

CLC at the World Social Forum

The Third World Forum on Theology and Liberation (WFTL III) is one of the large pre World Social Forum (WSF) meetings taking place in Belem, Brazil from 21 – 25 January 2009. The Ignatian family pre WSF forum begins today, January 25, 2009 and runs till 27 January, in time for the participants of these two forums to join up with the World Social Forum Program. I had occasion to attend WFTL by virtue of having been in the local organizing committee of the 2nd version of WFTL in Nairobi 2007. One of the greatest personal blessings of these two forums has been to be given the occasion to meet with Roswitha Cooper, one of the great pillars of CLC in the world, by virtue of her great commitment to the growth of CLC during her time as world Executive Secretary, and since. She too is in attendance of these forums.

Aside from these very personal benefits, our presence together at the WFTL has been an occasion to appreciate how participation in these faith reflections is a great advantage for deepening our understanding of our call to mission in the world of today as CLC members. The theme of the WFTL is Water, Earth and Theology. The forum has focused very strongly on the obligation to reverse the current speedy trend of the world order in the direction of the destruction of all natural habitat in the service of economic gains, and at the cost of life - human and all other earth forms- known and unknown to humans. Besides the strong awareness now more commonly shared that the earth can no longer support these current 'development' trends, and the fact that the earth may in the not too distant future have to continue without humanity, radical questions of justice and basic human rights arise when we confronted the destructions of native peoples' lifestyles, habitats, values, religions and the carnage on these populations that has been on-going in the last 5 centuries. These are fundamental human issues about which all nations must be concerned, about which CLC communities all over the world can do well to be knowledgeable and interested, from a mission and specifically justice perspective.

I felt much enriched by the larger perspectives brought in during these reflections, on the everyday justice and human rights issues which impose themselves on us and demand our Christian response. I am sure that the CLC reflection and engagement in mission can be informed by a vision of the World as the community of relationship of peoples and other children of the earth in the planet. I am also convinced that CLC mission discernment needs to be steeped in a communitarian dialogue at a deep level, engaging together the long on-going search for justice and transformation of the world in line with the gospel (good news) for our times. This is one of the ways to build a prophetic community. In Fatima our World Ecclesiastical Assistant, Fr. Adolfo Nicolas described the qualities of a prophet, and invited us to reflect on our call to be a prophetic community and what that could mean. To translate the qualities of an individual prophet to a prophetic community, on-going sharing of reflections supported by deepened seeing, hearing, feeling... the realities of the world of today with God is central. A discerning community can then be a prophetic community. The presence of CLC in reflections of forums that assist us to deepen our discernment is therefore important.