

International Forum of Catholic Action (IFCA)

You will be my witnesses in Africa

Reality, challenges and prospects for the laypeople's formation.

The contribution of Catholic Action/2

Bujumbura, August 21st/25th 2002

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Second African Continental Meeting

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PRESENTATION

The Second African Continental Meeting was held between the 21st and the 25th August at the “Grand Séminaire” of Bujumbura in Burundi.

In presenting these Documents, we would like to express the joy, friendship and faith which we have shared with our African friends during the celebrations enriched by singing, silent moments, diverse languages and gestures as well as during reunions, meals, sharing of personal experiences and common activities...

Together with you we would like to thank the Lord for the gift of these days in Burundi which were further enriched by our visit to Rwanda for the first meeting of associated lay people, promoted by the Church in Rwanda .

The theme chosen for this continental meeting was meant - and means - to underline the prospects to live in future with all the universal Church, as stated in *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (58): “We can rely on the strength of the same Spirit, which was infused at Pentecost and which drives us today to start again strengthened by hope “which will not let us down”” (*Rm 5,5*). It was also meant - and means - to recall lay people’s responsibility in the African Church, as the title of the postsynodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* “You will be my witnesses in Africa” indicates.

Participants from all the dioceses of Burundi, from many dioceses in Rwanda, from some countries in eastern and central Africa: democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia; about hundred persons, Bishops, lay people from CAM (Catholic Action Movements) and priest assistants as well as people from a number of countries members of IFCA’s secretariat (Argentina, Mexico, Italy/various dioceses and Romania) all met in Bujumbura.

We strongly experienced for a time the life of the Church: the African and the universal Church.

We would like to bring to light the formidable commitment of lay people in Catholic Action, which we have come across, especially of those who are members of CAM. These are women, men, young people and adults who are witnesses of their faith and of their love for Christ in very difficult situations which require of them greater hope and trust in order to build a culture of peace and of brotherly living together.

Even if it is not easy to understand why there are still conflicts which have negative effects on everybody’s everyday life, on everybody’s rights: education, work, health and stability, that which is so striking is the great faith with which all this is interpreted and confronted by the Christian community with the Eucharist as its centre and supported by prayers.

It is a faith which leads to choose education as a priority, starting from the promotion of schools for the education of the very young and youth, and of initiatives for peace such as marches of solidarity and programmes of formation for well-informed, competent and generous lay people.

Wherever there are schools conflicts diminish and finally cease, wherever a communitarian culture of peace is fostered Christians are always active and involved, wherever life and peace in faith is rooted martyrdom can also follow...

Duc in altum Catholic Action...in Africa!

Beatriz Buzzetti Thomson
IFCA Secretariat Coordinator

+ *Francesco Lambiasi*
IFCA Ecclesiastic Assistant

OUR SINCERE THANKS...

The meeting in Bujumbura, the visit to Bubanza, the pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of the Martyred Seminarists at Buta (Diocese of Bururi) and the trip to Rwanda gave the IFCA delegation the opportunity to meet Pastors, lay people and priests as well as a chance to get to know so many friends and the reality in which they live, more closely.

We would like to thank everybody especially Rev. Salvatore Niciteretse who has always believed that this initiative could materialize and has given his wholehearted support, at the various stages, to us all at the IFCA Secretariat as well as in Africa.

We are also convinced that he will continue to collaborate with us even more intensely now that he is back in Burundi. He is now in a position to work even harder for the promotion, participation and co-responsibility of lay people in the Church and in society in Africa.

We wish to thank also the Congregation for the Evangelization of the People and the Pontifical Missionary Works and CEAL (Episcopal Commission for Laity in Burundi), who gave us all their moral, material and spiritual support.

CATHOLIC ACTION, GIVE EVERYDAY LIFE THE FLAVOUR OF THE GOSPEL

Mgr Bernard Bududira
Bishop of Bururi

Dear brothers and sisters: Bishops, priests, religious and lay people, I welcome you to this Second Meeting of the International Forum of Catholic Action in the African Continent.

Two years ago we held an IFCA historic assembly in Nairobi. During this meeting we clarified Catholic Action's specific nature, mission and methodology. Seeing that the number of countries represented was rather small, we looked forward to another meeting which would bring together countries from west, central and east Africa. Thank God, our wish has come true, and here we are at Bujumburi in spite of the justified fears linked with insecurity.

Dear participants, I congratulate you for your courage. I thank you for being with us here this week.

The main reason behind our attempt to organize this meeting again within such a short time is the desire to understand Catholic Action's identity, its specific mission in the Church and in society, its methodology and its spirituality, that of inspiring and enriching human values with the strength of the Gospel.

Since Catholic Action's specific aim is that of being the yeast in the human pastry, its identity becomes evident from the fruits which the Spirit helps it to bear in everyday life.

In view of this, permit me to suggest to all the participants in this session to analyse, reflect upon and suggest methods of formation and training and plans of action, keeping in mind the objective which has to be reached: that of giving the flavour of the Gospel, "*being the salt of the earth*" (Mt 5,13) to everyday life and to the community.

With this objective in view, I hope that after the presentation about the ecclesial and socio-political aspect, we will be able to find out whether Catholic Action's characteristics are in fact existent and evident in our socio-political contest. We should try to identify what we should encourage and what remains to be done.

When we share our experiences, we should give due attention to those experiences which speak about actual projects and plans of action which are aimed at transforming everyday relationships between individuals and in the whole of society, at personal and organizational level, in the spirit of the Gospel and as an outcome of that faith which stems from the acceptance of the Word of God.

When we examine Africa's new evangelization, we should assess whether the spirituality lived by African Christians is such that it transforms all interpersonal ways of behaviour and relationships. We should also examine whether our sociopolitical commitment and our inculturation are motivated and enlightened by the Gospel and whether they inculcate a new spirit and an evangelical communitarian responsibility in the African mentality and culture. An inculturation, which only takes into account the rite, is not acceptable.

True inculturization penetrates and betters all human values with the power and vision of the Gospel.

When we reflect on Catholic Action's identity and formation, let us have the courage and honesty to correct the misconceptions which we notice. There are some who confuse Catholic Action with movements of popular piety, with the various spiritualities or with the sporadic Christian involvement of crowds or small groups. We should rather go back to the true nature of Catholic Action and thereon establish appropriate and realistic methodologies for a spiritual, theological and social formation which responds to the expectations and mission of the Church.

As regards the part played by Ecclesiastical Assistants in Catholic Action, I would like to ask the Bishops and priests, participating at this meeting, to share my concern about the fact that there are very few priests working with committed lay people. Speaking from my experience as Assistant of the African Teachers' *Equipés* from 1975, I can say that some of these teachers' *equipés* are now non-existent or have been converted into simple social organizations or Trade Unions. This has happened because of the lack of continuous guidance by a permanent priest assistant who should be a friend and brother to the members of the *Equipés*.

Inspired by the same faith, reassured by the same hope and animated by the same love, let us unite our efforts to promote a Catholic Action in Africa and in the world, which proclaims and manifests the power of Christ, creator of the new man and of the new world.

Enlightened by this faith, we can be messengers of hope in our countries where we encounter so much suffering and despair. May the Lord guide and sustain us during this meeting.

THE FORCE OF GOOD THE HOPES AND CHALLENGES OF THE REGION OF THE GREAT LAKE

Msgr. Simon Ntamwana
Archbishop of Gitega
President of the Episcopal Conference of Burundi

We are very happy to greet the meeting, in Africa, of the International Forum of Catholic Action being held in Bujumbura from 22 to 25 August 2002.

It is a real comfort to us that so many friends have come to our country, torn as it is by a fratricidal war, and such a visit is a call to us for conversion to brotherhood in the Gospel. Jesus our Master, standing in the midst of us, repeats once more to all “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (*Jn* 15:12). Having shown his humble love to the extent of washing the feet of each of us, he further insists “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (*Jn* 13:35).

Your visit has a great significance both for our country and for the Church in Burundi. It is an unparalleled source of energy for the members of our Catholic Action Movements, particularly those represented here.

I have been asked to give you an extensive description of the various situations in which our Catholic Action Movements are called to evangelise and bring holiness. I should like to break down this communication, which I have named “The Force of Good” (cf *2 Thessalonians* 3:13) as follows:

- The active pedagogic method used by Jesus in *Luke* 14:28-32
- A Region of enormous capabilities
- Our challenges
- An analysis of the situation
- Our commitment as Christians, the right hand of the pastors
- Conclusion: the invincible force of good

I expect to be speaking more of the countries than of the Church in our Region.

I. The active pedagogic method used by Jesus

In St. Luke we read the following passage: “*For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying: “This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.” Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace”* (Lk 14:28-32).

Jesus is addressing the crowds who are full of enthusiasm on hearing him for the first time, and immediately wish to follow him. He is asking these people not to let themselves be carried away by the first impulse. The first word may taste as sweet as honey, but later on, when it comes to living and announcing the word, there will be difficulty and bitterness (cf. *Exk 3:1-3*).

To follow Jesus is a serious undertaking; it engages the whole person; nothing can be kept back! Jesus calls on the crowd to measure their steps well in following him towards the full reality of becoming his disciples. He guides each person who hears his words towards a full discovery of what lies in waiting for him, beyond the enthusiasm which is often short-lived and therefore barely significant in real life! We are not only asked to verify the daily realities to evangelize. We must also take into account the efforts, methods and strategies we shall have to employ to reach our goal.

Our place is in the world: it is there, where our Master places us. This applies particularly to such as are involved in social life, and therefore in immediate contact with the whole complex of problems in society: “*They do not belong to the world* (Jn 17:16) although they remain in the world (cf Jn 17:11). It is indispensable for the Christian to realize this placement, the better to intervene when necessary (cf *Apostolic Actuositatem 7*).

Christ is the very soul of our activity. He is the Master, the Model, and the well-spring of our life which has become one of permanent action throughout the world: “*The success of the lay apostolate depends on the laity’s living union with Christ*” (AA 4).

Our role: helping all other ministers of the Church as “*co-operators in the truth*” (3 Jn 8) in the development of the Church’s mission. “*On all Christians therefore is laid the splendid burden of working to make the divine message of salvation known and accepted by all men throughout the world*” (AA 3,3).

One must insist on the urgency and indispensability of having a full knowledge of our field of action, at the same time bearing in mind the level of formation which the Diocese – that is, the local Church – is in a position to pro-

vide to lay people. This includes knowledge of spiritual matters, of the mystery of salvation, and of the present-day world (cf AA 29). And here I refer once more and in a special way to the Region of the Great Lakes. This is no doubt an ambitious prospect and does not admit going into the details of each country. I shall therefore limit myself to general characteristics, at the same time without excluding the possibility of outlining clear concrete actions.

II. The Region of the Great Lakes has enormous capabilities, both national and international

With regard to human populations, young people are numerous: their numbers increase by 3% annually; they are generally active, particularly in Burundi and in Rwanda where the scarcity of the land relative to the population drives all to work harder in their daily tasks. On the whole, the values of life and education are well appreciated; there is a love of life and childhood; adults and elders are respected. The environment is generally healthy and nature generous. The family still enjoys an outstanding position. Ancestral heritage has almost disappeared: still it seems to escape modern influences which gradually reduce it to a nucleus. Family ties seem to re-appear in the wake of immense difficulties brought about by the politico-ethnic crisis in the Region.

II.1. The Nation

The solid structure is still preserved. The passage from the traditional monarchic and patriarchal society to democracy is taking place through much suffering. The last two decades of the 20th century have seen the greatest crisis of our recent history. The Nation has resisted, in agony, the imposition of ethnic uniformity which may be compared to a terrific gale blowing on the conscience and behaviour of the people. Instead of enjoying a diversity harmonised in a dynamic unity, we have run the risk of squandering our Nation in a selfish break-up, under the banner of “ethnic exclusion”.

In their Nairobi message in 1997 entitled “*You are all brothers; put an end to the war*”, the Bishops emphasised the value of ethnic diversity.

The Nation should safeguard its institutions, for the sake of which it passed through the most dramatic years of colonization. The adventure of democratization is not a blind alley: we only need the courage to understand the importance of all citizens shaping out their destiny and the future of their country. The Churches have shown how good such a society can be and how it can help its various national components to reach their development. We had escaped dictatorships and States managed by military *elite*, with the resulting consequences.

Even though economic egoism were to promise a better future, the solidarity between our countries had created a network of relations within CEPGL which allowed for development of the various active levels of society. The mobility of persons doubtlessly provided opportunities for economic and social development.

II.2. Civil society

This is a rather new sociological category. It includes associations of citizens who unite with ideas aimed at the benefit of the nation, without involving political parties. These groups appeared in particularly large numbers at the time our countries passed on to democratic rule: the first of them were free from any political influence or ethnic connection. The majority of those that started during the heat of the politico-ethnic conflict fell victims to the current crisis: a few exceptions held their ground and remained at a distance both from political parties and from the ethnocentric crisis.

Within civil society, certain associations have appeared which are particularly involved in the defence of human rights. At present these can serve as a valid means for the development of the fundamental human rights of the person.

Up to that time, Catholic Action Movements had been the best known associations in our country surroundings; at present our Movements indisputably need a radical renewal both with regard to their dynamism and to their strategies, so as to be able to operate efficiently in their setting. I should say: they should even be competitive and attractive!

II.3. Culture

The vitality of our cultures is beyond doubt. They are well developed. They are healthy, being centred both on God and humanity; they do not acclaim the death of God or the death of man, since one would follow on the other, as Fr. Bernard Sesboë states in his book "To believe".

These cultures have found favour with many researchers both foreign and local; at present university faculties in Europe, America and Africa are full of outstanding works which describe our cultures and their content from various angles.

I will not hide the limitations of our traditions; they seem to have empty spaces waiting to be filled in by other cultures; these limitations call for the help of the Gospel and faith which leads to it in order to fill in what is missing and leads our peoples to a higher development. These limitations are witnesses to the greatness of our cultures: they are ready to be enriched through meeting other ways of life. On the other hand they should be prepared to pass on such cosmos-anthropological perceptions as lie hidden within them.

II.4. Economy

In the world scale of wealth and productivity, we are at the bottom of the list. It is a sad record. Still, our people have never gone begging in times of peace and climatic serenity. It has been a matter of honour for them to support their families; they have been willing to produce what they could; our men and women are the pride of our Region and the guarantee of its survival. The capacity of our farmers for work and creativity has often been surprising! Nature is generous, the climate favourable, and in certain parts of our Region, natural resources are amazing.

We are trying to resist the strangling effect of globalization and wish to come into the new system with our hands fuller (more than the 2% of world commerce at present attributed to Africa!). Above all, we should not try to escape reality or get hemmed in, in any way. It is indispensable to be present. We must find ways of being more attractive, more enterprising – *nigra sum sed formosa! Pauper sum sed activus!*

II.5. Art

The epithets applied to our art are often as unjust as they are far from the truth. There is nothing primitive, nothing naive. African art, the art of our Regions represents man in his hopes and in his challenges. It shows the labyrinths and complexities if the mystery of life, of God and the world. It does not aim at satirizing, it does not want to ridicule. Whatever is tragic in life is humbly placed before us to contemplate, without putting the dignity of the person to shame. The different expressions of art seem to unite, in order to keep us free from the eccentricities one sees in the art of various cultural circles in sophisticated societies.

