



REPORT 2001/2005 **OF THE INTERNATIONAL TEAM**

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT **DISPLAYED BEFORE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE MLC** **IN 4TH INTERNATIONAL MEETING (JULY 2005 - BORDEAUX, FRANCE)**

EVALUATION OF THE WORK DONE - CHALLENGES

The first remark on the challenges received in the last MLC assembly has to do with the difficulty of putting in order all the twenty new challenges and the fifteen remaining ones from Liria. We were given a summary with the number of votes that each challenge received. Only three of the new ones and two of the Liria ones had been voted by more than half the delegates with a right to vote in Philadelphia.

We have to say that it's very difficult to plan and subsequently to evaluate any work with such imprecision in the commands. We tried to fulfil challenges, following the order of the number of votes. It is important to say that the two most voted challenges coming from Liria dealt with organization questions of the countries and weren't part of the direct responsibilities of the International Team.

When evaluating the fulfilment of the challenges, I invite you to have a look at what we did and how we decided to do it in this period, according to the particular challenge we wanted to achieve.

Communication (challenge 1)

We received the mandate to improve the communication of the International Team; we tried to achieve this by writing periodical reports on a regular basis. We reported about every meeting of the International Team and started to publish a newsletter to be distributed via internet. Summaries and conclusions of the regional meetings were published and we started to send a report on the economic situation of the International Team.

As far as possible, Regional Representatives tried to be present in the countries of their regions. I myself tried to attend some regional meetings or national assemblies in order to communicate and receive the needs and suggestions of every one.

We tried to keep the Representatives of other branches informed about what was important in our life. We also started a rich dialogue with the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

International Meetings (new challenges: 2, 11, 17. previous challenges: 4, 7)

This meeting responds to the challenge we received to leave more time to talk and share experiences by previously participating actively in the drafting of the document to be approved by this assembly. We have tried to avoid the long debate sessions characteristic of the previous meetings and reserved night sessions for free communications, which should liven up a more open participation.

We have witnessed how the meetings held in Latin-America, North America and Europe consolidated. As foreseen, the Regional Representatives actively played an animation role. They will give us more details later.

There are two situations I would like to mention in a special way because they are a source of hope.

As you all know, the second African meeting was held in Abidjan with the participation of representatives of Eastern Africa for the first time. It was a meeting with a high spiritual richness and a true participation, with an expanding and encouraging spirituality. I've witnessed how Western and Eastern Africa can become one and walk together. Iñaki, the Representative for that Region, will comment further on these feelings.

Another special moment I would like to mention is the first meeting of the Marianist Family of the Latin-American continent, on the occasion of the regional meeting. National Representatives of FMI, SM and MLC met in Lima, spiritually accompanied by the Alliance Marial from Chile. After several days work, this meeting offered the world some conclusions which are a milestone in the construction of the family. After years of searching, the work finished successfully. Ezequiel will talk to you further about this meeting, which will be held



periodically.

World Council of the Marianist Family (new challenges: 3, 4, 5, 6, 15, 20. previous challenges: 8, 11)

The specific results of the WCMF work are the continuity of the IMV, headed up by a lay member, and the family album, among others. Besides, it was decided to support and cooperate with the International Centre for Marianist Formation in order to make formation efforts more efficient. We must say it was very difficult for us to carry on with all the activities that are already running and to start new ones in the field of Peace and Justice with the current structure. That's why we support the constitution of a permanent Secretariat for the Council.

Sharing (new challenge: 7. previous challenge: 7)

We are very happy to say that many communities profited from the exchange favoured by Twinning. That's why we devoted part of our efforts to continue encouraging this project.

Financing (new challenges: 4, 17)

We were asked to look for new ways of financing the activities of the International Team, but we weren't able to make progress on this point. Maybe we should be more coherent in constructing a solid awareness of the value of our organizations, international level included, organizations which should be supported by all members with funds and personnel.

