

CENTRAL REGIONAL MEETING – Sept 17 – 19, 2010, PICKERING, ON

Friday Sept 17 - Feast of St. Robert Bellarmine, sj, doctor of the Church

Dear All,

I have been in Central Canada since Wednesday in order to attend their Regional Assembly.

On Wednesday I had a chance to talk to Jenny Cafiso, the director of Canadian Jesuits International (which coordinates all our (Canadian English Jesuits) apostolic work outside Canada. We had a great chat about Haiti and how the Jesuits there have set up 5 priorities of apostolic action for the next 5 years. It will be in the context of these priorities that our collaboration (with CVX, other regions and USA) will be oriented. JP Horrigan went down to the Dominican Republic this summer and got a better picture of some of the relief efforts going on, esp. with Jesuit Refugee services.

I came out to Pickering this afternoon. And I was able to visit our elderly and infirmed members in our Infirmary located on the same grounds as the Retreat House where the Assembly is taking place.

the Central Assembly- almost 60 people here began right on time tonight, with Introductions by Mary B (I brought greetings from Ruth and GC and also from Prairies and Rockies). Gilles Michaud is the listener/process guide for this assembly. There is a Haitian man whom I talked to on the one-to-one sharing to get to know each other. I believe he's involved with Peter and Elaine's group in Toronto.

Jack Milan (one of pioneers with John English for CLC Canada), a good friend of Barbara and Peter Peloso, is the facilitator of the assembly. He explained the communal discernment process that we would be using around the proposal from Central Regional Council for this assembly to move from the recommendation to a concrete action about our engagement with the Haitian people.

Then we had an opening prayer ritual. Mary Balfe did a wonderful powerpoint presentation, giving us the history of the Central Region's proposal about Haiti, leading us from the World Assembly, to the National Assembly's call to be Pillars and Prophets, then to the event of the earthquake in Haiti and how World invited us all to work together to come to the aid of Haiti. She brought in the movement of the Central Region in this past year to try to respond to this invitation. It was well done with pertinent pictures to help.

We then looked at the wording of proposal (of Central Council) and worked on clarifying what it meant. (cf the letter and schedule for the Central Assembly) Then Jack moved us into the action of trying to formulate a: **We will (do such and such)....** He made it clear that we were not making any decisions tonight but just trying to clarify the proposal and possible action. We finished at 9 pm and were to reflect and pray over the formulation that the group came up with. It was a good process with good participation by most people. My simple comment to Jack was to make sure the "quiet voices" were being heard as well, and not just those who have no trouble speaking up. Otherwise, it was a good. Tomorrow we will share on some possible implementation of this proposal.

One of our loved Jesuits just died after a few months of slow decline, Fr. don Flynn. may he rest in God's loving peace and love.

Peace to you all.

Please continue to pray for us..... we are all part of the World Apostolic Body of Christian Life Community.

Charles

Saturday Sept 18

Hello all,

Today at the Central Assembly was a full one but very fruitful. A good experience of communal discernment.

We began the day with some gestured prayer.

Then JP Horrigan, the Central Regional Assistant, gave a power point presentation of the situation in Haiti (He had visited Dominican Republic this summer and met some of Haitian Jesuits). He talked about the context of Haiti's political social history and the effects of the recent earthquake. Then he gave the 5 priorities (education; communication; economics; spirituality; working with displaced persons) for next 5 years for rebuilding Haiti that the Jesuits have articulated. And how the Jesuits are trying to work with the people on many levels.

Gilles Michaud as Process guide reviewed the events and movements since our arrival, relating them to the Exercises, namely the Principle and Foundation, and the graced history that was articulated to moving into the 2nd week - listening to the call of the King, asking for generosity of spirit and to be placed with the Son as we move forward following the heart-felt knowledge of the Word made flesh for us...to share his Mission. There was good energy and life in the group this morning.

Jack Milan began with reviewing the Power Cycle - Evaluation, moving to Recommendation, moving to Decision, moving to Action...etc.

then we started an **"imaginative" implementation** of the proposal from last night. He began by asking us to write down our one deepest holy desire regarding Haiti; then on another card, to put other desires we might have for Haiti - what we would think would be good for Haiti and what would personally energize one personally. This was a good exercise and the first part - the deepest desire we have - were read out and put in categories up front. Then different work groups took these different desires and were to organize them. All this took the morning.

We had lunch then at 1:30 we put up the results of the working groups.

Then **Jack explained the different models of coming to a decision** - the bureaucratic (pyramid) model; the political model and finally the communal model - which is what Ignatian spirituality calls us to.

