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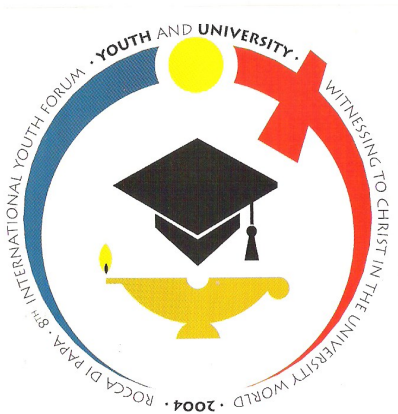


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FORUM

The Official Newsletter of the
International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS-Pax Romana)



**SPECIAL FOCUS ON
THE 2004
INTERNATIONAL
YOUTH FORUM**

With reflections on education by students from Algeria, Japan, Jordan, Poland, Spain, and the USA.

The Pope's Message to the IYF Meet the IMCS International Team



2004 #2

**IMCS - MIEC
Pax Romana**

 International
Movement of
Catholic
Students

 Mouvement
International des
Etudiants
Catholiques

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Please feel free to share any articles that you find useful, giving credit to where it may be due.

Editorial: The Challenge for Us

Dear friends,

As we promised to you a few weeks ago, here is the first edition of the "Forum", the new newsletter of the International Team. The name that we have chosen is not fortuitous. The "forum", in the ancient Roman tradition, was the place where the people gathered to discuss the public affairs. The history of humanity teaches us that all civilizations, all the people have, under various names, implemented the same system before and after Rome. No need to stress its importance. Indeed it enables the people and the intelligences

“To cut short, this first edition is a challenge to all of us: to continue and improve it so as to attain one of our objectives: communication.”

Nobody can deny the difficulty in succeeding to build up a Forum and managing it. One cannot either deny its aptitude to bring us closer to one another, to teach us how to dialogue, to listen and to learn from each other and, obviously, it will associate you with the international life of the movement. To cut short, this first edition is a challenge to all of us: to continue and improve it so as to attain one of our objectives: communication.

We thus invite each one of you to reflect with us on what we can do together to take up this challenge.

to meet,
exchange,
discuss,
discover, learn,
communicate.
Creating such
a space is the
concern which
animates us in
this moment.

For this edition, we wanted to make a file on the International Youth Forum (IYF) organized last March by the Pontifical Council for the Laity. Besides the report of our participation, we convey some reflections and actions of our members throughout the world on the subjects evoked during the IYF (2- 11). You may also know that we are a new team, for this reason we thought that it is good that we introduce ourselves to you (12-13) with modest biographies. We will however, not fail to bring new elements if you need them. We are very interested in the life of the movement in the world, and we follow all regional news (14-18), it is this very same idea that you will find under the heading “global actions”(19-20). Convinced that the movement cannot be completely detached from its History, we throw a glance on the past (21-22). This heading will, moreover, allow us to pay homage to those engaged before us in the movement and to look further into our knowledge of our history.

*Zobel, Kevin, and Fr. Mike
IMCS International Team*

To help better outreach to students, the
IMCS Forum is also available online at
www.imcs-miec.org.

The International Youth Forum

On invitation of the Pontifical Council for the Laity (PCL), the IMCS IT, represented by Zobel Behalal and Father Mike Deeb participated in the 8th International Youth Forum (IYF), from March 31 to April 04 in Rome. To complete our delegation, we were accompanied by two students members of our national movements: Ross Gruebel (USA) and Julia Stysiak (Poland).

Among the 200 participants to the IYF, coming from all over the world, 23 IMCS national movements were present, delegated by their Episcopal Conferences. This forum was the first to be organized on a specific theme outside of the context of the WYD.

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The International Youth Forum (cont)

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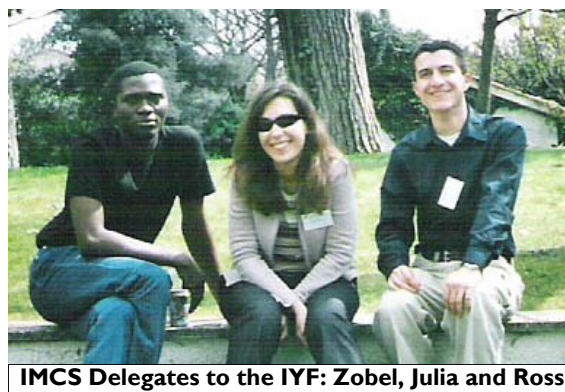
Overview

« Youth and University: witnessing to Christ in the university world », was the theme chosen by the CPPL for the forum. It was, essentially, meant to review the reality of the Christian witness in our universities and also to define ways so that our witnessing becomes more effective and more visible in this changing world. For a deep examination of this theme, it was divided in 4 sections [1] : Youth and university today; Studies and Life; University and Truth; University and Christian witnessing.