So far this has been a brief summary of the brighter, more hopeful aspects of our society. We shall now have to go over to the darker, perhaps even miserable side.

III. The challenges of the Region of the Great Lakes

No use turning a blind eye! There may be hopes, but also challenges and enormous problems which may mar the favourable points mentioned so far.

III.1. Populations

The demographic problem. Population problems in our Region are a priority which has to be faced with Christian responsibility. It is urgent that our traditional love of life become a responsible love so as not to worsen the condition of

poverty which is relentlessly invading our households. The human life we have sacrificed on the altars of political and economic power must retain the lead in the difficult climb towards the common good. Have the fundamental rights of the human person been forgotten? Some seem to consider them a fashion that has passed its time. Others see them as a supreme conquest which ignores the conquered, the minority of society and the poorest.

One hears about *phenomena of recession* and moral crisis: genocide, paedophilia, unbridled craving for riches, refusal of pardon whether offered or asked for: all these are social signs of a state of moral health which has become very vulnerable.

AIDS is called an economic evil. In so far as the Church is concerned, AIDS is, and will always remain a moral evil. The condom, with its implied narcissism, is no remedy. In fact, condoms and similar trappings have multiple uses, all leading to selfish and self-centred pleasure.

III.2. The Nation

It is no surprise, but a heart-breaking fact that following the political occurrence of democracy, the Nation has fallen into dangerous ethnic drifts. All socio-political initiatives have been given an ethnic flavour. This applies to political parties, the fight for the rights of the individual, and the economy. Individual freedom was easily confiscated by an ethnic group: any person whose actions did not follow the direction of the group fell under suspicion and was condemned to death, or exclusion, or remained under permanent suspicion. The course of development has been arrested. This damages the wellbeing of the whole country and causes it to die out. The purchasing power has been strangled by the unending speculations of an economy of war. Often, as in the law of the jungle, the more powerful prevail. The ethnic crisis which has bordered on genocide has not yet reached the end of the tunnel, in an atmosphere of revenge and refusal of national reconciliation. The process of democratization needs to be restarted, notwithstanding the resistance one often encounters on the basis of African custom and traditions which used to preserve the equilibrium in our society. Much has been said about the failure of evangelization in the Region, which is the most Catholic and Christian area of Africa. There was room for much soul-searching regarding the action of the Church before, during and after the crises which have tormented the Region of the Great Lakes.

III.3. Civil society

It has performed many praiseworthy efforts; it has contributed towards the revival of a new conscience: even apart from a political party one can contribute

towards the rebirth of a more human society, arising from greater solidarity. Nevertheless, this same civil society needs to be freed from the bonds that still tie it to political parties and ethnic influences.

Catholic Action Movements have been active in forming numerous *elites*, in the political, economic and military spheres.

Without forgetting their religious and spiritual contribution, we need to search new objectives and employ new strategies, in the spirit of the parable regarding new wine having to be stored in new wineskins. Is it not the case of re-organizing the Catholic Action Movements and placing them in the territory where they are most needed, of impressing on them the strategy of action and testimony, which would lead to their being effective in their immediate surroundings?. Thus one would pass on to them the theological vision of Vatican II, which visualizes the Catholic Action Movements as being operative in the local Church, that is, in the diocese.

III.4. Culture and Art

Culture and the arts: are the fruits of the effects from which they result in countries. Allow me not to insist too much on this point.

III.4.The economy

It deserves some special attention. We are going through a process of globalization; our countries are moving towards it anaware, more impoverished by neo-liberalism, which has an unrestrained concept of economic organization wherein the weakest disappears without any alternative. Our countries are among the poorest and the GDP has gone down, less than 150 dollars per year per person. We are living below the threshold of poverty, which has been fixed at one dollar a day of economic capacity. The scourge from AIDS weakens us further and makes our Region the holocaust of the 21st century, after the genocide committed within our walls.

Countries of a thousand hills, countries of a thousand problems, regions of a thousand challenges. And at all levels that we knock we are faced with indefinite challenges. As disciples of Christ we should carry these courageously on our shoulders. Our faith should act. All our actions should be enlightened by the Gospel. Christ has to transform our Regions with our help.

IV. A tentative analysis

We are faced with a sick body. The symptoms of the sickness are however clear: it is the same cells of the body which are carrying the sickness through; external action alone would not have made it possible for our

country's sovereignty to falter, had not our countrymen handed over their own Nation. But the hope for recovery is real and is based on clear and sound signs. If the challenges fill us with awe they also fill our hearts with joyful hope. The community's vitality, their refusal to die as a result of the war which lasted since 1990, starting from Rwanda, passing through Burundi, and establishing itself in Congo and the tenacity of the Christian community to remain a sign of life and hope in all the regions, are motives which promise life rather than death. I would like to make mine the analytic observations of our pastors who recently met at Kigali for the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Association of the Episcopal Conference of Central Africa (AECCA):

"Three years ago, when we met in Nairobi for the Plenary Assembly of the Association of the Episcopal Conference of Central Africa (ECCA), we launched a pressing appeal to Christians and to all men of good will, saying: "You are all brothers (Mt 23,8), stop the war". Although this message was widely spread and greatly welcomed by the Christian faithful, still the war was not stopped.

Pope John Paul II, in his encouraging message for the occasion, sent to the President of AECCA once more insists: "Today, I would like to repeat with you: never again to war, which destroys people's desire for living in tranquillity and in fraternal understanding! May there be more courageous testimonies of a new hope for all the region in the Africa of the Great Lakes!".

H.E. Mgr. Robert Sarah, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Men, also treated the subject of hope in our situation of crisis, in his homily during the opening Mass of our meeting. "In spite of the war and of the absurd violence, in spite of the catastrophes, in spite of the misfortunes which submerge us, we should together reaffirm our faith in the love of God our Father for us. God loves Africa".

And the President of the AECCA, at the opening of the workshops of the recent General Assembly of Kigali (May 2002) has described the aim of the meeting in these terms: " We would like to... reaffirm in front of everybody and of each and everyone our mission as Church of Christ as a sacrament and place of salvation. This is true, thanks to our faith. This is also true, and moreover fortunate, thanks to the appeals which we receive from all parts. The Catholic Church is the institution, which better than any other, can draw attention to the crisis which prevails in our countries".

V. Our commitment as christians

We are gathered here as Christians, as disciples of Christ who wish to share with all nations the grace of salvation. It is the command received

from the Risen Christ: "Go and teach all nations" (Mt 28,19). He says explicitly to the Christians of the Great Lake Regions: make of all of you my friends; make of all the countrymen of your Nations my disciples; make of all your daily life realities occasions of salvation which bring to every person the merciful love of the Father. We are not "generic" Christians, but special Christians - using the present pharmaceutical language! We are important members of Catholic Action. We are the disciples nearest to our Master. This is how Vatican II describes us: "The laity, dedicating themselves increasingly to the apostolate, grouped themselves into various kinds of activities and societies which, in a rather close union with the hierarchy, pursued and continue to pursue goals which are purely apostolic. These associations are CATHOLIC ACTION". They are given their own peculiar characteristics in the words of the Council:

- a) The immediate aim of these organizations is the Church's apostolic aim, that is, to evangelize and sanctify men and women and to form in them a Christian conscience so that they can infuse the spirit of the Gospel into the various communities and spheres of life.
- b) Cooperating with the hierarchy in their own way, the laity contribute through the benefit of their experience, to the running of these organizations, to the weighing of the conditions in which the pastoral activity of the Church has to be conducted, and to the processing and carrying out of the programmes of action.
- c) The laity act together as an organic body so that the sense of community of the Church is made more evident and the apostolate is more effective.
- d) Whether they offer themselves spontaneously or are invited to work and to cooperate directly in the hierarchy's apostolate, the laity work under the higher direction of the hierarchy itself, and the latter can sanction this cooperation by an explicit "mandate".

VI. An appeal for commitment

St. Paul, together with your pastors, urges you and asks for your determined commitment: "As for you brothers and sisters, never slacken in doing what is good" (*II Ts 3,13*).

It is your duty to make Africa and especially this Great Lakes Region, more Christian, more catholic, or simply more human, because a true man and a true woman can only be fully so when they are sons of the Father, in the Son, through the Holy Spirit (cf Mt 28,19).

May you be the inexhaustible source of The Force of Good.

THE LAYMAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE NEW EVANGELIZATION IN AFRICA: SPIRITUALITY

*Msgr. Peter Kihara
Bishop of Muranga*

*"You are the salt of the earth and you are the light of the world" (Mt 5:13-16)
"New wine has to be poured into fresh wineskins". (Lk 5:38)*

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ: Christ thy Kingdom come!

To share with you dear delegates on the above topic, I have found inspiration from the above quotations of the scripture. Although Jesus directed them to the twelve disciples, they became open to all those who believe and follow him from the Pentecost event. It is then when he extended the missionary mandate not only to the apostles, but to all who would believe in Him. Hence, his mandate continues: "Go to the whole world and make disciples of all nations, baptise them... and teach them to keep all the commandments" (Mt 28:19).

Time and time again, the theme of the "New Evangelization" has hit our ears from the Holy Father's speeches during his various journeys and pastoral Encyclicals. In spite of his poor state of health and age, he has not hesitated to remind us that the times and world social order have changed. As such he has been recommending new Pastoral approaches or methods so as to respond adequately to those needs. Most of these challenging needs are found on the direct field of the layperson. Since the harvest seems to become even "richer than ever", the layperson's immediate contribution would be to provide the expected response and witness the Gospel more adequately than the ordained minister. (cf Mt 9:37-38).

For many centuries the Church has concentrated its attention to the formation of the clergy and religious and rightly so because of their role in the field of Evangelization. Thanks be to their contribution in guiding and inspiring the world order through the Gospel light. But more than even

before, we are realizing that there are direct forces contrary to this light and its direction. The Church ministers and its mission are being denied and closed out of the decision-making forums. These create new world-order and civilizations whose progress is not based on the Gospel of truth and neither is it intended to promote the human person integrally. Some are open deceptions intended for material gain, others for short-term pleasure, search for unlimited freedom and power beyond the Creator's will. This is the place and area of the layman's contribution through life-witness.

So, in such social, political and economic situations whose consequences we witness and go through daily, we tend to question: how can the Church respond and give answers to these challenging demands? Or: has the "light become overcome by darkness?" Or even more: "has the salt lost its taste and become sour?" Since the driving force has shifted the attention from reaching God as the final Goal guided and inspired by the Gospel to Science and Technology whose final goal is man himself, the only living witness of Faith required and fittingly is that of a committed catholic layperson. Jesus continues to stress that we "are salt of the earth". Salt has the capacity to preserve, purify and flavour and so, by calling us "the salt of the earth", Jesus wants us to preserve the human beauty and dignity, to purify it, and heal the painful wounds and bitterness caused by hatred and war, by healing relationships and putting the necessary flavour life. That is in spite of all the challenges that are creating hopelessness in life, the hidden image and likeness of God in man, his human value is still there and they should come first. The challenges we are facing in this new millenium are calling for a direct contribution of the layperson according to Vatican Council II, *Church on Modern world*, (GS 43)

How can the lay people contribute to the New Evangelization?

By participating fully in the field of evangelization Formation in the various areas of Social Teaching of the Church. This means giving more importance to their Spiritual Formation so as to fully witness the Gospel values in their field of work and life. This will enlighten and empower them even more so as to play their fitting role in Evangelization more faithfully. There has been a shift of needs in the apostolic field such that the traditional pastoral methods and approaches seem out-dated. As the Vatican Council II has been calling for up-to-date renewal for almost forty years, the response has been slow. But counting with the fervent faith, love and will to commit themselves even more in the apostolate, we feel that the *Third Millenium* is an open chance "to be the salt and light of the world" as they are called to be. Any delay will make us be over-taken by the events if we are not over-

taken already! Well formed and informed about the mission ahead, the lay people will fittingly provide what the new world and social order requires to be Gospel inspired. (cf GS 42: “this religious mission can be the source of commitment, direction, and vigour to establish and consolidate the community of men according to the Law of God”).

What more can they do to hasten the mission of the New Evangelization? As the Holy Father reflects that... “faced with the great challenges of our time, we do not find some magic formula. No, we shall not be saved nor save the situations by a formula but by a Person, Christ who assures us: I am with you always, to the close of the age (Mt 28:20)”. And so the formula is in Christ whom we have known and believed in. Loving and imitating him, we shall “live the life of the Trinity and with him **transform history** until its fulfilment in the heavenly Jerusalem...This programme does not change with times and cultures... and it is our programme for the third Millenium” (cf NMI 29).

What Spirituality is required for the New Evangelization in the New Millenium?

It is one that will re-instate the Gospel values prioritizing their place in the person, the family and society at large. As in the early primitive Church when these values were allowed to become the driving force, new avenues will open and the Risen Lord will guide the programme as He has done it for two thousand years.

I consider the following as the main characteristics of the Spirituality we require to be able to contribute fittingly to the New Evangelization to respond adequately to today’s needs:

1. Search for Holiness

This was Jesus first Goal in His initial public ministry: “Be holy as your heavenly Father is holy”, attainable by repentance of sin (Mk 1:15). This call directed to every individual, family and communities, demands a personal response. It is an invitation that pre-supposes a new way of living and doing our apostolate today (cf *Christifidelis Laici* 17). This means we have to intensify our Catholic Action Motto to Prayer, Action and Sacrifice and live the Gospel in action, or to become living Gospels. A new beginning through the help of the Holy Spirit as the early Christian community whose living witness attracted many to their group day by day: “And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47b).

The lay people's commitment to the sanctity of life and work in their social, political and pastoral field is inevitable and makes a great contribution in deed to the new evangelization. I believe that given the right chance and formation, they will truly shine in life and work.

2. Prayer

The call to holiness is impossible to achieve by human strength and will and so, just as the disciples approached their master to teach them to pray, we too should learn to pray (*Lk* 11:1). Since Prayer is our daily commitment through which we offer the world and its needs, we should also learn to become more and more intimate friends with Jesus so that what we ask can be granted. He told his disciples to "abide in me and I in you" (*Jn* 15:4). The more intimate and the deeper the communion with Jesus, the more Christlike will our loving charity be to reach others and transform them as in the Gospels. The closer we are to God through prayer, the closer we shall be to our brothers and sisters offering them Jesus' compassion transmitted by that communion. Hence, the higher we go vertically towards God in prayer, the closer we shall reach others horizontally. So, prayer inspires the action that follows it making it a living sacrifice offered to God with love. In this we shall be fully living our CA motto, the powerful force to move the challenging mountains in our personal, family and community life. "I tell you the truth: the Father will give you whatever you ask of him in my name" (*Jn* 16:23b).

3. Following the Holy Spirit's Guidance

To be able to venture into the vast sea of apostolate calling for our witness in this new millenium, we shall have to **trust** and **follow** the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. He is the principle agent of evangelization even today, for Jesus said: "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak of what he hears and tell you of things to come" (*Jn* 16:13). Therefore, if we commit ourselves to be moulded by this Gift of the Father, then we shall be able to reflect the face of Christ and look at the rich harvest with his eyes full of compassion. I have no doubt that we shall not remain indifferent but that we will respond to the needs accordingly like Jesus. He will provide us with the grace of fortitude and discernment to go out of ourselves courageously like the apostles from the upper room. The Holy Father concludes that "The Spirit will impel us to start out on Evangelization anew sustained by hope which does not disappoint (*Rom* 5,5)" (*NMI* 58).