You'll see in the economic report, which will be presented by Iñaki, who undertook a very important task to put order in our economy these past four years and how we used the funds we had at our disposal. These funds went mostly to cover the travel expenses of the team members to attend International Team meetings, regional meetings and to visit regions. Administration expenses are very low, which not only reflects our discipline but also the fact that resources were very short.

There are three significant items more to be mentioned, not because of the amount disbursed but because of the importance of the criteria. The first one is not new. The international fund had to help and finance a Regional Meeting (Africa this time). The second one is the monthly financing of some work hours as a support to the Presidency in the last two years, the origin of the Secretariat. I can assure you that it was of great help but clearly not enough. We also decided to cover the income loss caused by attending meetings in working days, in order not to generate a difficult economic situation in the families of the team members to whom those days resulted in loss of salary.

Finally, we have looked for alternative resources to finance this meeting. We are very pleased to say that the solidarity among the members of the MLC has been a very important source to achieve this goal. The national organizations in France, Spain (Madrid and Saragossa) and USA have donated special contributions of their lay members. Adding this up to the aid of the Santa Maria Foundation (Spain) and of the SM publishing house (Spain), we were able to pay for all the delegates from countries that couldn't pay for them. Our special thanks to the Foundation and the publishing house, we hope this cooperation brings about the results they expect.

Participation in the Church (new challenge: 5. previous challenge: 12)

Regarding our ecclesial participation, we have deepened our relationship with the Pontifical Council for the Laity by getting in touch and reporting on our activities. This will allow us to participate in a meaningful way. Furthermore, many of you had the opportunity of using a kit that national organizations prepared to introduce ourselves in the local Churches.

FORWARD-LOOKING APPROACH

As I already mentioned before, the International Team detected a need for changing the way we take decisions on the challenges that should guide its activities in the next future. That's why we propose to put all challenges we had up to now to an end and offer some new ones we think may contribute to the improvement of the MLC life and organization. You all were invited to send other goals for the next period and Hill have also the opportunity to review them as well as offer us new ones during the Meeting. But the most important thing is that we present for consideration a methodology that might guarantee a significant support of the assembly and a maximum of 10 challenges to be fulfilled before 2009. We hope to achieve this way a more mature and efficient way to orientate our life as an ecclesial body.



Possibilities

This group of people, that tried to lead the international life of the MLC and, to some extent, of the Marianist Family, faced many options for its future development, which had to be evaluated. We started to work on the communion between countries and regions, which is doing well, but it requires constant care and attention.

A life within the Marianist Family means to participate in the WCMF and to lead its activities, as well as to give impulse to National Councils. To read the signs of the life within the Family, without necessarily including its contents in our organizations. To go on searching for the proper means that help people discover their Marianist Vocation in any of its states of life.

We also see some forums within the Church in which we could participate, such as the ones that open a dialogue between the different lay movements, the different Christian Churches and the meeting with other religions.

On the other hand, we find possible meeting fields for social construction, that strive for a better world without discrimination by race, sex or religion. Half of the inhabitants of our world live in poverty, can we still be missing at an international level without offering our voice? Can we possibly stay silent when we are involved in wars in which peace will never triumph? Are we faithful to the Gospel legacy if we don't stand up and denounce a world without compassion?

I want to tell you that none of these challenges will be possible without the living presence of Jesus embodied in our small communities, in our homes. I want to tell you that making Christ present is so difficult in our every day's life that we need the motherly impulse of Mary, her example of naturalness and obedience, the only one that is worth following.

All right, I assume this is a task in which we all are working in our own small environment. From the familiar neighbourhood in which we live, we throw ourselves into the dream of a national presence that converges in this International space that summons us. We ask the persons we will elect to lead this world vision dedication, previous formation, certain minimum knowledge, vocation, Christian and Marianist faithfulness and human quality among other characteristics. Which instruments are we going to give them for their mission?

Out of my experience, I suggest you to give them a lot of confidence, the financial resources that we have promised them, a little bit of our private time to answer to their requests and to remind or suggest them anything and finally, support them with a minimum infrastructure that allow them to go on being lay in the whole sense of the word but carrying out at the same time the task to which we are sending them out.



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