The examination of these different sections was preceded by the message of His Holiness [2] and the president of the PCL, Archbishop Rylko that recalled with force that the students have an important role to play in the Church and in society.

From the daily presentations of the experts such as Prof. René Rémond, Prof. Mary Ann Glendon, Prof. Giorgio Vittadini, one can retain that: the world today is subject to an explosion in the number of universities and institutes of higher education. Paradoxically, the more institutions created, the less formation, capable of producing a whole man. Students undergo pressures that deprive them sometimes of a free choice. Most of them have to study to satisfy the needs of the market that was erected as model by the globalization process. These conditions impede the development of their spirituality on the campus. The spiritual formation is therefore poor, indeed nonexistent within the University. This fact is so generalized that sometimes even Catholic universities undergo the same sort. All the ideas here under were corroborated by the testimonies of the students. Through their anecdotes coming from all the regions of the world, we were able to realise the seriousness of the situation. It was indeed possible to understand the negative impact of economic under development in the formation of the students, such as the difficulty to access to education and to the new technologies when one lives in the “South,” the solidarity deficit that characterizes the student milieu, the constraints preventing the students to live fully their faith.

Next to this dark picture, glimmers of hope and satisfaction motives nonetheless have been pin pointed as much by the students as by the experts. For instance, if we take the work done by the evangelising movements at the level of the universities concerning informal education of the students. One also can underline the numerous chaplaincies that offer to the students to within or at proximity of the universities a



IMCS Delegates to the IYF: Zobel, Julia and Ross

space to allow them to deepen and to live their faith. The numerous testimonies from students newly converted to Catholicism in the sometimes hostile countries were equally reasons to hope. These come to show that Christ is not dead on the campus and in his intervention, one of the experts, Mr. Alejandro Liano Cifuentes summoned the students to have this conviction. He demonstrated that Jesus is the truth and that the truth is a source of freedom. The students, therefore, were encouraged to continue to look for this truth in the faith, as Mgr Josef Miroslaw Zycinski said. He added that he thinks that the courage of faith is borne by the courage of the human reason, therefore to mix faith and reason in the research of the truth is the research for God.

Moments of High Emotion

Besides the purely intellectual works, we went through high moments of emotion, including two celebrations with the Pope. As part of the first one we met his Holiness at the Youth meeting of the Diocese of Rome and the second one on Palm Sunday, at the time of the celebration of the XIX World Youth Day. The delegates were equally entitled to a tour of Rome and to a cultural evening to celebrate the richness of so many regions and countries being together.

Foro in the Forum by the IT

The participation of the IT in this meeting equally allowed us to have some parallel activities. We met with our members present in Rome in order to present for them the big lines of our plan of action and to in force the idea of the need of contact between us. We also discussed about our activities in general with them and finally, but not least, we had a special working meeting with the FUCI, our national movement in Italy. We also visited Radio Vatican where we were received in a program of the African department.

[1] We published the reflections of our students during these four stages and we distributed them during the WYF. These reflections will also be published in this bulletin.

[2] We reproduce some excerpts in this bulletin

Youth and University Today: A Christian Student in a Muslim Country!

They are numerous, these young people in the world who, attracted today by the magnet of knowledge, seek an inscription within national or international universities. This phenomenon does not exclude Algeria, where young people, coming from several countries of sub-Saharan Africa, arrive in search of knowledge. Which are thus the experiences and expectations as of the these young people at the university?

The university in Algeria constitutes a large crossroads of culture insofar as one finds there young people coming from several corners of Africa, each one bringing with them, their culture and religion. To live together, to share the same class rooms, the same rooms in the university campus, without minding our differences and our origins constitute a great experience acquired in this university life. The fact of adhering to various students' associations also enables us to work together for the same cause.

Moreover, coming from a countries where more than eighty percent of the population is Christian, the discovery of a majority Moslem country enables us to have a deeper knowledge of the Islamic religion.