We truly need the discerning eyes of Christ and his generous heart to be his instruments and continue his mission. Cf the Hymn:

“Abba, Abba Father, you are the potter, we are the clay.
Mould us into the image of Jesus your Son”

4. Living the Mystery of Christ, Who was sent

If we shall be able to continue and contribute into the new evangelization as the situation requires, we shall have to understand that although it is ever new, it remains the One Mission of Father who **sent** the Son Jesus. The Holy Spirit continues to guide the Apostles and the Church through all times so that as agents, they remain faithful to their Master who assured them: “And remember! I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Mt 28:20). We too have to know that He is sending us unto his vineyard just as the Father sent Him. This means that mission to evangelize is the Father’s but entrusted to the Son: “I did not come to do my will but that of my Father”.

This deep understanding in the mystery of Salvation has to become another element of our Spiritual Life so that we are able to live and fulfil our role faithfully as Jesus’ mission.

We have to cultivate the spirit of a Disciple - **the one who is sent** and his duty is to do as he is taught by the master. A spirit of Loving Obedience has to characterize our life and work in imitation of Christ whom the Apostle Paul wrote: “Though He was in the form of God, Jesus humbled himself taking the form of a servant, becoming obedient to death, death on a cross” (Phil 2:5-8). If we have to contribute effectively towards the mission of the New Evangelization, we need this spirit of Fidelity and to the end. This should teach us that the Mission always belongs to the Father who appointed the Son and us today, apostles, we are just servants honoured to participate in it. What a grace to be found worthy of such a cause! Let us therefore heed his call: “I give you a new commandment, love one another as I have love you” (Jn 15:12-13, 17).

At this new era Jesus directs us as his disciples, “Throw your nets to the right, ready for a catch” (Jn 21:6-8).

May Our Lord Jesus renew our enthusiasm by sending us the gift of the Holy Spirit under the maternal guidance and care of the blessed Virgin Mary. May He bless our Catholic Action Movements and all members keeping them faithful to his mission of bringing all to the Salvation he brought.

EDUCATION: A REQUISITE FOR THE NEW EVANGELIZATION EDUCATION IN HUMAN AND CHRISTIAN VALUES: A PRESSING REQUIREMENT

Sr. Marie Goretti Nizigiyimana

“Our contribution as Church shall consist, first of all, in educating consciences for responsible action in the cause of peace”⁽¹⁾.

“In fact, if we do not exercise capable influence on the man and woman of today, we run a great risk of seeing whatever we build collapsing like a house built on sand”⁽²⁾.

The New Evangelization can become a reality through new approaches and proper action, aimed at instilling a Christian mentality in our surroundings. We are called upon to uproot from the minds of our young (and not so young) brethren the feelings of hatred and exclusion, thus leading to real love. Such is the education we indispensably need for a New Evangelization.

But what is education? It is a permanent process of control and development of the human being in all the aspects of life: physical, biological, sociological, spiritual and moral. Thus it goes beyond the mere transmission of knowledge: it influences behaviour and attitude, the skill of being and knowing. In other words, the purpose of traditional education was the forming of personality with a certain number of values, such as solidarity, life, and above all, the family. Although this system had its shortcomings and difficulties, it was useful, particularly for the link it provided between knowledge and life in practice, education and the values of a social group.

Unfortunately, the social crisis which has shaken our continent in general and our country in particular has not spared the institution of the family. The result is that the family has given up its noble mission of education and left it entirely in the hands of the school: an impossible substitute. Thus the current moral crisis, arising mostly from an attitude of forgetting, or being indifferent towards such values as identify the human personality. Neglecting an ethical approach we have reached the stage of “letting go” in all matters of behaviour, thus resulting in social disorder. We assert, without

hesitation, that what is at stake today is: what values should form and condition the face of humanity.

At a time of new Evangelization, the Church should plan an integrated education, starting with the material, cultural, and spiritual condition of her own members. It would therefore be necessary to train suitable persons in the skills required for ensuring this advancement of humanity. But who are these education experts, and what result would they produce?

Such questions compel us to describe the qualities necessary for such an educator, a responsible African and Burundian who would have the skill to re-establish a society living in harmony.

1. Towards whom is this education in values aimed?

The crisis we are passing through is no accident. It is rather the result of an ever growing decay in moral norms and an obscuring of the moral conscience. This places on us all, in varying degrees, the responsibility for the downgrading of behaviour. Hence the scheme for education in values should reach all categories of people. To work efficiently towards the renewal of society we have to start by redeeming the human person.

The Church, as the first institution entrusted with the education of peoples, is to reach out towards the conversion of all her members. There is an advantage in the fact that both men and women in our society are yearning for an atmosphere of harmony, and the majority of them are ready to commit themselves towards the re-building of society. It would therefore be sufficient to start by making use of this disposition, and training leaders capable of working towards the advancement of others in all circles of society. All institutions should keep their eyes open on the moral state of their members and act, in their respective surroundings, as “the salt of the earth” whenever needed.

2. Who has the leading role in the education in values?

The mission of the present-day educator consists of imitating Christ, who came down from heaven to serve man. A real educator should definitely be at the service of humanity. It would therefore be necessary to re-define the purposes of education to fit such a mission. John Paul II has given the basic points: “Besides good teaching, teachers and educators should dedicate themselves to imparting such moral and spiritual values as are necessary for the existence of humanity, being themselves witnesses to Christ” (3).

The educator should thus know the main challenges facing him today, which belong to varied categories: economic, political, cultural, scientific and technical, and also religious. It follows that the Christian educator should be a prophet in the full sense of the word. He must be a spokesman

for God with his people, and share with them all the ups and downs they may be facing at any time. He must be ready to live through the fortunes of his people, understanding their aspirations and hopes. In other words, the meaning of “educational prophecy” is the capacity of understanding the present moment and interpreting the crises we are living through, in the light of the presence of God and the criteria of the Gospel.

In such manner, fortified by the renewing strength of the Spirit, the educator will be ready to face the different ways and options for such changes as bring hope. On the other hand, the greatness and nobility of this educative mission in the light of the New Evangelization cannot remain the monopoly of the privileged few. It should rather be an active combined effort on the part of Church institutions such as the family, the schools, and Catholic Action Movements, all under constant supervision by the pastors of the Church.

We shall now be giving a glance at these agents of education and their respective roles.

*** The family and its basic role in education**

John Paul II describes the family as “the first basic structure for a human environment. It is in the family that one receives the very first basic ideas on what is true and what is good, learns the meaning of loving and being loved, and hence, the real concept of being a person” (4). Note that the Holy Father is always preoccupied with the well-being of the family. It was with this thought in mind that he addressed the bishops of Burundi in these terms: “Be the promoters of pastoral activity with the family in all its aspects: this objective should be given priority and followed up patiently together with all those entrusted with pastoral action” (5).

It is in fact thanks to the institution of the family that a human being becomes a human person. The family remains the natural source from which youth receives its education and human formation. But then it is through education that young people realize their calling and their spiritual development is systemized. Unfortunately, the family is nowadays the target for many attacks directed by a perverted modernity which corrupts social relations, and the spread of false values which lead to the culture of death. In a few words, the family in Burundi and all over Africa is facing many problems which weaken, and perhaps even paralyse, its role in education and evangelization.

And what is the specific role of the family in evangelization?

First of all, the love which is lived day by day by husband and wife is a reflection of God’s unending love towards humanity. Moreover, the Christian family has an important role in evangelisation. Parents pass on their faith through their married life and their professional life, in both of

which they are witnesses to the Gospel. It is from this point that various expressions arise which are descriptive of the family, such as “domestic church”, “church in miniature”, “sanctuary of the Church”, “prime missionary unity”. The numerous problems facing the family should not be allowed to result in an irrevocable attitude of “let them perish” on the part of Christians. Christian families should be enlightened, by Christian morality, as to how they should react according to current needs. Moreover, in an age which excludes various categories of persons for one reason or another, the family has a calling to rebuild the social structure, particularly by re-introducing the value of brotherhood.

In fact, love constitutes an indispensable climate and condition for the education and development of members of the family. “It is in the heart of a family where love and unity prevail that young people learn the values which are essential to Christian behaviour. And parents, with their way of life enlightened by the Gospel, pass on the significance of faith to their children, and start them on the road of life enlightened by human and Christian values. It is thus that the family can build up the citizens of today, as living witnesses of evangelical charity” (6). It is by following this inspiration that the family will always remain the nursery of religious vocations and vocations to the priesthood, as the Pope said at Songa: “Religious vocations and vocations to the priesthood more often than not know their origin to the life of faith, hope, and charity of the domestic church, which is the family, well integrated into the large community which is the Church... The future priest needs suitable surroundings and most of all a suitable family environment in order to become conscious of his vocation, and act in response to it” (7).

In a few words, the family has an insistent calling from Christ to “Be my witnesses”. The family, by its testimony, becomes a sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of unity in all humanity (8). In this way “the family will be achieving its essential purpose: that of communicating life, bringing up, and preparing persons to reach their full aim” (9).

However, notwithstanding its indispensable role in education, the family cannot fulfil all that is needed in such a task, unaided.

*** The school that evangelizes and forms a “new man”**

School educators hear families, society as a whole, and the Church telling them as the daughter of Pharaoh told the mother of Moses: “Take our children and educate them for us”.

But what type of man does Africa need today? This question must be continually present in the mind and heart of the educator in order to reach a suitable

point of reference for his mission. There are many teachers among us who are taking part in this forum. We feel that we have a fundamental role in our society: that of preparing the new man worthy of “a new heaven and a new earth”. This is the purpose which the New Evangelization intends fulfilling.

In the words of St. John Chrysostom, your responsibility implies two rules: “Day by day, keep the young people carefully under your eyes” and “Educate Christ’s athletes”. By being faithful to this responsibility, you shall be fulfilling one of the essential missions of the Church, as mother and educator. Do your best, therefore, so that the education of young people will serve for the building up of the whole person, and of every person. While teaching sciences, you are called upon at the same time to give each one the opportunity of building up his or her personality, together with a spiritual and moral life.

It follows that the school should be, both for educators and for pupils, a place with a warm atmosphere, a large educative family where every young person has a place as such, and is shown due respect, apart from his or her intellectual capability. Good quality teaching is indispensable, but educators should also commit themselves to communicating moral and spiritual values, being themselves witnesses of Christ, the fountain and source of all life. It is this integrated education which leads to development and advancement of the human person and of whole peoples. It is the way that leads to solidarity and brotherly understanding.

Thus, our pupils will learn how to discover the real meaning of life so as to persevere in hope. These days, more than ever, the world needs your support and care in order to cope with the challenges facing it at the start of this third millennium. Yet it will not be possible to carry out this task efficiently without living deeply in the light of the Gospel. If a school is willing to answer the call for a New Evangelization, those responsible for running it should check their actions, day by day, in the light of the Gospel, and remain always faithful to their vocation.

With self-education youth become the morning watch

Never tell young people that they are the future of the Church. This would be an insult, as it relegates their presence and their action to a distant future. It would also be a grave sin against truth: “young people form part of the Church as it is today” (11). Faced as we are with countless needs and problems in our region, we have to rely on your natural generosity. You have a model for your conduct in *John* 6,1-13: the apostles worrying at the enormous crowd they had to feed. Just as they were on the point of giving up, and sending the people to town to buy food, Jesus asks them to make an effort and feed the crowd themselves.

A boy interrupts the conversation to offer his five loaves and two fishes. An insignificant offering, given the size of the crowd. But in the eyes of the Lord it is a gesture of rare generosity, and he uses it as a starting point to feed the crowd.

Here is an example of an important duty to be performed by our young people. They are to become like the boy in the Gospel: generous leaders for the changes needed in our society through evangelization. To reach this aim you have to be conscious of your own riches: the gifts of enthusiasm, courage and love which God has given you and which you are to use for the benefit of others. Faced with the extensive work to be performed to help our society out of the present multiple crises, you should, like Christ, have faith in the future, even if you do not know how it is going to develop.

Do not be afraid; do not hesitate to commit your lives to peace, freedom, justice, truth, tolerance, solidarity and other values worthy of Christians, because the Lord is with you. Break away from all mediocrity; dedicate yourselves to the ideals which ennoble you. Beware of crying over your insignificance and giving way to despair. You might object to the effect that you do not carry enough weight to broadcast, far and wide, the Good News of salvation. However, in a spirit of shared responsibility with your colleagues in the various associations and movements of which you form part, you can be the salt of your small community and surroundings.

Be conscious of what you are, not to exclude one another, but to enrich and complement one another's qualities. In this way you will be able to bring back to the world the joy of living universal brotherhood, and being capable of hastening the arrival of a climate of justice and peace. You shall discover that this is a heartening mission, even if it is delicate and burdened with great responsibility.

In these strange and troubles times we are living through, be aware of the fact that the world expects much from you, in eliminating hatred and building up a civilization of love. We are confident in your determination and commitment to save present-day humanity. In all things remember that Jesus is the only way and light in which to place your trust. Guard this light well, and do not let it be extinguished.

Basing your spirit on the Good News of the Gospel, you shall yourselves be the light and salt of the earth.

Notes

1. ACEAC, Extraordinary Plenary Assembly, Kigali, 13-18 May 2002, "Rechechons donc ce qui contribue à la paix". Introductory dossier, Kinshasa, 2002, p. 15

2. cf. ibidem
3. Address by John Paul II at the XIV World Congress of OIEC in Rome, 1994
4. John Paul II, Centesimus annus n. 39
5. John Paul II, Meeting with the Bishops of Burundi
6. cf. John Paul II, “Mary Queen of Peace”, homily in the Mauritius Islands, 1995.
7. John Paul II, homily at Songa, September th 1990
8. cf Gaudium et Spes 42
9. J. Maritain, “Man’s Rights” p. 60
10. John Paul II, Address to the participants in the international meeting of catholic teaching
11. Kubler Michel, Youths in the new millennium “La croix” n. 362780 of 19/7/02

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC COMMITMENT AS A NEW FORM OF EVANGELIZATION

Rev. Salvatore Niciteretse

Introduction

In whose name does the Church speak about the economy, politics and current social issues when evidently it does not have any claim or any particular competence in economic science, politics or any experience in economics?

We know that the answer to this lies in the ethical character of the numerous choices which men are expected to take in economic and political spheres. When involving itself in concrete ethical problems particularly in the social, economic and political world, does the Church still seek inspiration from the Gospel, the only source - as it maintains - of a truly Christian pronouncement?

In fact, for a long time the protestants have been asking whether the social teaching of the Church focuses more on declarations on human rights and on natural social philosophy than on reference to the Gospel. But can the Church present itself as having the right to teach on human rights? We should try to give a reply to this question as well.

It is in this light that I will try to speak about the political and socio-economic involvement as a new way of evangelization.

Our intervention will be based on the following points: the competence of the Church to deal with socio-political and economic problems; the challenges of Evangelization at global and local level today and then possible solutions.

