world. It is necessary to give rise to a laity - not to lay people as an individual force - but to a lay movement that the Church needs today. Missionaries in the secularity".

On May 2001, on the occasion of celebrating his 50 years of priesthood, he wrote a letter where he said: "At this moment, when one already begins to part from life because retirement is approaching and one is not even

afraid to think of "death like a friend", I worry about the religious crisis which enwraps us, with some many opposing forces. And we parish-priests should be patient, near, but good witnesses to Christ, people who pray, and should promote, together with priestly vocations, a true lay movement of Christians not only for parish services but for the life of the world".

Rev. José Maria's dream was God's dream, that is to realize God's Kingdom in our world, built through the active and necessary participation of all members of the Church.

We thank God for the final stage of his life, because - as St Paul says - in life and in death Rev. Maria José belonged to the Lord. During his illness he gave us a wonderful witness of his trust in God "I feel a great peace" he went on saying with the utmost simplicity and his words cheered us all up.

Rev. José Maria now in heaven, thank God, goes on with his work, while his devotion and his witness continue to animate our faith, as long as God shall make us meet again.

Beatriz Pascual Guijarre
National Secretary of ACE Movements Federation

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