Also, the human being, since the dawn of time, is in search of knowledge and seeks to include/ understand the phenomena which occur around him. Thus, the university offers an ideal framework to us to reach to this knowledge; one finds the possibility there of acquiring a technical training, which will certainly enable us to be useful in our societies, to contribute to scientific progress and to ensure us a certain financial autonomy.

Here are in some lines experiences and expectations of the young students of the universities in Algeria. Let us specify however that, in spite of the knowledge acquired and the experiences, the success in life remains a random test.

*Kalenge Nguvulu Chris
(Algeria originally from Ivory Coast)*

“the human being, since the dawn of time, is in search of knowledge”

University and Truth

I count the stars, I wait for one pin of light. -Meera

For me the university is where people know that there is the truth.

The truth is supernatural. It lies beneath and surpasses everything. In front of the truth there's no difference between studies, nations, or peoples. This is why university is the best place to know that there's the truth, because you are allowed to study what you want and interact with many others like you. In other schools, you also study what you would like, but the university is the highest education institution and has no limit for any study.

The history of the university traces back to the 12th century. So much has changed since then. Students now can graduate in majors other than Philosophy, Theology, Law or Medicine. There are many female students. A friend of mine graduated in Business Law; this was unthinkable in the 12th century. But something always stays there: the search for the truth. Listening to lectures, reading books, thinking and interacting ideas with others brings students to the dimension that they had never thought existed.

Does the truth help? Of course! People are often caught between two things to decide when both look the same. When they encounter the truth, with its light they know what the more important one is.

This doesn't help only in studies, but also in daily life. All lives have a lot of decisions to make and the truth helps people decide the right one. The truth also brings happiness and righteousness in the world.. Knowing that there's the supernatural enables people to accept other peoples and their cultures.

“A school can't go on only by love. We do need money,” I heard one Catholic principal say once. It is true and I know many universities are struggling with financial issues. But the truth surpasses even this. There's another option, other than going bankrupt, firing employees or closing unproductive faculties. What's this “another option?” Only those who search for the truth know. I know a university that started to accept the minorities. The truth let people get out of their narrow way of thinking.

The truth makes people creative. I hope all university representatives realize this and work for the truth. The truth should be the only thing that students think when they graduate. Students graduate happier and brighter and so will be this world.

Moyuko Okada (Japan)

Studies, Life and the Path to Human and Christian Maturity

“We live in a globalized world where almost all the aspects of our life are characterised by permanent change” – this sentence is being repeated again and again, we all seem to be aware of it. But are we, young people, students, prepared to face the challenges that reality brings? Do the universities, which partly are the “engine” of the change, or the educational system in general, give possibilities to fully develop one’s personality and potentials, as well as understanding of the processes going on around us and our role within them?

The 26th article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says:

“Education should be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It should promote understanding, tolerance and friendships among nations, racial and religious groups”.

Consequently, four pillars in education are considered to be crucial:

- learning to know,
- learning to do,
- learning to be and
- learning to live together.

This means that education should enable us to learn throughout life, give skills and competences to deal with everyday life, help to develop the individual personality, talents and potentials and, what is more, it should prepare people to live together with others.

However, traditional education, which still dominates in many educational centres, is, to a large extent, based on the accumulation of knowledge and the development of the intellectual capacities mainly based on memorising information. There is little room left for creativity and critical analysis. Students are prepared, first of all, to be very productive and specialised in a narrow area of knowledge, as to work effectively on the global market.

Moreover, many students tend to be passive and do not want to take any responsibilities for what is going on around them. Students’ short-term commitment, fear of confronting the reality, constant search for identity, sometimes accompanied by fear of differences - these are some of the current tendencies

that old inflexible structures are hardly able to deal with or even to notice them.

In this context the importance of integral education increases. Integral education defined as a development of integral consciousness; of the whole person and of all the people. There are different kinds of consciousness, social consciousness, global consciousness, historical consciousness, evolutionary, ecological consciousness, consciousness of others as persons, creativity consciousness, consciousness of our inner-selves, and finally God consciousness, which is a spiritual or religious consciousness that will arise out of the other forms of consciousness. Only through developing the awareness in all these fields, one can speak about building up a person in all his/her dimensions.