I. The competence of the Church in socio-economic and political matters

We know very well that the proper mission which Christ has entrusted the Church with is not linked with economic, political or social matters: the assigned mission is purely religious. But from this religious mission light and strength emerge which help to build and reinforce the community of mankind in accordance with divine law.

According to Vatican II, the crucial point is that in Jesus Christ, in whom according to the Christian faith, humanity and divinity are united, man is looked upon in a new and clearer way. "Christ, the new Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear." The Council goes on to say that precisely: "by His Incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some way with every man"¹.

Pope John Paul II often speaks about this subject thus giving a special perception of the human dignity of every individual. Preaching Christ thus reveals to man the inalienable dignity which God has given him through his redemption by the Incarnation of His only begotten Son. Since man has this unique dignity he cannot be allowed to live in socio-political and economic inhuman conditions. The Church involves itself in economic, political and social problems precisely in the name of the Gospel and because of its belief and understanding of Christ's key event. Economy and politics are not autonomous practices wherein questions cannot be raised about man's ultimate aim and treatment by man and for man. It is exactly the opposite.

For this reason, the Church cannot refrain from involving itself. Socio-economic and political problems cannot be treated only from the technical aspects. Social, political and economic issues are a human problem which also has an ethical dimension. Even in spheres which are essentially technical, faith forms men's consciences and helps them assume a role in this field. Thus faith sustains the social order by strengthening the moral sense in man ².

Besides, social problems owe their origin and have their roots in men's sin, in the de-Christianization of society and in the absence of spiritual values. Our economic organization ignores and even contradicts moral exigencies. That is precisely why the Bishops at Medellín, John Paul II in his homily in Zapopán Sanctuary and the Bishops at Puebla ³ describe this as a sinful situation. It is therefore moral causes, especially the exclusive crave for gain and the thirst for power, which produce sinful structures.

At the same time, it is worth understanding that the consequences of social problems are of concern even to the Church, inhuman life situations hinder the realization of the human person and man's vocation to development and to final salvation: they are definitely a great disrespect towards the human person and give a materialistic outlook and conception of life ⁴.

Lastly, the Church, through its teaching, has the duty to advocate a christian outlook of life; and this implies our duty to listen to its teachings. Evangelization presupposes a continuous study of social life in the light of the Gospel. There are therefore strong links between Evangelization and human promotion, links of an anthropological nature. Man, the subject of

evangelization, is not an abstract being, but is subjected to social and economic problems. There are also links of a theological nature since one cannot dissociate Creation from Redemption which concerns so many concrete situations of injustices which have to be fought, as well as the establishment of justice ⁵.

In view of this mandate, we will now look at the challenges which Evangelization faces today.

II. Some global and local challenges and prospective ways out for an indepth Evangelization

Among these challenges, the main ones are the problems of debt, market economy, good governance, distribution of wealth such as capital, technology, knowledge and others...These challenges do not enhance human dignity and lead to inequality at global and local level. They are thus obstacles for an indepth Evangelization.

II.1 - The problem of debt in relation to human dignity

International debt is not only a political *dossier*. It is a great moral challenge because it affects human dignity, human rights and the well-being of the most vulnerable men, women and children in the international community.

When analyzed with reference to the Social Teaching of the Church, the actual situation of the international debt presents a very great moral challenge. It corrodes the intrinsic dignity of the human person, a dignity which every human being has received from God, since the creation, independently from any action taken on the part of man.

Human dignity cannot be safeguarded and promoted without the minimal conditions for political, economic and social order which determine that which every individual and State should aspire for and that which it should defend and expect from others. In other words, it is the pursuance of the common good which should dictate the responsibility of individuals, States, international institutions and other private bodies concerned.

Reduction of debt should be consistent and should be projected towards the benefit of the poor. In fact the driving principle should be that of satisfying the primary human needs rather than that of paying off the debts. "Life before debt". The amount of the reduction of debt should be enough to release the necessary funds for the basic primary needs of the population that is health, education and the basic infrastructure. This means "putting life before debt". All the governments, in the North as well as in the South, should involve themselves to eliminate the shamefulness of poverty.

- Transparency and the participation of civil society, Church included, non-governmental organizations, the poor and emarginated are essential contributors in agreements about the cancellation of debts, the allocation of the released resources and the provision of new finances and donations. In this way, governments in debt, can be held as the ones actually responsible for their citizens. This can reduce the risk of future debt crisis.
- The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have already shown that without a real commitment on the part of the local population, the conditions and the terms coming from abroad remain ineffective.
- The actual policy of reducing debt should be faster, more consistent and should include a greater number of countries. Of the 41 countries considered admissible for the reduction of debt through the initiative of poor countries most indebted in 1997, only 7 have been accepted and only 4 have benefited from a reduction in debt. This shows that the way is rather long. Together with this challenge there are other challenges such as the market economy, good governance at local and global level...

II.2 - The challenge of market economy, of good governance and the prospects of a way out for an indepth Evangelization

The fundamental challenge which market economy presents to today's evangelization lies in the postponement of the problem which is strictly speaking a moral problem. This is characteristic of the "complex" culture and concerns individual consciences and their ability to contribute also as regards behaviour in the economic field, correcting the confiscation which puts into practice the philosophy of "business is business".

In fact the globalization age has transformed the whole world into one village, unified by telematic networks, by the mass media and by the economic and political interdependence very often expressed in unilateral forms of dependence of the weakest on the strongest. The value which stands out not only from the economic and political point of view but also from the ethical side is subsidiarity. That which can be done and promoted at the local level should not be transferred elsewhere, while the process of globalization should pay attention to use to advantage the participation of the grass roots and not base only on interventions from above.

The loss of the identity of local cultures is a danger to all, because the global village needs communities, countries and cities which build a network of their proper economic, political, social, cultural and spiritual riches

and which benefit from the overall communication which bring them the services and resources which they lack.

It is in this sense that the Church, which knows that cultures are essential means of evangelization, can never accept the disappearance of cultures but on the contrary, it should promote them through a genuine inculturation.

This is the reason why the Church should work to defend man's place in the global economy. The Church should lay the ethical foundations to defend man, above all the weak and the least, even at the economic level, because even economy should be ethical.

The international community (UNO) should put into effect a legal, social and political counterbalance in the implacable logics of firms and revenue immediately. World Organizations of Commerce and Work should be evolved. These should be truly world organisms which make it possible for poor countries to put their products on the world market - especially agricultural and textile products - without being penalized by protectionism measures by richer countries, and without the risk of certain countries' poverty being exploited by unscrupulous companies. One should also suggest the setting up of a "Group of global governance", whose members should not only be the 24 States represented in the Administrative Council of the World Bank but also the States in the UNO.

The international community should create a State of Law at world level, in which the "Declaration of Human Rights" of 1948, enriched with new additions, is made to play an analogous role to the Constitution of a democratic country. At the same time, it is necessary that, as soon as the International Penal Tribunal is set up, it will be a really well known and accessible place of appeal which will not be the victim of vetos by the great world powers like the UNO.

Within the framework of world globalization, the big challenge, which the Church has to face today, is the promotion of interreligious dialogue. It is a means of realizing more deeply its catholicity. The interreligious dialogue could be an effective means of finding, together with the other religions, a common way for the promotion of peace and justice, for the safeguarding of creation and to overcome all branches of fundamentalism, as John Paul II says⁶.

Conclusion

In conclusion, because of its faithfulness to the Gospel, the Church should involve itself in socio-economic and political matters. Christian faith is not a purely interior and private matter; it should have social, economic and political consequences.

Those who believe in the Gospel should have the urgent duty to build the earthly city according to God's plan. It is important here to clarify that the aim behind the socio-economic and political involvement, at all levels, should not be the attainment of egoistic privileges or of unjust gains, but the perusal and the realization of the common good for the development of man and the defence of human dignity.

We can thus reconstruct humanity and promote universality based no longer on absolute economy but on that which is human and all its possibilities.

It is therefore not enough to humanize the economy and politics, but we should try to create conditions which make it possible for us to live together. Each and everyone should examine his own way of living in order to live in sobriety and with consideration to others poverty thus guarding against the traps of the consumistic society which is the direct and unavoidable result of today's globalization. A synergic effort is necessary for the realization of a true "community" in today's concrete and limited conditions.

The *Apocalypse* gives a powerful picture of this happy community towards which we should all aim: it is the celestial Jerusalem which links the radiant identity and the openness and welcome of each other⁷ the announcement of *kerigma* and the involvement in effective testimony in socio-economic and political living. Everybody's and each and everyone's commitment should be aimed towards this city.

This should be done through the continual passing of possible inspired ideas to ethical principles outlined and carried out with everybody's contribution, starting from the humblest, the poorest and the least on earth, who are the most precious in God's eyes and although very often forgotten in this world's reckoning books, they are written in the book of life of the Lamb⁸.

Notes

- 1 GS n. 22
2. MM n. 195; QA n. 96
3. Puebla 40-44
4. QA n. 135,144; PP n. 9,21-22
- 5 EN n. 31
- 6 John Paul II, *Novo millennio ineunte* n. 55
- 7 Ap 21,23-27
- 8 *Ibidem*

FAITH, JUSTICE AND PEACE CATHOLIC ACTION'S ROLE

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Introduction

When I was asked to develop this theme, I immediately referred to the important orientations of the African Synod where it refers to justice and peace ⁽¹⁾. My presentation will therefore focus on an analysis of the actual reality with reference to the Synod's orientations.

It is important to remember that, in general, Africa, particularly the Great Lakes Region, has become a hotbed of divisions among the ethnic communities. It is the place where the greatest number of refugees, evacuees and dispossessed come from. The field of "justice and peace" is undermined by inhuman situations which rather tend to make it a fertile ground for injustice and wars.

This reflection goes beyond simple moralization. The facts are there but the action taken is rather weak. After some references to the Synod's important orientations, an attempt will be made to discover the actual situation and suggest some concrete plans of action in view of the new evangelization.

1. The African Synod's Important Orientations

As regards that which concerns the theological principles of the Church's commitment concerning justice and peace, No. 51 presents this problem very clearly. Lay people are called to live the Gospel's implications. Their testimony constitutes a prophetic challenge.

1. The basic idea of the Church as the Family of God excludes all ethnocentrism and any excessive particularism and favours solidarity and sharing. It preaches reconciliation and communion among ethnic groups (No. 63).

2. The dignity of man, created in the image and likeness of God and redeemed by the blood of Christ, constitutes the strongest basis for the Church in its social commitment, which on the other hand should imitate Christ in the world.

No. 70 speaks about orientations, directives and commitments. It appeals for an awareness by Heads of State and introduces the initiatives taken by the Synod in the area of justice and peace:

1. The Church in Africa should develop its prophetic role and should

speak for those who have no voice, denouncing and combating all that which lowers and destroys the human person.

2. The “Justice and Peace Commissions” should be set up at all levels so that social action will not be something improvised (No. 106). The promotion of the values of Justice and Peace should form part of all the pastoral programmes of every Christian community (No 7). The Church, with the means at its disposal - education, health, sensibilization and social assistance - has the duty and the right to help in the building of a just and peaceful society (No. 107).

3. Lay people are called upon to be actively involved in public life (No. 108) and to work together with people of other beliefs (No. 109), so that they may be able to answer to the great challenge to ensure a good running of public affairs in the political and economic fields (no. 110-112). This is the price that has to be paid in order to arrive at having a State ruled by law (no. 112).

II. The actual reality

II.1. Today’s situation

The African Synod was held after the outbreak of the crisis in Rwanda and in Burundi. The orientations as well as the recommendations which came out are very relevant as they take into consideration the various atrocities, which took place particularly in the Great Lakes Region, which were definitely a blow to “justice and peace”. The Synod has made a strong appeal to the laity. Unfortunately this is still made of a certain number of laypeople who are conscious of their role are assembled in the Catholic Action.

In reality, from the catechetical point of view, the Church is nothing but the family of all baptized. Today’s criticism is more aimed at the hierarchy of the Church than at the faithful gathered together.

II.2 Faith’s role

Often it is evident that there is a tendency to ignore the role which faith plays in the struggle for peace. This started with a popular opinion, prevalent in Rwanda after the genocide and which later reached Burundi, with the slogan *Kiliziya yarakuye kirazira* “the Church has suppressed taboos and interdictions”.

In my opinion, those who support this idea are to be classified among the culprits who are not acknowledged. This is a mistaken evaluation which limits the responsibility of the Church only to the hierarchy. The only explanation to this mistake is “infantilization”, whose victims are lay people.

State Administrators adopt underhanded strategies aimed at reserving power to only a few or at trying to attain power by all possible means, have always tried to eliminate any space for communion and have created a situation which favours the negation of positive values.

Between them the Catholic and Protestant Churches comprise about 80% of the Burundese population. This percentage has been widely made known to the public during the crisis period. As a result of this, some pertinent questions as to the validity of a Christian religion, which at the opportune moment has proved to be ineffective, have been put to the pastors.

The discussion is still going on and some conclusions seem to have been reached. Evangelization, in Burundi as well as in Rwanda, has had many failures because the greatest commandment of love has not had enough prophets who to put it into practice in the community. The 5th commandment “you shall not kill” has been violated during the electoral campaign, to the detriment of pastoral orientations. Even ecclesial structures have been hit by the scourge of divisions of an ethnic nature.

Nevertheless, the baptized and their pastors know very well that any barbarism against the human person does not fit within the dynamic relations which should exist between

God and humans. The analysis made has been so severe that the final conclusion reached is that religion is useless.

II.3. The prophetic announcement

I think ⁽²⁾ that religion and the Church are not a question of hierarchical structures. People are still far from understanding what is essential in matters of faith. However it is not necessary to be learned or to see miracles in order to believe. We need prophetic preaching and concrete actions which go beyond simple moralization of real social situation.

As members of the Church-Family, it is the work of all the baptized to preach, who work in the political and economic institutions of the country.

The Gospel’s message is ineffective if it does not succeed to transform from within the men and women in the secular world, those same people who have to confront the challenges linked with the management in the various spheres of daily life.

I will give an example: Burundi is in the experimental stage of applying the Arusha Agreement for peace and reconciliation. Apart from the foreseen reforms and the material advantages which are expected, is the human person at the centre of the debate? There is the risk that the peace which is being sought becomes polysemantic - that is having more than one meaning - since some understand it to be a cessation of hostility while others as macrosocial tranquility which is not reflected in the real life situations of the community.

In spite of all the omissions in the current process, we are on the right track: that which favours dialogue and joint agreement. However attention should be paid so that the debate does not focus solely on the State’s super-structures. Any action taken at national level should be directed towards the

silent masses who perish in incredible misery. Injustices have to be targeted to ensure the truth and to analyse the gossip going round and that which is not said in order to focus all the attention on the way of life of the outcasts, the emarginated, the poor and those who have no voice.

III. Refocusing the debate and action

We all know that God cares so much for the human person that he created him to his image and likeness. Some passages in the Bible prove very clearly up to which point God cares for human beings. He forgave them all their offences and saved them from the deluge, as if there was something special to save in this creature.

With the New Testament the new alliance is fulfilled: God becomes man so as to live amongst us and to share our human conditions in order to transform from within the whole of humanity. Jesus Christ is God made man. Throughout the Gospel there is a message of justice and peace. The Gospel is the basic reference for those who do not want to fall into irrational reasoning. The human person should always be at the centre of all our preoccupations. We should refrain from insulting people and should stop any attempt of homicide at all cost because the human person is human and divine at the same time. It is endowed with a conscience which guides its actions. A person is free to choose between good and bad. When a conscience is distorted by historical, sociological and psychological events, the human person may go astray and the divine which is within it gets overpowered by the dormant animal instinct.