We were ready to come to a decision on the proposal set out last night. this proposal was: *We the Central Region (of CLC Canada) will commit ourselves to actively supporting the Haitian people in their efforts to raise up and rebuild their country, making every effort to collaborate*

with CVX (French Canada), other North American CLC groups, and the Society of Jesus, to be evaluated in 5 years.

The first step was to prayerfully collect the data. So we were given a sheet with the context and an image and a grace to seek, and after some prayer to give the reasons for and the reasons against taking this proposed decision.

The main reasons for and against were then put up on the flip chart. There were 25 delegates/those able to vote on a proposal. They had to ask the non-delegates if there were any other reasons for or against in order to get the full picture.

Then the group decided that a 90 % vote (that is 22 of them) would have to say yes, and those who said no would be asked if they could live with this decision and support it (consensus). The result was 21 -yes, 4 - no!

so, after a break, Jack put all the delegates in an inner circle and asked that each give their main reason for saying yes and no. When all were heard (with no discussion), Jack asked those who said no to tell the group what element in the proposal could be amended so that they would be able to say yes to the proposal. This was very enlightening and important, not without some little friction. But Jack led the group through this and the result was a unanimous yes, with some cautions for implementation.

The resulting proposal was: *We the Central Region (of CLC Canada) will commit ourselves to actively support the poor and disadvantaged Haitian people in their efforts to raise up and rebuild their country, making every effort to collaborate with CVX (French Canada), other North American CLC groups, and the Society of Jesus, in an ongoing process of evaluation.*

the "cautions" were: be respectful of all the regions in Canada; be careful that we don't take over their (the Haitian people) efforts; don't exclude other areas for apostolic concern.

A very good process that led to a consensus. We then went to Eucharist, presided by Fr. Jim Webb. (None of the local bishops were available to come), Provincial. At the end, Barbara and Peter led the group in a commitment prayer. They were no individual temporary or permanent commitment but rather a "group" prayer of commitment (the prayer: Take and Receive was said by all.)

This was followed by a dinner, with a short game exemplifying the First World, the Second World, the Third World and what each would eat.....Then we had our regular dinner... tonight there is a social.....

I'm a bit tired so I will go for a bit then head to bed...

Tonight the members are to pray for confirmation for this decision and it will be reviewed tomorrow.....

A very rich day.....continue to pray for us. It's a very engaged group....different ethnic groups - Korean, Filipino, a Haitian, Caribbean, Anglo Saxon...and of all ages....Very hopeful...

Peace to you all... Have a good Sunday..

Charles

Final Review of Central Assembly in Pickering #3

Dear Friends,

I'm writing you on Monday morning on return to Winnipeg from TO. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to send you this on Sunday because of not having access to the internet with my computer.

Saturday evening, the group had the usual time of socializing and celebration after a full and fruitful day of working together on the proposal. The Young people's groups were leading us in enjoyable "games", dancing, etc. along with a wonderful spread of food and drink (including wine) for everyone. I didn't stay for all of it since I wanted to catch up on some sleep and fight the head cold I had.

Sunday morning: Jack Milan led us in a time of silent prayer after the Scripture passage from Philippians 1 where Paul prays that "*your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.*" We ended with the refrain: *Alleluia, give praise to the Risen Christ.*

Then Jack explained the signs of confirmation of a decision in a community. Then he asked the **members of the local groups to gather (2 or 3, however many present) to answer 2 questions:** 1) *What implications does this decision have for us?* 2) *What is our next step?*

Everyone went off for a half hour or so. (During this time, I had a chance to pick Jack Milan's brains as it were, and his experience with CLC over the years. Glad I had this moment with him.) We then regathered and heard some of the responses to these questions. Unfortunately because of time, we could not hear all the reports. But they were to give these to the CrExCo for them to collate and help them in their execution of this decision.

Gilles as the Process Guide gave his final review of the movement of the Spirit from the morning.

We then went to the Chapel and celebrated the Sunday Eucharist. JP Horrigan presided and I concelebrated. It was a joyful celebration, a deep sense of gratitude at what had been given this weekend. At the end of the celebration, a short prayer of sending on Mary as president-elect, on Adrienne, as coordinator of CrExCo, and Andree as regional rep on the General Council. The Region presented Mary a bouquet of flowers in gratitude for all her work for the Central.

We went out from the Eucharist and to lunch dancing to the last hymn: *You shall go out with joy and be let forth with peace.*

It was surely a blessed weekend. Good energy and participation by so many. All had a sense of being sent forth on mission with Christ....

[After lunch there was a short video on Haiti by Bernard, a Haitian, living in Toronto. I couldn't stay for it but went to visit some good friends in Toronto.]

It was a joy and grace to be part of the Central Region's Assembly and to see the good things that God is doing in CLC across the country....

Blessings on you all,

Charles
NEA