Bearing in mind that such a broad approach is not provided by traditional educational system, new needs and challenges arise for the students’ milieu. New tasks have to be set out and actions have to be undertaken by students’ movements as well as the Church in order to help young people to define their role in the society and the world. This process can be realised through integral education, reinforced by non-formal education, which is complementary to the formal one.

Providing space for participation at all levels of the social life, promoting peace, justice, empowerment of the poor can bring about meaningful changes leading to the improvement of the society. But in order to achieve that there is a need to deepen the understanding of problems emerging both on local and global levels, especially when it comes to issues connected with culture or religion. Realising one’s responsibility for him/herself and the Others and taking action for the change of the reality is an important step towards human and Christian maturity.

Julia Stysiak (Poland)



IMCS Delegate Ross Gruebel

University and Christian Witness

This past Christmas holiday I was part of the 20th annual National Catholic Student Coalition's leadership conference entitled "Ask Me Why I'm Catholic!" in Orlando, Florida, USA. At the conference I was able to begin to "reflect on my decision to become Catholic and what it means to be a Catholic at university. I began to recall my journey as a college student and as a Catholic.

Before leaving home for college, I had received a letter from the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) campus ministry office asking if I were interested in any of the various religious groups on campus, namely Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, or Catholic. I reflected on this survey for a while and I decided that I would like to become Catholic. I didn't know why, but I felt that the Protestant Church did not fulfill my spiritual needs. I returned the survey and received a welcome letter from the Catholic Student Union, which invited me to attend the freshman Open House during orientation. I was excited, but anxious because I was preparing to become truly independent.

Leaving home in Lancaster, Ohio—located in the northern part of the United States—I traveled nearly 1,000 miles south to Daytona Beach, Florida in order to attend ERAU. This was a time of new beginnings and a time for growth, both spiritually and psychologically. During orientation my mother and I went to the chapel and received information regarding the Mass schedule and various events that were sponsored by the Catholic Student Union. I began to attend Mass regularly and I spoke with Fr. Tim Daly, the Catholic chaplain, about going through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (R.C.I.A.) program in order to be baptized, confirmed, and receive first Communion. R.C.I.A. was a rewarding experience; I learned about the faith, the Church, and about myself.

During my four years at ERAU I have become very active in the Catholic Student Union, serving as vice-president of the ministry board and actively taking a role in our various social, spiritual, and service programs. I have seen new faces enter the Catholic Student Union and be changed by the presence of an amazing campus ministry program. I have seen that college students *are* interested in being Catholic and sharing their faith with others. Students are regularly involved in social justice projects, witnessing that there are many people less fortunate who need a helping hand. I've seen members of the Catholic Student Union actively minister at Mass as lectors, Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, sacristans, and greeters. I've seen growth in our ministry program since my freshman year when there were 60 students coming to Mass each week. Now, because of a new generation of leaders and faithful Catholic students, there are over 150 students who attend Mass regularly at

ERAU.

Students from all over the world—Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas—bring a new light to worship. They bring traditions from their homelands and share the faith that is so truly named Universal. So many alumni have been touched by the Catholic Student Union that they often write back to the chapel with a *thank you* letter or even a donation to continue the many programs that our campus ministry program offers to ERAU students. Personal contact between upper classmen and new members to the Catholic Student Union is vital for our organization to continue its ministry as well as fostering the needs of Catholic college students. This is true evangelization; getting to know people and uncovering their spiritual needs and then addressing these needs as a community. I see many freshmen with so many gifts and talents, and I make a strong effort to pull them into an active role in the Catholic Student Union.

Another approach to evangelization that I will take is when I see Catholics, as well as non-Catholics interested in the faith, who are not yet active. I invite them to join me at Mass or at programs sponsored by the Catholic Student Union so that they may become aware of the various activities that are available to them. I try to answer their ques-

tions to the best of my ability regarding Catholic traditions and teachings so that they may have a better understanding of the faith. Evangelization is being a role model for others; guiding people to ministry; opening doors and building bridges.

Each time the Catholic Student Union Ministry Board meets, service, social, and spiritual programs are discussed. It's no longer the chaplain initiating ideas and delegating tasks to run these programs, rather, the students are taking this role upon them to organize and implement prayer groups, fellowship after Mass, service projects at the nursing home and for those with disabilities, and much more. I am overwhelmed at how much campus ministry has to offer to students because of the leaders who are the Church, who take an active role despite their demanding academic schedules.