In this case, the importance of religion lies in the fact that religion contributes to the re-education of consciences towards conversion and the re-establishment of a person's relationship with God.

This insistence on the human person is of major importance in any effort to establish peace, otherwise the peace which is being sought has no other aim but the destruction of humanity. The Gospel's message insists on the conversion of hearts "because man's heart is an abyss from where plans, of unheard of atrocities, capable of upsetting in a minute the serene and industrious lives of a whole nation, emerge" (3).

It is on the question of horizontal relationships that the Gospel's message puts weight so as to make it clear to humans that the human person is "an image of God" and the most precious in all creation and as such it merits respect and dignity. Sacrifices, offerings of any nature, prayers and liturgical celebrations are necessary because they express the respect which the human person owes to its creator (the vertical relationship). However, these become meaningless as soon as the horizontal relationship is undermined by hatred, injustice, intolerance and disrespect. They lose their meaning when they are

mixed up with violence which aims at the physical elimination of the human person who is created in the image of God. Assassinations, massacres and genocide are in fact the killing of God.

One can elaborate more on this theme of “perfect relationship” by referring to certain passages in the Bible and also in the Koran which show the close correlation between the Kingdom of God (of justice and peace) and reconciliation (the horizontal relationship). There is an urgent need for prophets among lay people so as to refocus debates and actions on the human person as well as on the vertical relationship.

IV. Iteneraries for action

- Given that the politicians in our region are Christians, baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and that the State Administration depends mostly on their choices, Catholic Action can turn to them to question them and to form them. They will then be able to put the human person at the centre of their preoccupations and work to foster a true culture of justice and peace.

- In this respect, Catholic Action Movements can be effective if they get the necessary pastoral and financial support which makes it possible for them to educate those of their members who assume responsibility for the administration of the State.

- Pastoral support could for example be in the formation of lay people and in the diffusion of relevant documents. This could then lead to concerted action built around a pastoral plan. The financial help will permit the realization of concrete actions to bring back evacuees, to help the needy and to reinclude the emarginated. In those countries where the democratic process is being relaunched, lay people’s role will be that of participating actively in any action taken by working from within and by relying on the input given by those elders involved at decision making level. Support by the local Church and by the International community, with the participation of the local Catholic Action, could promote a sensibilization in favour of the establishment of a State ruled by law.

Notes

1. NGOYAGOYE E.: Presentation des problemes de justice et de paix vus par le synode, in *Au Coeur de l’Afrique* n.4, 1995 pp. 112-115
2. MANIRAKIZA Z.: Le front de la paix, transformer les drames en opportunités, in *Au Coeur de l’Afrique*, Sepcial issue 2001, pp.149-185
3. John Paul II: “A dark day in the history of humanity” in *Osservatore Romano*, 13 September, 2001

RESEARCH AND CULTURES TOMORROW'S INEVITABLE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE "CONTEXTUALIZED INTER-CULTURATION"

Adrien NTABONA

Introduction

The Research Centre for Inculturation and Development (CRID) continues to believe that faith penetrates, permeates and transforms a culture up to a point where faith becomes culture and culture becomes faith.

This long-term research started in 1992 with the theme of the family. However, the conditions in the sub-region did not allow for the continuation of this fundamental research. CRID had to give priority to the struggle for life and survival, so it proceeded in conducting research on the culture of peace. This line of research revealed another dimension to inculturation: when talking about faith, horizontal inculturation must precede the vertical.

On the basis of experience which has matured over a long period, CRID has come to understand horizontal inculturation as the union of tradition and modernity where values alien to a culture may penetrate, permeate and transform it in a balanced and dynamic manner up to a point where there is a marriage between the traditional and the modern union which allows the grafting of the new branch on to the old trunk. This particular conception brought forth research on the institution known as "Bashingantahe", meaning the "Wise Men" the aim of this research is to propose to the country a viable framework for the culture of Peace.

Today, the continued research has given rise to a third concept: that of "inter-culturation". As the local values and the new values confirmed by the international community undergo a process of contextualized fusion the fertilization and mutual transformation of both sets of values, a process that yields contemporary points of reference, in short the rocks arising from the water providing a foothold for others who wish to act to save them from drowning in the vortex created by a greedy, aggressive, and all-encompassing insatiable globalisation.

This article tackles that last point of view. It will address in depth the problem of globalisation in general, and the conceptual confusion in particular. We will then address the centrifugal forces set in motion by all these

factors, that produce the inter-culturation and the consequent re-humanization as tomorrow's inevitable development.

I. Presenting the problem

In the face of the demands of globalisation, a global task of upgrading is indispensable. Wherever one looks throughout the world, one does not find the attitude equal to the demands of sustainable development that is open to the process of globalization. This is not just a problem of the masses, but also that of the leaders at different levels and in all regards. On the world dimension we are continually becoming like the animals taken ill with the plague in La Fontaine's story. Not all of them died, but all were struck with the plague.

Some leaders, for example, while being aware of what the international community expects, play at democracy while having their own hidden "political agenda", it consists of using their power to increase their possessions or to suit themselves and "their own", while keeping the population quiet. This abuse of power is a type of psychophysical burden that weigh down the masses. It is really one of the major obstacles to a healthy globalisation. it causes the destruction of the spirit and the conceptual confusion which permeates the whole structure...

II. The issue of conceptual confusion

This taming of consciences passes through various stages: integralism at all levels, at times assuming a Manichean form which places all that is felt good on the part of "us" (an artistic fantasy), and whatever is classified as bad on the part of "you" (a still more artistic fantasy). No country is safe from such a temptation, which is fanned by the presence of world terrorism.

From this point it is only one step to the dismantling of structures and the destruction of human lives and property belonging to the "you" side, which may also go on to genocide. This happened in Rwanda and Burundi, where the situation developed into ethnic totalitarianism, and is still moving in that direction under the disguise of aspiring to democracy. A similar outbreak may easily develop elsewhere, unless sufficient caution is exercised. Their are Examples that stare you in the face always camouflaged in the most subtle conceptual confusion.

Group conflicts exist all over the world. When they are not in the open, one will find them latent. If there are no massacres, it is because a group has not yet decided to exterminate the other, or vice versa. Otherwise there

would be a repetition of what happened in Rwanda and Burundi all over Africa and maybe elsewhere throughout the world. It is necessary to prevent this at all cost, Otherwise the wide-ranging negotiations, can create a greater confusion in the political scene, perverting minds and constructing labyrinths to paralyse systems and exterminate lives, in any place.

The Diasporas resulting from exiles of integralism may eventually create a rebounding integralism from returning exiles, thus giving rise to a cycle of unending wars. In traditional Burundian philosophy, for a man to act there must be unity in his inner life. Intelligence and feeling need to act in unison for the will to be set in motion.

A corollary immediately follows. Globalisation should give first priority to a programme of training in values. This would have as its foundation a culture based on human rights: a feeling for human dignity, democracy, the promotion of freedom, tolerance, active non-violence, self-development, and self-sufficiency in the natural means of life.

Such a programme should include studies and publications on the cultural riches of peoples, subjects of research in concord, and the peaceful prevention of conflict. This should not exclude a study on the healing of feelings and memories in places already struck by devastation. It was as a reaction to the chaos created by the Second World War that the philosophy of human rights was formalised, and introduced on a world scale. A similar step should now follow the end of the Cold War. In any case, in the developing countries it would appear that conceptual confusion is the result of a badly assimilated transition from from a world influenced by two Major Powers to one with only a single Major Power. Unfortunately this change has given rise to a flagrant clientelism in relations with the Major Powers.

It is a long-term issue. In Africa, for example, contacts between cultures occurred in a context of acculturation by substitution this resulted in an unprecedented example of deculturation. This in practice results in an amoral situation leading to the production of crime: hence the remote and underlying cause of unending crises. It is for this reason that the current remedy, which only treats political symptoms, can be compared to the treatment of AIDS, without direct treatment of the immune system.

From the ethical point of view, the immune system has foundered more or less all over the planet. Just think of the unsettled families in the Western Countries, with divorce in all its phases and the mental confusion brought about on children, who can no longer find where to look for help, when they reach adolescence they turn to gangs and drugs . What can one expect of a mass of youngsters who have no social points of reference? And what would happen if all this, in certain phases, were to spread over the whole planet?

Hence the heart of the world problem, whether one looks to the right or to the left, is not mainly political or economic. It is first of all axiological, which signifies that it is tied up to a system of values which results in man being man. Man is demoralised. The current radical elimination of cultures has produced an “axiological vacuum” in many natural environments of life.

To a greater or lesser extent, throughout the world, we have become like swimmers in great difficulty, seeking desperately for something to hold on to. So far, we have been blindly attached to the “White Man”, but without becoming his partner. “African Reputation” attributes the following words to Houphouet Boigny: “God is great. But White Man is also great”. In other words, whether we like it or not, the “Black Men” who think this way are numerous. They keenly seek to hold on to “White Man” to save themselves from drowning in an anthropological vacuum. Whether we like it or not, this mentality has already taken root.

This vacuum has its origins in the conceptual violence which characterised the beginning of colonisation. This same violence keeps growing nowadays through audiovisual communication – practically a one-way process – which keeps producing the citizen who is foreign to his own environment. Following both colonial and post-colonial conditioning, he sees his world through borrowed eyeglass. He seeks to understand himself through what is said about him. He has lost all hope of making his own discovery. He has lost all points of anchorage. He has become a sort of puppet, or soft wax ready to be moulded into any shape.

III. The Consequence: development of “total defence” forces spreading all over Africa.

The average African has lost his spark. It has to be found in some foreign land. This explains why he goes through the troubles of escaping into the unknown, some other unknown place. He knows the risks of this other place, but he must go.

In this connection I have seen a film with surprising scenes which have much bearing on the situation. One day, some preachers advise their mission to immigrate to Europe. Soon columns of migrants started moving all over the place. Their orders are: “Europe has taken all our resources, both material and human. Let us go and share them with the Europeans!” The columns started marching towards the Straits of Gibraltar where the portico gave way. Continuing their march in Spain, they aimed at the Capital of Europe: Bruxelles.

Meanwhile the Parliament of Europe held a meeting. No attempt was

made to fire on the “unarmed” invaders. The semicircular hall was divided into two blocks: one favoured a powerful reaction, and the other a real process of development for these people who had come over. The latter finally prevailed and a “Marshall” type plan was approved...

This is the drama of the African drift in several places. How can one help a continent which has been annihilated both with regard to its nature and to its values? A continent in which one finds only bodies since the heart is elsewhere? When the rural environment, which has become obscure to its members, does not expect light except from the city and when the city itself looks for light from a decisively and irreparably unknown elsewhere, globalization becomes a gentle bulldozer the outcome of whose action is unpredictable.

Having thus lost their points of reference, the African masses have got used to obey without understanding, provided that the order comes from above, from the leaders of the blessed “we”, even if it is a call for murder.

This is the result of the cultural exile which, in the course of the last century, has produced shattered and disillusioned citizens, who are interested only in personal security and immediate profit. Such is the effect of a creative genius which has dried up, and which has given place to inactivity and weariness, thus creating a void which somehow or other waits to be filled: a confusion contrived in the mind which dulls the heart.

There is a risk that this confusion might deepen with the present all-encompassing means of information, operating as it does in many ways in the midst of a void with regard to values. For example a heated way of speaking, full of strong emotions, is developing. The firmness and constancy behind the words always allow for the possibility of a physical and emotional reaction to the messages. This void with regard to values easily leads to sensorial logic. In this way, man is fragmented, in other words broken up.

Thus, the discussions in certain fora resemble hives teeming with insects, where everyone, instead of reasoning, echoes the vibrations of the messages. This reveals a collective adolescence, in which firm concentration on a particular concept becomes very tiresome. This plays into the hands of a certain intellectual spirit of adventure, creating a noise pollution, which is really deafening. Popular wisdom certainly had good reason to come out with the proverb: “empty vessels make most noise”. This gives place to a general disintegration which in its turn leads to a certain hypnosis of the faculty of reasoning and arouses the passions. In other words, an excessive externalization of the human person, leads to a stupor in interior life. This in turn cannot but lead to estrangement. It signifies that men become alien to themselves and are lead by an external remote control. These are in fact the effects of a one way globalization, which is very much like a gentle bulldozer. In any

way, if one looks at numbers, this phenomenon is alarming unless serious precautions are taken.

IV. Inter-culturation as tomorrow's remedy

As a remedy for the chaos already treated above one must aim at providing 'rocks' which the masses can hold on to in the prevailing confusion, axes around which better developments may evolve. Persons who do not lend themselves to bribery, young people who sincerely wish to prepare a better future for all, without depending on adults who are themselves in a crisis. In other words one must build up a resource of persons, local leaders capable of being looked up to and sought by the masses, as witnesses of values existing in real life: people who resolutely seek a planned journey of existence, a project for indigenous society.

It follows that there can be no success for globalisation unless people have been conditioned to reason in the following manner: "If I do not obey the dictates of my conscience, without regard for personalities and frontiers, I shall be killing myself. If I do not fill in the existing void in matters of values, in the midst of the chaotic ideas surrounding me, I shall be killing myself. If I do not follow inter-culturation, as understood locally and in its proper context, I shall be killing myself. Hence the importance of the triad: re-culturation, inculturation and inter-culturation in order that globalisation may be successful.

Re-culturation in its proper context signifies re-establishing the traditional indigenous values in a particular environment in such a way that behaviour is always conditioned by feeling and conscience, following interior impulses but at the same time open to other exterior personalities. In this way a proper identity is established in the meeting of nations. As regards inculturation, as described above, this is appropriate when external influences penetrate and enrich local culture, transforming it internally but only up to a point where it is possible to graft the new branch on to the old trunk.

In this particular case, the values must first of all be such as are already accepted by the international community for the purpose of creating a society which is acceptable and approachable in the meeting of nations. In this connection, one must underscore the point that values such as human rights, democracy, good governance, tolerance and non-violence are all tied up with globalisation, but need to be inculturated locally in order to have a permanent influence on consciences.

Still, these values should not fall on a void, as is the case at present. It is therefore necessary that re-culturation should come before inculturation. As

already explained, this implies taking back one's own culture in order to use it as a key to development, to use UNESCO's own expression. By culture, we intend to convey, in the very first place, the level of values i.e. that which makes man a human being.

It is necessary that the existing values, already referred to as a desired possibility, may have a chance of blending into existing ideas both local and international. This will lead to the ability of forming a firm judgement in the midst of all the surrounding confusion, ability for discernment in the face of the current turbulence in communications and memories. It is exactly in these circumstances that healing of memories should accompany the healing of persons and groups.

Without this task of reviving values, globalisation might produce some potential clients, but they would be unreliable partners, without any sense of direction, firm principle or point of reference. At present one is like a ship finding its way on the open sea which would be the internet! Thanks to globalisation, one might find 'partners', but in the present context of upheaval in values, the result cannot be otherwise than a market of victims.

