

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) Forum with Movements and Associations - the butterfly needs all the air to fly!

On Dec. 3 and 4th, Fr. Charlie Pottie Pate and I had the opportunity to be among over 30 representatives of different groups within the Catholic church meeting at the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB).

How exciting it was to see the diversity of our church. Of the thirty or so groups represented, some worked with the young, others the elderly, some had very charismatic spiritualities, others were more contemplative, some were well established religious orders rooted in history and tradition, and others were newly formed groups responding to specific needs. The whole spectrum of the church was present.

The theme of the event was the Word of God - and quickly it was apparent that the Word of God was key to all of the organizations. Even more so it was clear that we were all rooted in the same thing - a love of God and a desire to build God's kingdom - and a deep passion for our church. The two days of these meetings were filled with wonderful encounters with passionate, faithful people who care deeply for the God and the church.

It was clear from the diversity of missions of the group that we were all integral to the church. We all knew that **TOGETHER WE ARE CHURCH** - and as one of the bishops said in his opening remarks - the butterfly needs all the air to fly.

Incredibly powerful were the small group discussions on the second day where we all shared how we as associations evangelize - in everything we do. It was fascinating to hear this sharing and see without a doubt that each group had an unique and yet interconnected role in building the kingdom of God. It was very exciting to acknowledge the range of needs in our church - and how well all these various groups have adapted to meet these needs.

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. I Corinthians 12: 12-26

And the bishops' presentations reinforced our commonalities - and gave us guidance in moving forward. They focused on things of common ground - an encouragement to pray with scripture and to use scripture as the foundation for all we do. They also promoted a spirituality of openness, promoting the heart of Christ vs. rules of the church. And consistent with our Ignatian spirituality the bishops reminded us that God always precedes us in all we do - that God is in all things - and so our responsibility is not to bring God to others - but help to uncover God in the other. The bishops encouraged us to be transformed by our involvement in our organization and to bring that transformation to others. We are to live with an awareness of the Good News - which is not rules and doctrine, but that God is love and that we all belong to God. And that God calls us each uniquely forward to fulfill God's call in our life. The principles of CLC were strongly re-enforced throughout the forum.

I felt strongly that the meetings were incredibly affirming of all that CLC is and stands for - and supportive to all in attendance as we appreciated the gifts of all the associations represented.

Adrienne De Schutter,
Coordinator of Communities (Elect),
Central Region CLC