I have come to see and hear God in a new and deeper way through my fellow students at Catholic Student Union. I have found support through the help of my peers, and I have become more open to God and myself. Being a part of the Catholic Student Union has given me a foundation for my faith and has built my leadership skills immensely. I will be able to continue my journey of faith into the future and will continue to live the Gospel as I have learned from campus ministry.

"I have seen that college students are interested in being Catholic and sharing their faith with others."

Ross Gruebel (USA)

Being Catholic in the University: Two Perspectives

Some once asked me what it was like to be a Catholic student at university. This is a question I've never thought of before because I've never really put being Catholic and going to university together before.

When I started to think about it I realized that my faith goes with me every where I go. But it is particularly strong in my university setting. Aside from being a full time student at the University of Saskatchewan, I'm also a very active member of the Catholic community on campus. Being involved with the Newman Centre for three years, the Catholic social group on campus, and an active member of the CCSA (IMCS Canada) has really enriched my university experience. I am constantly surrounded by my faith and wonderful

people not only of the Catholic faith, but of many different faiths, who do everything they can to encourage me to grow in my faith and to learn more about it. Being a Catholic student at university has truly been a rewarding experience and has proved to be nothing but helpful in difficult times with my studies. When studying and homework prove to be a bit strenuous I've found wonderful support in God, and in the people who surround me at school. Being surrounded by other Catholic students has helped me to see that I am not alone in whatever struggles I might have in my faith or in my school setting. As a Catholic student at university I would say that it's been a very good experience, and would encourage all students to make their faith a bigger part of their university life. It can truly help you to rise above the discouraging times being a student can bring.

Marianne Chabot (*Canada*)

"Being a Catholic student at university has truly been a rewarding experience"

Being a Catholic student in an Arabic Muslim university has been a big challenge for me regarding many aspects; of them is the way I should witness for Christ in the university, the message I should pass to other Christian students, and how to respond to other non Catholic movements.

To be more precise, I will try to give an idea about my experience regarding each aspect mentioned above.

As for trying to witness for my faith in the university it wasn't that easy because the number of Christian students in my faculty wasn't more than 50 students from a total of 500 students!!! This means a minority that should live their

Christianity in the right way by witnessing to Jesus through its daily life..... Christianity is a life and not only a way to live.

The second aspect is that I have the responsibility to pass on Jesus' good news to all other students especially that lots of Christian students know nothing about Christian spirit; the spirit of respect, forgiveness, charity and love and I feel I really succeeded to a degree in passing my faith to those students by trying to help them live their real Christianity and realize that Jesus lives in us and he died for us, so Jesus deserves that we live our life with and for him.

And the most difficult task was to defend our faith against those non catholic movements that are trying to change the meaning of real Christianity by different ways; attracting the students to their illegal activities and this task requires from the Christian students to be always aware and to work together against these groups using the power of Jesus that would never ever fail.

Rima Nsheiwat (*Jordan*)



**Canadian Delegates at the IYF
On Palm Sunday**

Extracts from the Pope's Message to the IYF

It is important in our age to rediscover the bond that unites the Church to the world of Higher education. For the Church not only played a decisive role in founding the first universities, but throughout the centuries she has been a workshop of culture, and continues in the same direction today through the Catholic Universities and various forms of presence in the vast world of higher education. The Church sees the University as one of those workplace in which man's vocation to acquire knowledge and the constituent bond of humanity with truth as the purpose of knowledge become a daily reality for so many professors, young researchers and generations of students (address to UNESCO, 1980).

Dear student, in the University you are not only recipient of services, but you are the true protagonists of the activities performed there. It is no coincidence that the period spent in higher education is a vital stage in your existence, in which you prepare yourselves to take on the responsibility for decisive choices that will direct the hole of your future life. It is for this reason that you must approach higher education with a searching spirit, to seek the right answers to the essential questions about the meaning of life, happiness and complete self-fulfilment and beauty as the splendour of truth

Fortunately the influence of ideologies and Utopias fomented y the messianic atheism that had such an impact I the past on many University environments has waned considerable today But there are also new schools of thought which reduce reason to the horizon of experimental science alone and hence to technical and instrumental knowledge sometimes enclosing it within a sceptic and nihilist vision. These attempts



IMCS Members Meeting at the IYF



European Delegates to the IYF

to evade the issue of the deepest meaning of existence are not only futile they can also become dangerous.