Nevertheless, it is not enough to have re-culturation and inculturation alone. In a closed circle, they would lead to 'defective manufacture' arising from the fact that one departs from foreign elements to arrive at a local culture. On the other hand, one can complement this situation through inter-culturation. This would involve starting by re-culturation, i.e. reviving that which is essential in values so that every person would have a specific culture, and subsequently linking with universally accepted values. Such linking must be reasonable and compatible with the different sources involved, thus arriving at a society where human and interpersonal relations can exist without frontiers, where the local and the global are firmly united.

When I speak of humanizing anew, I do not feel I am exaggerating. If one just casts a glance on the violence which nowadays erupts in football stadiums, it is enough to realise that the creation of a mass mentality leads to 'reification', i.e. the reduction of human persons into objects. There is also the ever growing eagerness to appropriate the property of the weakest members of society, by taming them culturally and weakening their sense of value. And finally, we must open our eyes to that anger which leads to murder, accompanied by suicide if necessary, which is spreading all over the world like a mass of inflammable material released into the sea by ships in the hands of obstinate and angered individuals.

In any case, if inter-culturation is to be of any use in globalisation, particular attention must be given to the spiritual dimension of the human person in a community: once these ideals are absorbed into globalisation, they can

serve as an antidote to a globalisation organised on the basis of a common individualism which can only help the more powerful to absorb the weakest. This would lead to the unfortunate ones losing their bearings, and seeking shelter among the strongest. As already indicated, would not such a situation lead to an increase in clandestine migration, even if it is at a risk?

V. Inter-culturation can only bear good fruit if it leads to the re-establishment of human values.

Considering all the above, if globalisation is to have any success, it has to be grounded, before all else, on the human person, the whole human person, and primarily, on all that is sacred in the human person. It should not be based solely on the exchange of material goods, as is unfortunately the case nowadays in the rules of world trade. This semantic devaluation, carried to the extreme, inevitably results in persons being reduced to the status of objects, with all the attendant consequences of violence conceptual, verbal and physical.

If, on the other hand, the human person is given the importance it deserves in the matter of globalisation, the cultures of all peoples, even the least influential, will be taken into account. This is a point I wish to emphasize: the cultures of the least influential peoples! And while taking all factors into account, culture must have the first place. To be precise, culture is that which makes man truly human. If it is not given first priority, if for example the culture of the weakest nations is not considered in world commerce, economic globalisation can only burst out into a massacre of the innocents. It would be a monster sapping at the very life of the poor, a ruthless bulldozer destroying peoples at their very roots.

Such a situation, as already indicated above, would turn the poor into 'men of straw' who would consider any contract or agreement as just a scrap of paper doing the rounds of world commerce ethics. De-culturation is no joke. On the other hand, only inter-culturation in its proper context, as has been defined above can be the proper foundation for globalisation. Such foundation requires a firm resolution that man cannot become man except through culture, and that the culture of the weakest peoples be promoted on a world-wide basis, where all cultures converge and complement one another. Economic globalisation can only succeed through placing itself at the service of man and his cultures, the latter being recognised as the only source through which he is really human. In this way, international citizenship will have a point of departure and, through inter-culturation in its proper context, will pass on to future generations.

On the other hand, if the human being is reduced to just an individual i.e. matter which can be quantified (*materia signata quantitate*), he cannot be a citizen of the world with the rights and duties – both understood and assumed – that go with such a status. He will be just a thing (*res*), just one more object to be sold and bought: an object in the service of other things set up as idols, with one sole thought as a base. The goods of the earth will not belong to man, but he will belong to them, with all the subjection they demand, ending up in complete slavery.

Thus globalisation can also become a vehicle for post-modern slavery, with man being sold and re-sold: a monster with endless tentacles giving rise to comparable forms of violence which would paralyse exchanges between the nations of the world. One cannot tone down the meaning of all this without suffering the consequences, particularly since such an attitude would eliminate all that is essential from the point of view of human nature and its values.

Still, one cannot save the world except by saving man. And man cannot be saved without saving his culture. Moreover, one cannot trade safely on a world-wide basis unless through an extension of the mind and heart, thus enabling the setting up of bases for a family without frontiers: precisely through inculturation in its proper context.

For this purpose a new agreement would be required. After the Second World War, an agreement was made. This led to the current pressure for a civilisation based on human rights to be established. In our days this agreement is being nullified by those who should have put it into practice.

In any case, at this point in time we need a new agreement which will underscore man's obligations, requiring him to keep together, at all times, spirituality, solidarity and shared responsibility both on a local and on a world scale, such as is required in any organic body which wants to be taken seriously.

The ethics of combined and global responsibility should therefore control globalisation, by means of inter-culturation in its proper context, especially where values are concerned. In fact, the West has not so far cared to understand the values which form the basis of African customs: they are still in the dark on the subject. This led to a grave misunderstanding: the confusion of concepts described above.

Unless inter-culturation in its proper context aims at understanding values in the first place, any exchanges in the field of expression and cultural tools would just be “folklore”, providing entertainment for people who are already well fed, and increasing the misery of the hungry.

Similarly, unless the expected inculturation reaches the proper level of values, the weaker peoples will have no option but to let themselves be humiliated, like one who allows himself to be divested, with a smile on his face and surrounded by applause and blowing of trumpets.

VI. Conclusion

It will take time for all this to materialise. It is the least one can do. In any case, time destroys whatever is done without enough of it being allowed. One should rather imagine the countries of Africa in comparison with the allegory of the frogs which had fallen into an enormous bowl of milk. They did not drown or even lose heart, but paddled with all their might, and in doing so, beat up the milk.

Now, when milk is beaten in this way, it starts turning into butter. And that is what happened: a considerable mass of butter was formed, and the frogs, having climbed on it, proudly came out of the bowl, stronger than ever. This is the task of re-culturation, defined above as a necessary process leading to inter-culturation. And it cannot be reached except through paddling more vigorously than ever in the proverbial “milk”.

To be precise, the greater number of African countries has not fallen into acid, but into milk. They have their own values which unfortunately, for the time being, are being jealously guarded under the ashes, so as not to be buried under the coconuts. One must dig them out and reinforce them. This is the work of re-culturation and rehabilitation of values: its importance can never be sufficiently emphasised.

Moreover the frontiers are already open for inter-culturation. The peoples concerned have to be guided towards the proper choices so as to find their way and reach a safe end to their journey, in a climate of inculturation and inter-culturation in its proper context.

This is the work undertaken by the Research Centre for Inculturation and Development (CRID), which the author of this article has had the pleasure of starting and directing. Much has already been published on the subject. However, the ground is full of hidden dangers. The CRID would therefore be very happy if other services and organisations having the same aim would collaborate with them, thus arriving together at results which are tangible and practical.

In any case, the future is in the hands of such as search with endeavour in the field of values on a world-wide scale, starting with the creation of “*élites*” for the purpose.

Speaking of “*élites*”, I do not mean dignitaries, but resourceful persons, poles of reference, and living points of orientation, whatever the social position to which they belong.

THE ROLE OF THE PRIEST ASSISTANT IN CATHOLIC ACTION

Msgr. Domenico Sigalini
ICA's Vice-Assistant

Preamble

In placing before you some ideas, as they occur to me, regarding the priest assistant in Catholic Action, I should like to start with a theological preamble which I find important to repeat, given the danger of falling back into the “temple mentality”. It is a useful theological reflection which helps both laity and priests in arriving at a correct concept of their relation within the Church.

We are priests not of the temple, but of the New Testament.

1. Our way of looking at the priesthood is still linked to the Old Testament mentality. This causes us to see the priesthood and the laity as being on opposite sides

Man has always had the great desire of being able to meet God: *Your face, LORD, do I seek...* [Ps 27:8]; *“My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, “Where is your God?”* [Ps 42:3]. In the Old Testament the priesthood was “invented” in order to find a response to this seeking. There was a definite separation between priests and common Israelites. There was a specific caste for service in the sanctuary. Woe to the commoner who tried to enter: he could face death. (cf. *Nb*). The old religion was based on a clear distinction between the sacred and the profane, the priests and the laity, cult and ordinary life.

Cult was organized through a specific system of ritual separation. For man to get close to God he had to be sanctified. He had to pass from the profane to the sanctified state. This could only happen through a number of ritual separations (cf. *Heb 9*). Meeting God was linked to:

- A sacred place, set aside from ordinary activities, which could only be reached by observing a number of rules. A mediator was required, the priest, who was prepared by ritual baths, sacred vestments, and ritual purity.

- Two grades of priesthood: one for the outer sanctuary, and the other for the Holy of Holies: the High Priest.

Moreover, there had to be a victim, and its blood. Such a system forced a great distance between people and priest. They were just efforts to try and meet God. But what communion could there be between a dead animal and the Living God? Between the blood of a dead animal and the conscience of a living person?

The end result was a rigid separation between cult and ordinary life. This would be a bizarre religious position, surely within the context of God's pedagogic project for man, within His plan of salvation. But it waited for its definite fulfilment in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

2. Jesus' position

Now Jesus is a lay person. He is not separated from the rest of us. He is not placed apart. He has changed the ancient concept linking sanctity with separation, replacing it with the new idea of sanctification through solidarity and communion. Some phrases from the Gospel illustrate this:

- before making your offering, go and be reconciled with your brother
- the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath
- it is mercy that I want, not sacrifice.

Between the two ways of serving God: rites and separations or solidarity with man, Jesus has chosen the latter.

The death of Jesus was not a ritual sacrifice in the ancient sense of the word, but a supreme expression of communion with God and solidarity with man. Not a ritual sacrifice, but a definite decision opening the passage from an external, conventional cult to a real, personal religion.

In Christ all separation has been abolished. We have passed from the "devil" to the "symbol". Separation is a function typical of the devil (devil means *separator* in the Greek language).

The priesthood of Christ does not arise from any rites separated from the reality of existence. He has taken this reality and transformed it radically under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, changing it into a filial obedience to God and brotherly solidarity with man.

Such is the exercise of the common priesthood. It does not amount to taking part in liturgical celebrations, but in the transformation of ourselves and of the world through divine charity under the impulse of the Holy Spirit.

This is the actual and essential meaning of being lay people. The priesthood which belongs to all baptized persons is this submissiveness to God as being his children, and solidarity with all brethren. Real sacrifice is not something close to existence, but part of existence itself. It amounts to placing oneself in the hands of the Holy Spirit for the furtherance of communion throughout the world.

Rm 12:1 “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” A married couple who love each other are actually putting this fundamental worship into practice. The priesthood does not stand in contrast with the lay state, but is its definition.

One says that there is a ministerial priesthood that is valid and actual, and a common priesthood which is symbolic, if one may compare. However, one should actually invert the argument: the real priesthood which is more important is that called “common”, which is held by all Christians. The purpose of the sacrifice of Christ was that of creating the common priesthood.

The ministerial priesthood is a means established by Christ in view of the exercise of the common priesthood. It is the sacrament of Christ as mediator. Since it is only through the sacrifice of Christ that all can turn to God, the establishment of a ministerial priesthood is necessary.

II. The service of the ecclesiastic assistant in Catholic Action in the light of the “four notes” (AA 20)

It is in the light of the above reflection that the service to be given by a priest assistant to an association having the following qualities stands to be regulated:

1. The ecclesial character: living what the Church is called to live

The first choice in *Novo Millennio Ineunte* is the contemplation of Jesus. He stands at the centre, it is for Him that we live; it is towards Him that our life together in an association should lead us. It is He whom we wish to serve. Jesus should give sense and taste to our lives. The assistant who performs the service of Jesus as Shepherd should be the first to make contemplation his definite experience.

2. The lay character: making the best effort towards sanctity

The life of a faithful lay person does not develop close to the world, but is in the world itself. Lay people become saints in the concrete realities of daily life, such as the love of one’s family, the married state, and the commitments arising from work and study. For lay people these are the equivalent of the priest celebrating the Eucharist and other sacraments. Catholic Action members are not the specialists of the parish, but specialists of sanctity in the lay state. One needs rediscover the splendour of being a Christian: baptized, priest, king and prophet in God’s Kingdom. This lay sanctity immediately turns into a mission, a communication of the Gospel. We cannot keep back from communicating that which Jesus is working within us.

So many believers become tired in their life of faith. This happens because when doubts arise we do not face them; we do not dare involve others in the strenuous effort of keeping to the Gospel. Instead, we keep looking at ourselves in the mirror. Faith grows by being passed on to others. The Gospel gives you light only if you place it in the window to be seen by all. The priest assistant should offer all possible personal support to lay members in recognizing the light of the Word, and orienting themselves in the way of sanctity.

3. Collaboration with the pastors (hierarchy): the courage of self commitment

I am convinced that, once the essence of the lay state has been fully thrashed out, with its implications of lay sanctity, Christian dignity, and service to the world, Catholic Action would do well to involve itself intelligently in the pastoral projects of the Church and the interventions arising from Her pastoral sections. There should be no discussion, no reservations regarding allegiance to the Holy Father. In interpreting the teachings of the Church in the best and most orthodox manner there are the dignified and balanced views of various movements and groups. The Pope, the Church, and the diocesan Church have very much at heart the existence of an association of lay people who are ready to take upon themselves the programme of the Bishop. Such an association would ask to be involved in building it up, but the important point is that it becomes their own, in an intelligent manner.

4. Organic unity: finding a home for communion

Lay people are willing to live this life in common, in an association in which they find support. Such an association sustains their outlook, and offers the atmosphere of a fellowship which results in growth. Facing life in a group is not the same as going it alone. The personal formation of the members should go further than the life of the group, and can be obtained even if one cannot be living in the parish all the time. Is there a type of help which is personalized, and which can support one's personal formation even in the surroundings of the family? The priest assistant provides all the support necessary for members to reach their own formation, as well as ensuring that every moment of the life of the group may contribute to such formation.

The service of the priest assistant to Catholic Action can be summarized as follows:

- *Offering ways towards sanctity* through the life of the sacraments. Only he can bring one to meet Christ through the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

- *Fostering an ecclesial feeling*: he is capable of helping others to understand the true meaning of the Church and the know-how of living in alliance, not in conflict.
- *Acting as a spiritual guide*. This involves the ability of viewing the lives of members in the light of the Word of God, in an atmosphere of continual prayer so as to reach new ways of sanctity.
- *Helping others discover their real vocation in life*. There is a way of judging life in the light of the Word which enables one to understand one's responsibilities towards the world and the Church.
- *Keeping alive the experience of communion*, together with all other components of the Christian community: groups, movements, associations, those who are in charge both in the Church and in society.
- *Keeping up the link with the Bishop and all other priests*, so that Catholic Action may not be seen as a body outside the daily life of the Church.
- *Establishing connections with the new pastoral services, both diocesan and national*, fostering especially the collaboration between laypeople and priests.

THE PATH OF CATHOLIC ACTION IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

*Beatriz Buzzetti Thomson
Coordinator IFCA Secretariat*

Iwould use this moment to reflect with you, about what Catholic Action is waited for, in the third millennium. First of all the Church and the society would like CA to be faithful both to its mission and to its identity.

It is true, that in our pilgrimage, we often go away from what is essential, several times we get involved in something and we go away from the main road. I think it is important to become aware of our “being called” - here and at this moment - with our gifts and our history, to a vocation both personal and associative and institutional. All this obliges us to a continuous conversion.

