

Sisters and Brothers, on July 8th through the 10th Laurie and I attending the "Third Gathering of Movements and New Communities in the US" held at the Lumen Christi Retreat Center in Shriever LA. We were attending not only to represent our Community but also the other covenant communities that made up the Catholic Fraternity in the US. Retired Bishop Sam Jacobs was our host. The Movements and New Communities that had representatives were:

Alliance of Filipino Catholic Charismatic Prayer Communities

Beginning Experience

Catholic Charismatic Renewal

Communion and Liberation

Community of God's Delight

Couples for Christ

Emmanuel Community

National Cursillo Movement

Neocatechumenal Way

People of Praise Community

Prayer and Life Workshop

Schoenstatt Movement

TEC Conference - Teens Encounter Christ

USCCB

Worldwide Marriage Encounter

We started with Mass on Monday evening and then spent the rest of the evening introducing ourselves and our movements and communities to each other. I was very impressed by the diversity of movements and the many ways the Holy Spirit was using so many people to serve the Church. Tuesday morning we had small group meetings where we had the opportunity to get to know a few attendees in an in depth way. We were encouraged to give our personal testimony and explain why we were called to the movement or community that we were associated with.

The rest of the day on Tuesday was spent reviewing and discussing the *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation CHRISTUS VIVIT* of the Holy Father Francis to Young People and to the Entire People of God. Many valuable insights were shared as different people were touched by different aspects of the document. I had the opportunity to share some of the key points that were meaningful to me and made the following observations:

- We need to accept challenge from Youth, be flexible on structures and support their efforts to fight injustice & inequality and to fight for the marginalized
- The important warning to Youth of digital communication
- The importance of personal encounter with God and with God in one another
- The importance of supporting Youth Ministry and empowering our young people

- The importance of silence and prayerful discernment as the only way to be led by the Holy Spirit

The document conveyed the passion that our Holy Father has for Youth and it is an important document for all of us to read and reflect upon.

When someone asked an open question about how to engage young people I shared some highlights that I captured from other meetings:

1. Honor and love them
2. Give them responsibility
3. Be flexible (not forcing them into current ministries/structures)
4. Send them on mission
5. Challenge them to be missionaries to their generation
6. Prioritize them and provide resources
7. Cross-pollination (facilitate time with other communities)
8. Personal connection with leaders (mentoring)

The final session Wednesday morning was entitled "Sent Forth In Communion and Mission" where each person shared thoughts regarding how we each individually and collectively can continue to serve the local Church where we live. We also shared ideas and suggestions regarding future meetings of the Movements and New Communities.

Laurie and I were very blessed by the meeting and gained significant insight on how the Holy Spirit is moving in many other Communities and Movements throughout the Church. I am hopeful that one day our movements will cross paths and we will be able to serve together.

God Bless,

David