3 Through the gift of faith we have met the One who introduces himself with these surprising words: " I am the truth" (Jn 14,6). Jesus is the truth of the universe and of history the meaning and the destiny of human existence the foundation of all reality! It is your responsibility, you who have welcomed this Truth as the vocation and certitude of your lives, to demonstrate its reasonableness in the University environment and in your work there. The question that then arises is: how deeply does the truth of Christ affect your studies, research, knowledge of reality, and the comprehensive education of the human person? It may happen that, even among those who profess to be Christians, some will behave in the University as if God did not exist. Christianity is not a mere subjective religious preference, which is ultimately irrational and relegated to the private sphere. As Christians we are duty-bound to bear witness to what the Second Vatican Council affirmed in *Gaudium et Spes*: " For faith throws a new light on everything, manifests God's design for mans' s total vocation and thus directs the mind to solutions which are fully human ' (N° 11). We must demonstrate that faith and reason are not irreconcilable, but that, " Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth" (cf *Fides et ratio*, Intr.).

JEC Spain University Manifesto

The following is the Manifesto of the 2004 JEC Spain campaign on education : "**Your knowledge for the poor:**"

As believers and students, with this Campaign we have tried to create awareness, to animate and to provoke students as regards the socioeconomic poverty in our society where 360 people accumulate as much wealth as the poorest half of the world-wide population. Next to the disaster of the generalized poverty in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the countries of the East of Europe, we face the very serious structural problem of world-wide unemployment, closely related to the problem of the exclusion and more and more the evident crisis of immigration, evident symptom of the dimension of the problem on planetary scale. While looking more closely, we see how in our country there are more and more persons excluded from the "good gust of wind" of our macroeconomics, more and more those who experience job insecurity, are being exploited, face uncertainty and the impossibility to construct a future life. Nothing of what is happening is unknown to us.

As bearers of Knowledge, we have a debt, not only with the previous generations, but also on how to spread and put it to the service of the others since to

"As bearers of Knowledge, we have a debt, not only with the previous generations, but also on how to spread and put it to the service of the others..."

keep knowledge for oneself and to the service of our personal interests only contributes to the increase of the poverty in all its scopes. Our study is the tool to change what we do not like, what is not right, what is not well. Each one of us must question the social use (implication) of his/hers studies (the Physics, the Mathematics...) in the daily life and evaluate how they serve the most underprivileged.

We want the spirit of the University to remain alive in our mind, that is, the University does not finish when we finish our studies, if it is a University in which the subjects are something more than examination agenda. That University where we also grow as persons, and not only as "thinking tanks". In a University were we are, in addition to being the most privileged, protagonists, and the motor of change. A University in which the changes the society needs are thought, and, as someone said "... its mission is to illuminate the truth, and to promote the very essence of the human dignity, and, if the University does not fulfill this, what good is it? What interests move it?"

WE DEPLORE the fact that the students do not have contact with the reality, we do not see beyond our copybooks, when one studies the only thing that matters is finishing them. We are being educated to be passive and not creative, enterprising or with eagerness to search. **WE PROPOSE** to provide, in our academic life, spaces like: Debates, Formation programs and Critical Training groups that enable the development of criteria, ethical references... guaranteeing a professional ethics in our future performance and thus to orient our professional life towards the most underprivileged.

WE DEPLORE that in the University Curricula there is no place for contents/subjects where to find alternative answers to the situations of poverty/injustice. **WE PROPOSE** to modify the Curricula so that subjects focus in social, solidarity, critical and proposal analysis, so that may give rise to proposals and themes addressing the realities of marginalization and injustice as well as cooperation and volunteer dimension, awareness of environment, Human Rights, etc.

WE DEPLORE that the University research subjects are based on the economic resources and not on the relevance they may have for a fairer and better common future for the present and future generations. **WE PROPOSE** to prioritize research projects promoting solidarity and the cooperation with the poorest countries; to take advantage of the channels of research and practical work to put our knowledge to the service of the poor men in a real and effective way (thesis, masters evaluations, projects, etc).

WE DEPLORE that there is no promotion of the associative and political participation, we ignore the participation avenues, the students are mere users, do not assume their responsibility like a group I front of the different problems of the university community and the society. **WE PROPOSE** to prioritize a true associative network with material resources and institutional support, to offer information, to create spaces for exchange, contributing to the cultural and associative life of the University, becoming thus one of the elements of support in the formation of people.