We have to discern what is essential, what remains, what identifies us, in order to see what means to be CA today.

To make this discernment I have been helped very much by my CA experience at international level. As you know, for about five years I have been coordinating IFCA secretariat and through this commitment I have had the possibility to know CA in different countries in America, Asia, Europe and Africa, with different characteristics and ways, but sharing what is essential.

At this point we must ask ourselves: what is essential?

Let us start from the “founding” reality which is the Baptism, through it we are all embodied in the people of God, we are all children of the Father, members of the Church, whose chief is Christ. Through the Baptism we are all called to holiness, which is the vocation of all *christifideles*, both priests and lay people. Holiness as the centre of the life of a Christian is one of the ideas which are always present in the allocutions of the Holy Father in this last period.

This common vocation to holiness assumes - in us as lay people - specific characteristics, since because of this divine vocation lay people have to live in the world and in it look for the wholeness of life in the holiness. This is the specific way of our Christian existence and, at the same time, the specific function of our apostolical commitment. Ecumenical Council Vatican II states this in a very precise way: “Lay people ought themselves to take on as

their distinctive task this renewal of the temporal order... they should act directly in this domain and in their own specific way” (AA 7). “It belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God’s will” (LG 31).

We, as lay people, are called to make present the Church in the heart of the world and the world in the heart of the Church.

I think, many times we don’t pay much attention to this responsibility. I remember the times just after the Vatican Council. I was in the National Board of ACA Youth and we used to study the Council documents, heatedly. I clearly remember when, for the first time, I found, in the constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, a severe warning which entrusts us, very clearly, with this ecclesial mission of the lay people, which is, at the same time, their way of sanctification. *Gaudium et Spes* states (43): “Christians who shirk their temporal duties, shirk their duties towards his neighbour, neglect God himself, and endanger their eternal salvation”.

This statement changed my life because it showed me with absolute clearness, which are our ineludible duties. Sure of this double belonging to both the ecclesial and the civil community, that we must live and help each other to live the Church, mystery of missionary communion. This demand comes from the Baptism for all lay people.

This call to holiness we receive in the Baptism obliges us to a personal meeting with Christ who, according to the extraordinary expression used by the Synod of America, is the way for conversion, communion and solidarity with all our brothers and sisters especially those in extreme need.

We have answered to the call of our Lord and have decided to live this lay identity according to our special CA vocation.

So, what is essential for CA?

In the Council ecclesiology of communion and mission, the CA identity is defined by the “four notes” of *Apostolicam Actuositatem*: ecclesiality, laity (secularity), organicity and cooperation with the hierarchy (AA 20). These “four notes” are the wealth of the tradition and experience of CA before the Vatican Council.

Ecclesiality: it is constitutive of CA, since its goal is the same apostolic one of the Church; because it is called to work so that the Church may give witness of its unity, in the diversity, before the world and may proclaim bravely the Gospel to all men and women.

Laity: it is the lay character the origin of the unrenouncing responsibility of CA in the apostolic work in the different fields.

Organicity: it is through an organic action that it is shown the unicity (tension towards unity) of CA. We are an organization at the service of mission.

An organization with lay leaders, which refers to the reality of every historical moment. The essential is the organization (not the concrete organizational form).

Cooperation with hierarchy: this special bond with the hierarchy demands CA a special service to communion and mission. It is a characteristic deeply connected to the specific ministeriality and pastoral willingness of CA. It is because of this service and willingness to collaborate in the pastoral plans that *Ad Gentes* indicates CA as one of the essential ministries for founding the Church.

After the Ecumenical Council Vatican II many lay (ecclesial) movements spread giving new life to the Church and bringing a great wealth with the variety of charisms sustained by the Spirit. It is in this context that the Synod for Lay people was held. Its recommendations are summed up in the Apostolic Exhortation about "The vocation and mission of lay people in the Church and in the world"; in it Pope John Paul II explains, clearly, the Council teachings, putting, among all ecclesial movements, CA as an association of laypeople called "to be of service through their faithfulness and good works to promote, according to their own vocation and their own method, the growth of the entire Christian community, pastoral activities and infusing every aspect of life with the Gospel spirit". (CFL 31).

To obtain this *Christifideles Laici* indicates the specific formative style of CA: formation is then the essential for CA, a formation which has its own characteristics:

Formation to communion: seen as the development of a special sensibility to create communion, in the Church as well as in the world. For this, we must love the Church, this real Church, we must feel, as our own, this social and cultural reality we live in and in which God has thought we should live since eternity. Only in this way we can be builders of reconciliation in our communities and countries.

Formation which brings us to unity between faith and life: formation which allows us to be witnesses of the Resurrection in our places. Many times I have wondered how many brothers and sisters will never know Jesus, because we have not been sufficiently transparent to let Him be seen through our lives.

Formation to Social Magisterium of the Church: a formation which may allow to imbue all fields of culture, politics, economy, education, health, art, communication, family with the Gospel spirit.

Formation for the interior and progressive growth in the holiness of life by the spirituality of the incarnation.

These are the essential characteristics of CA, yesterday, today and forever, in this as well as in many other countries in the world. This is the permanent gift of the Holy Spirit to its Church: CA, lay people who live the ever newness of the Gospel in the world and are signs of communion.

How shall we incarnate this gift today, at the beginning of the third millennium?

Many times we catch in our communities the concern of laypeople for the *intra ecclesial* life, but little presence in the world, little awareness of our responsibility in the construction of a more human, more fraternal, more solidary world in the justice and peace.

For this reason it is good asking ourselves which is our presence and commitments in the different fields: work, education, economy, politics, family, health, ecology,... and furthermore: how do we live and how do we express our faith in the different places where we live?

Our commitment demands a deep meeting with our Lord, the growth of our spiritual life and a more and more renewed conversion. John Paul II in *Novo Millennium Inenunte* states: "If we have truly started out anew from the contemplation of Christ, we must learn to see him especially in the faces of those with whom he himself wished to be identified: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me" (Mt 25,35-37)" (NMI 49).

We must ask ourselves if we always live with our eyes open to discover the needs and answer with the Good News to our brothers and sisters who live with us.

Do our CA groups look like either caves in which we take refuge to protect or crossbows which make us jump out in the world strongly? We need a clear awareness we cannot be pilgrims of the heaven if we live as fugitives from the earthly city. We need to assume our lay responsibility, to increase our awareness as citizens and foster our social, political and economic engagement.

All this means a commitment which is always new in the research and in the construction of the common good. It is urgent we engage and involve others in this research and construction of the common good, committing all we have, through sacrifice and grief. If we do not want to do this, if we are not able to recognize that there cannot be any more room for selfishness either individual or as a category, if each of us waits for the act or sacrifice of the other to start doing his own, we are condemned to fail.

Such awareness needs a formative work, a deep revision of our attitudes, but, at the same time, a resolute action. We all have something to do where we are, in our countries: children, youth, adults, nobody can feel excluded.

If we engage ourselves seriously in this work we will facilitate the coming of a new society where it is possible to experience the justice, longed so much for, by so many brothers and sisters; justice which is the base for a more human, more fraternal, more sharing world.

We want to live this difficult situation, according to the Spirit. Our world is full of prophets of misfortune, and many times we, CA members, act in our daily life as if our Lord had not risen; as if everything would explode and we were next to the end. We know by faith, this is the moment we have to live and it belongs to the plan of the Father: it is time of Grace, time of salvation. Jesus opens us the way to change this time in providential time, in time of hope.

In this hour of the history we want to be men and women who, because of their belonging to CA, live inside the social and ecclesial world committed in making real, as asked by the Pope, “acts of greatness” capable to rebuild social ties in our communities, capable to rediscover the essential values to get out of this cross-road so that the crisis, in which we are involved, may be transformed in ways of active hope.

CA wants to assume this invitation and this call humbly and with a strong conviction today and for the history it has to write: by concrete, simple, stern and deep facts. I had the grace to participate together with Sébastien to the National Assembly of Italian Catholic Action. On April 26th the Holy Father gave us a special audience and spoke to us with great affection. At that moment I felt each of you, each member of CA in the world, was there, next to the Pope. For this reason I would like to conclude using his words:

“The Church needs Catholic Action, because she needs laypeople who are ready to devote their life to the apostolate and to establish, particularly with the diocesan Community, a bond which leaves a deep mark on their life and on their spiritual journey. She needs laypeople, whose experience shows, in a concrete and daily way, how great and joyful Christian life is; laypeople who can see in the Baptism the roots of their dignity, in the Christian community their own family with whom they share their faith and in the Pastor, the father who guides and supports his brothers’ journey; laypeople who do not reduce faith to a private matter and do not hesitate to bring the Gospel’s leaven into the fabric of human relations and institutions, into the territory and into the new areas of globalization, so as to build the civilization of love.

Just because the Church needs a Catholic Action that is alive, strong and beautiful, I would like to repeat to each and everyone of you: duc in altum!

Duc in altum, Catholic Action! Look to the future with courage...

Duc in altum! Be a prophetic presence in the world...

Duc in altum! Be humble and daring enough to fix your eyes on Jesus so that your authentic renewal may start from Him...

Catholic Action, do not be afraid! You belong to the Church and are close to the Lord's heart. He never stops to guide your steps towards the newness of the Gospel, which never loses its value and is never out-dated.

With these guidelines in mind, all of you here, members of this glorious Association, know that the Pope supports you and is with you through his prayers.

He ardently asks you to persevere in the commitments you have undertaken and blesses you all with his whole heart".

May we in the silence of our prayer discover what God wants from us, and what we need to do to change the history. This is an invitation to raise our look, open our heart and put our hands one in another. There is no time for discouragement. Let us put our work in the hands of Mary Our Mother, the faithful Virgin.

May She lead us and teach us the way of Catholic Action in this millennium which is at the beginning, and may She help us to be faithful to the call of our Lord.

PRESENTATION OF THE CATHOLIC ACTION MOVEMENTS

*Térence Mbonabuca
CAM's leader and
Xavery leader in Burundi*

This is the title of the intervention I was asked to hold during this Second African Continental Meeting.

What is a CAM?
Which are CAM's activities?
Which are the difficulties they have to face?
Which are their future prospects?

I shall try to give an answer to these main questions.

I. What is a CAM?

A session organized by the Episcopal Commission for the Lay Apostolate was held in November 23rd/26th 2000 in the Centre Thérésien of Gitega. Various important themes were dealt with. One of them referred to the definition of Catholic Action Movement and was held by H.E. Msgr. Bernard Bududira, Bishop of the diocese of Bururi. He is the most competent person to deal with this theme. So I shall try just to paraphrase him.

This intervention concerning CAM brings to light four characteristics of Catholic Action, namely:

1. care for the Church;
2. cooperation with the hierarchy;
3. joint action;
4. action under the hierarchy's superior direction.

From all this we may derive that a CAM is that Movement whose members share the care for the Church for evangelizing men's and women's consciences through a human and christian formation in all their spheres of life, so as to imbue the various social groups and environments with the Gospel spirit.

This is done with the help of many techniques, according to the Movements' specificity.

In Burundi CAM are classified as follows:

CAM: Scouts; Guides; Eucharistic Movement; Legio Mariae; Chiro-Xaveri; Young Christian Students; Catholic Working Youth; A.G.I.; Teachers *Equipes*.

All of them attended this meeting. To these are to be added: Kolping Family; St. St Vincent de Paul and Abana ba Mariya.

Spiritual Movements: Fraternity of Mary Queen of the Hearts; League of the Sacred Heart; Friends of Domenico Savio; Adorators etc.

Ecclesial Movements: Schoenstatt; Focolari; Family of Cana; Movement of Charismatic Renewal; New Life for Reconciliation; Marial Sacerdotal Movement etc.

All these Movements support their members, form them, direct them and their apostolic action in a way as to achieve more important results than if every member acted individually by himself.

CAM's goal is to announce the Good News and to build God's Kingdom. The hierarchy has its own rights and duties towards the laypeople and viceversa, with the aim to achieve the members' sanctification and to enable them to be witnesses: "you will be my witnesses in the world", as the theme of this meeting says.

How do CAM contribute to building God's Kingdom? This brings us to speak about CAM's activities.

II. CAM's activities

Lumen Gentium No 31, quoted in the magazine CHARITE' No 3 issued on Easter 1972, at pag 16, says:

"It is laypeople's proper task to search God's Kingdom through dealing with the temporal affairs and orienting them according to God's plan... There they are called by God to contribute, as a leaven, to the sanctification of the world".

This task is daily fulfilled by CAM, thanks to their organization of charitable, apostolic, development activities. Moreover by organizing the formation of their members and leaders, who are helped in this by joining one Movement or another and according to the specificity of every Movement..

II.1 - Charitable activities

More or less, in all their reports, CAM mention many activities towards the poor: drawing water, looking out for wood, cultivating their fields, building or restoring the elders' houses, visiting and helping - both on a moral and an economic side - the sick in the hospital or in the house, taking care of the children whose parents are in the hospital, organizing merrymakings for the sick, planting the fields with vegetables, sweet potatoes, or manioca... whose harvest is devoted to the needy, organizing games for the children in difficult situations (orphans, street urchins...), literacy campaigns etc...

Moreover, thanks to the yearly themes, collections of money are organized. In 1981 it was given out to the handicapped and since 1993 up today to disaster people.

II.2. - Apostolic activities

Most of CAM's members are engaged in:

- animating the liturgy;
- forming acolytes and masters of ceremonies;
- taking care of the vestry;
- committing themselves with the conversion of non-Christians who are followed by CAM 's members up to the Baptism.

The godfathers and godmothers of the converted people become CAM's members.

In the schools, the pupils who behave badly are admonished by CAM's members who rouse them by their good example.

CAM participate also in the Parish Councils and in coordinating the Catholic Action at all levels.

II.3. - Activities for development

In Burundi, activities for development were organized since the eighties, after the 1st National Conference of the UPRONA Party. At the end of this event, all Burundian people, with no exception, were urged to get down to work for building the Nation. In fact also in the various international conferences (among them the "Afroforum" in Bukavo on April 13th-20th 1970), CAM were regularly urged to participate actively in developing their own countries. To this regard we wish to quote the following resolution; in full, that speaks by itself: "Let all the Movements participate in working for the civic education and for the development of their country, and in the initiatives undertaken in this field by the governments of their different nations in view of the common good".

For this reason, camps of work and formation were systematically organized. Some press-cuttings bring news about the following camps for:

- building schools for basic-education;
- manufacturing briks;
- building multipurpose halls;
- preparing the ground for building schools or play-grounds;
- reforestation;
- water pipes etc...

III - Difficulties met with by CAM

In the first place we censure four of them, which were also pointed out by H.E. Msgr. Bernard Bududira in his intervention held in November 2000 in Gitega.

1. Lay people are not aware of their fundamental vocation to evangelize as Christ's believers. As a matter of fact, many laypeople, in good faith, think that the apostolic activity is a matter of the priests, the religious or the catechists. Now, announcing the Good News of the Salvation is the mission of every baptized, according to everyone's particular life condition.
2. Distance and indifference: many lay Christians feel uncomfortable in being considered as direct or indirect Agents of direct or indirect Evangelization
Direct Evangelization refers to the apostolic activities. Indirect Evangelization means to witness faith through life, to infuse the evangelic spirit in daily professional and social life.
This challenge should be answered to by a clear and resolute engagement in Church's life.
3. A partial and incomplete outlook and practice of the life of faith. There are those who think that Christian life is bounded to prayer and cult. They forget that faith, if good deeds do not go with it, is quite dead (*Jm* 2,14-17). This challenge should be faced through a commitment aimed to transform our family, social and ecclesial environments.
4. Fear to take position against unjust attitudes, behaviours and structures. Face to this great fault of the Christians, we bear witness to Christ in our spheres of life if we imbue them with truth, social justice and solidarity.

Furthermore we wish to point out the following:

1. Lack of Permanent Offices as well as of permanent staffs.
2. Inadequacies in material and financial means (aids, means of communication: telephone, fax, postal box, files, aids for animating the various sessions etc., lack of small equipments for the offices: paper, envelopes, writing machines etc...)
3. Resistance met with in promoting justice, truth and peace in our spheres of life.
4. Working in scattered groups.
5. Risk to work in closed vessels with no opening to the outside world.
6. Lack of parish and diocesan Assistants duly formed for this role.
7. Insufficient formation concerning: theology, Bible, liturgy, catechesis, Church's magisterium, animation of groups etc...

IV. Future prospects for CAM

1. Keeping alive and effective the option for a permanent Christian and human formation through additional sessions of formation and re-training, duly programmed.
2. Choosing to form a laity who is co-responsible and engaged within the parishes.
3. Analysing through which ways and means CAM can achieve an organic autonomy fully respecting the cooperation with the hierarchy
4. Evangelizing the intellectuals' environment. It is too easy for them to talk about the Christian base-communities. Also in this case commitment is necessary to achieve good results.
5. Continuing and increasing assistance and urgent interventions in favour of the needy: it is a duty of charity.
6. Educating those who receive assistance to participate in their own development (DELTA Project to be spread among all CAM). This option should be more resolute and needs means to be realized.
7. Being firmer in organizing the youths (formation through crafts and followed by post-formation).

Conclusion

CAM's and CA's experiences and projects differ according to the different environments. We can however say that their balance is positive considering the material and socio-economic conditions in which they usually work.

As a matter of fact, since their setting up in one country or another, CAM and CA always suffered owing to financial problems. The lack of financial means and of means of transport affects the activities at all levels in a negative way.

This situation influences the organization of every activity even if leaders, both intellectually qualified and professionally trained, are present in one or another CAM or CA.

Voluntarism has its own limits in a world characterized by an unlimited and unloyal competition. Owing to this a well-thought re-arrangement of CAM's and CA's programmes and activities should be drawn up.

Nevertheless the political and religious authorities, who look upon CAM's and CA's favourably, trust them and are contributing to their expansion.

We wish to thank them very much. I hope that in future we will both continue to cooperate, so that the ideal of CHARITY may triumph and spread in the world in general and in Burundi in particular and that the Holy Spirit will inspire us.

So we will be witnesses of Christ in Africa!

SECOND AFRICAN CONTINENTAL MEETING

August 21-25th 2002
“Grand Séminaire”, Bujumbura – BURUNDI

FINAL STATEMENT

1. From 21st to 25th August 2002, at “Le Grand Séminaire” in Bujumbura, it has been held the Second IFCA African Continental Meeting. The theme has been “You will be my witnesses in Africa. Realities, challenges and perspectives for the formation and mission of lay people. The contribution of Catholic Action.”

The participants were more than 100 people: Bishops, Priests, Religious and Lay people from Zambia, Uganda, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi together with representatives of the IFCA Secretariat from Argentina, Italy, Mexico and Romania.

2. The work has started with a reading of the reality with a special attention to the Great Lakes Region where the heavy socio-political-economical difficulties cause situations of violence, hate and poverty. The Church – and the Catholic Action Movements – live in this reality and are called to be witnesses of brotherhood to build peace and nourish hope. The participants have discussed about the real meaning of new evangelization and about the choices which qualify it: spirituality, socio-political-economical commitment, formative commitment, inculturation, faith-justice and peace.

3. The MAC have stressed that the essential element for the life of each believer consists in meeting Christ; this meeting roots us in the Church which is missionary communion, makes all of us brothers and sisters and calls us to announce the Gospel and to solidarity. The MAVC have renewed their apostolical commitment both in the local Churches, cooperating with their Pastors, and in the society which is waiting for their witness of holiness.

In a particular way, the participants have underlined the need and urgency of a deep spirituality, of an integral and missionary formation, of an absolutely necessary inculturation of faith, of a wider and wider awareness of the contribution as lay people to the socio-political life and to the construction of the civilization of love in justice and peace.

4. One day of the meeting has been dedicated to the reflexion about the identity and the formative and missionary proposal of Catholic Action as shown in the Ecumenical Council Vatican II and in the Magisterium of Pope John Paul II.

Together with the four peculiar notes (ecclesiality, laity, organicity and cooperation with the hierarchy), they have dealt with the formative and methodological choices related to the reality and addressees (adults, family, youth, children, students...).

In particular the participants have underlined the necessity and the urgency of:

- * assistants priests who can participate and accompany the life of lay people,

- * responsables to be formed and qualified,

- * an associative life more dynamic, thanks to new members and to an - at least minimum - availability of resources, of moments of exchange as this one, to walk together in an atmosphere of dialogue, exchange and mutual support.

5. IFCA Second African Continental Meeting has closed with a wide prospect upon the way of CA in the third millennium enlightened by the invitation of John Paul II addressed to Italian Catholic Action on April 26th 2002: “*Duc in altum*, Catholic Action! Look to the future with courage, be a prophetic presence in the world, be humble and daring enough to fix your eyes on Jesus! ...”.

2nd African Continental Meeting

21-28 August 2002 - Great Seminary, Bujumbura- BURUNDI

“We can count on the power of the same Spirit who was poured out at Pentecost and who impels us still today to start out anew, sustained by the hope “which does not disappoint” (Rm 5:5)” - NMI 58

You will be my witnesses in Africa

Reality, challenges and prospects for the laypeople’s formation.

The contribution of Catholic Action/2

PROGRAM

Wednesday August 22nd - Opening session

17.00: Opening Eucharistic Celebration in the Cathedral of Bujumbura,

H.E. Msgr. Evariste NGOYAGOYE, Bishop of Bujumbura

21.00: Invocation of the Holy Spirit

Presentation of the Delegations

Intervention by H.E. Msgr. Bernard BUDUDIRA, Bishop of Bururi, the first diocese with CA in Africa, which joined IFCA

Thursday 22nd August

READING REALITY of the ecclesial and socio-political contexts with attention to the conflicts going on in Africa

7.00: Morning prayer

8.30: Salutation

Presentation of IFCA by the Secretariat

10.00 - Opening lecture by H.E. Msgr. Simon Ntamwana

Archbishop of Gitega - President of the Episcopal Conference of Burundi (CEB)

Interventions by the Pastors present or by the representatives of the various local Churches

15.00: Presentation of the MAC and the CA of the various countries:

experiences and projects. Introduction by a leader of the MAC in Burundi

17.30: Eucharistic Celebration

21.00: Prayer for peace and eucharistic adoration

Friday 23rd

**The New Evangelization in Africa: spirituality; socio-economic-political
commitment; engagement in education;
faith and culture; faith, justice and peace**

7.00: Morning prayer

9.00: Basic lecture and interventions

The new evangelization in Africa: spirituality by H.E Msgr. Peter Kihara – Murang'a,
Kenya

Socio-political-economic engagement: Rev. Salvatore Nicitertse, Bururi – Burundi

Engagement in education: Sr Maria Goretti NIZIGIYIMANA, Bururi – Burundi

Inculturation: Rev. Arien NTABONA, Bujumbura - Burundi

Faith, Justice and peace: Zénon MANAIRAKIZA, Gitega - Burundi

15.00: Small workshops

16.00: Plenary session

Interventions from workshops - Discussion and reply by the lecturers

17.30: Eucharistic Celebration

21.00: Prayer for the Church with the Rosary

Saturday 24th August

CA's IDENTITY and proposal of formation: prospects in Africa

7.00: Eucharistic Celebration

9.00: 2002 WYD in Toronto - direct witnesses by some participants

H.E. Msgr. Bernard Bududira (Bururi), Msgr. Domenico Sigalini (CA Italy), Oana
Tuduce (CA Romania)

10.00: The choices for formation and the methodology for CA's proposal in the parti-
cular Church for laypeople who are responsible in the Church and in society -
by IFCA's Secretariat

The service of the ecclesiastic Assistant in ICA -

Intervention by Msgr. Domenico Sigalini, general Vice-Assisant of CA in Italy

Workshops

Youths and children; Adults, Family, School...

15.00: Going on of workshops

16.30: Plenary session

Short report of the workshops - Proposals

20.30: Approval of final Document

MERRY TIME

Sunday August 25th

***“Duc in Altum, Catholic Action! Have courage for the future. Be in the world
a prophetic presence. Have the humble courage to fix your gaze on Jesus...”***

8.00: The journey of CA in the third millennium

Intervention by Beatriz Buzzetti Thomson, CA of Argentina, Coordinator of IFCA's Secretariat

10.00: Eucharistic Celebration in the CATHEDRAL

H.E. Msgr. Evariste NGOYAGOYE – Bishop of Bujumbura and closing prayer

11.30: Meeting with MAC members of Bujumbura diocese with their WITNESSES

Reading of the final Document

LIST OF THE PARTICIPANTS / BURUNDI

Name and Family name	Diocese	Name and Family name	Diocese
H.E. Msgr. BUDUDIRA Bernard	Bururi	BATAKANWA Deogratias	Bujumbura
H.E. Msgr. NGOYAGOYE Evariste	Bujumbura	NINTEREKA Yves	Bujumbura
H.E. Msgr. NTAGWARARA Jean	Bubanza	NDIKUMASABO Raphael	Bururi
H.E. Msgr. NTAMWANA Simon	Gitega	CIZA Emmanuel	Ruyigi
BUKURU Juvenal	Gitega	HABONIMANA Venant	Ruyigi
NKURUNZIZA Emery	Bujumbura	Msgr. NKURIKIYIE Protais	Muyinga
YENGAYENGE J.Paul	Bujumbura	Msgr. NDORICIMPA Helmenegilde	Bujumbura
NDENZAKO Marie Claire	Gitega	Rev. VYUMVUHORE Avit	Gitega
SINDAYIHEBURA Innocent	Gitega	HABONIMANA Bede	Bujumbura
MANIRAKIZA J. Bosco	Bujumbura	Rev. NZEYIMANA Gerard	Bururi
NZEYIMANA Felix	Ngozi	NIYUNGEKO Helmenegilde	Bujumbura
NDABAKENGA Regine	Bujumbura	Msgr. MURWUNDI Theogene	Bubanza
NDUWAYEZU JM Vianney	Muyinga	Rev. NTABONA Adrien	Bujumbura
CISHAHAYO Antoine	Bujumbura	Sr. NIZIGYIMANA Maria Goretti	Bujumbura
NAHAYO Anatole	Bujumbura	Rev. NICITERETSE Salvatore	Bujumbura
Rev. RUBERINYANGE Anatole	Bujumbura	Rev. BARIHUTA Juvenal	
NGENDAKUMANA Christine	Bujumbura	BUTOYI Venant	Bujumbura
Rev. TUHABONYE Deo	Bujumbura	BUDUDUYE Hermes	Muyinga
Rev. MAYOYA Athanase	Gitega	NDABUMVIYE Salvator	Bujumbura
Rev. RURYORYO Jeremie	Bubanza	NYANDURUKO Marie Jeanne	Bujumbura
BIKORIMANA Lea	Bujumbura	NTAKARUTIMANA Barthelemy	Bujumbura
NDIKUMWENAYO Steve	Bujumbura	NTAGWARARA Esperance	Bujumbura
NDAYIRAGIJE Sebastien	Bujumbura	NIYONZIMA Cecile	Bujumbura
NDUWIMANA Francois	Bururi	NDIKUMANA Etienne	Bujumbura
NIYONGABO Emmanuel	Bujumbura	NKEZIMANA Francine	Gitega
HATUNGIMANA M. Grace	Bujumbura	MIDENDE Fidele	Bubanza
IRAKOZE Marie Bernadette	Bujumbura	BARHAGAMYE Judith	Bujumbura
NSENGIYUMVA J. Pierre	Bujumbura	NIYUNGEKO Ferdinand	Bujumbura
NIBARUTA Gaspard	Bururi	NSHIMIRIMANA J. De Dieu	Bujumbura
NDINZURUVUGO Pierre Claver	Ngozi	MANIRAKIZA Arthemion	Bujumbura
BUCUMI Phocas	Bubanza	LAE MHOVU Arsene Lokana	Bujumbura
BUYOYA Chantal	Bujumbura	RIZI Sebastien	Bururi
NIRAGIRA Candide	Bujumbura	BAZINGA Jean Marie	Bubanza
MPITABAKANA Dieudonne	Bujumbura	Sr. KAMARIZA Beatrice	Bururi
HATUNGIMAN A. Etienne	Bujumbura	MUTERAMPUHWE Generose	Bujumbura
NTIBIYUNGA Rose	Bujumbura	Sr. NIYONGERE Dorine	Bururi

LIST OF THE PARTICIPANTS / OTHER COUNTRIES

Name and Family name	Country	Diocese
Peter KIHARA	KENYA	Muranga
H.E. Msgr. NZAKAMWITA Servilien	RWANDA	Byumba
NJOROGE Naomi Wandia	KENYA	Nairobi
MURIITHI Daniel	KENYA	Muranga
BABIKIRE Deogratias	D.R. CONGO	Uvira
MUDARHI B. J Pierre	D.R. CONGO	Bukavu
MAYALIWA Jean Claude	D.R. CONGO	
TABU MAWAZO Emilienne	D.R. CONGO	Bukavu
NTAKO-NNAVVUME Gustave	D.R. CONGO	Bukavu
BOROTO M. Salome	D.R. CONGO	Bukavu
SANFELICE Cardelo	D.R. CONGO	Uvira
MUKABASI Pascale	RWANDA	Byumba
NGENDAKUMANA Gerard	RWANDA	Kigali
NTIJIYINAMA Juvenal	RWANDA	Kigali
KAMATAMU	RWANDA	Kigali
Msgr. KAYITANA Justin	RWANDA	Kibungo
SEMPEBWA Francis	UGANDA	Lugazi
NABIGEMERA Rose	UGANDA	Lugazi
SAFARI Eugene	UGANDA	Lugazi
MUKOSA Stanley	ZAMBIA	Lusaka
BANDA Peter	ZAMBIA	Lusaka
RUGGIERI Maria Giovanna	ITALY	Gaeta
Msgr. SIGALINI Domenico	ITALY	Brescia
MACAGNINO Fulvio e Adriana	ITALY	Ugento
PUGGIONI Giovanni	ITALY	Nuoro
PAGLIONE Sebastiano	ITALY	Cerreto Sannita- S. Agata dei Goti
TUDUCE Oana	ROMANIA	Oradea
CHESI Andrea	ITALY	Livorno
JASSO EGUIA Pablo	MEXICO	Monterrey
TIBALDI Maria Grazia	ITALY	Alba
BUZZETTI THOMSON Beatriz	ARGENTINA	Lomas de Zamora