DO NOT BE AFRAID – of challenging questions

Message from the International Chaplain

To all our dear student members, chaplains, and friends of IMCS, and express their faith adequately.

Since the beginning of his pontificate, Pope John Paul II has continually spoken to youth, and one of his key messages has repeatedly been, “Do not be afraid”. This, of course, was a key theme for Jesus and the biblical writers (and not only in relation to youth) (see Matt.14:27; 17:7; 28:10; Mark 5:36; Acts 18:9; 1 Peter 3:14, etc.), since we know that fear is probably the biggest obstacle to us being open to the truth and to love (1 John 4:18). This same message about the need for courage was repeatedly stressed again to the more than 100 students from all continents attending the International Youth Forum in Rome in April this year.

I was privileged to be one of the chaplains invited by the Pontifical Council for the Laity to accompany the students during this meeting. So, for one week, I was enabled to have an incredible experience of the universality of the Church. Some of the experts and students provided a number of excellent analyses of the state of the world and the university, and proposals on the sort of Christian presence needed in the university today. And the joy, openness and conviction of the students provoked by the group sharings and the beautiful liturgies was a real sign of hope!

For me, the most striking experience was hearing the concerns expressed by the students in the discussion groups. A number remarked on how many youth were abandoning the Church, which they saw as old, authoritarian, and associated with “embarrassing” and unfashionable things such as the Inquisition, the Crusades, control, ignorance, bad priests, celibacy, and sexual morality, with which they could not identify. Others, on the other hand, expressed a feeling of being rejected and discriminated against as Catholics in the face of militant atheists, Protestants, or Muslims, and, in such situations, they unfortunately were often unable to defend

While many students present did not say much, many of the vocal participants (following the analysis of some of the speakers) understood these situations as the result of faulty student perceptions of the Church, and of the “tolerant” mentality of freedom of the 1960’s (the generation of their parents and many teachers), which, they felt, did not want to provide clear religious or ethical formation. They criticised this “tolerant approach” for frequently being hypocritical, and for promoting an ‘ethical relativism’, which reduced ‘truth’ to ‘what is convenient’. With little sense of ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, this generation was therefore accused of failing to provide young people with an ‘objective morality’ – either at home or in the school or university.

I could feel the sense of confusion that many students expressed, resulting in a fearful and defensive reaction, and a need for clear ethical standards in an insecure world full of financial pressures and uncertainties, conflicting values and peer pressures, and little accompaniment. Along with the very negative evaluation (by a number of invited speakers) of the university today as (virtually only) propagating unchristian values, these reactions left me with an uneasy sense of a Church with a siege or fortress mentality (as it seemed at the time of the French Revolution after 1789!), which felt under attack by the forces of change in the world and in the university! This resulted in an inability to be self-critical, to recognise any legitimate reasons for criticisms of the Church (which were simply dismissed as misunderstandings or false perceptions), or to acknowledge any positive challenges that changes in the world and education pose to the Church!

Consequently, the strongest message emerging was a call for ‘a return to the truth (Jesus)’, and to the ‘absolute moral laws’ with which the Gospel frees us from subjectivism. In response, one student asked in plenary: ‘How do you know

(Cont. on page 11)

Do Not be Afraid (cont.)

(Cont. from page 10)

that you have the truth?’ – a question that the speakers struggled to answer satisfactorily! This highlighted a major problem that all of us (especially young people) are facing today as we struggle to find the truth!

In a world that is increasingly uncertain and insecure, it is very easy to be fearful, and hence to be seduced by structures, organisations, ideologies or theologies that offer ‘secure’ absolute principles and traditions which are not open to question (fundamentalism). This normally leads to a high level

of intolerance! Of course, as Christians, we can say that for us Jesus is the truth, and his way of love is therefore absolute. However, as limited humans, our understanding of him and of the implications of his love for our human behaviour will always be limited. This is why even we Christians can come to such different interpretations of Gospel texts and their implications for our moral decisions amongst ourselves. But this need not result in an ethical relativism, where we just do what we want regardless of anyone else!

As the Church (with society) has slowly changed and evolved over the centuries to appreciate the evil of slavery, of exploitation of indigenous peoples, of discrimination against women, etc, it has offered us a rich tradition of social teachings, which provide valuable guides from the past and the present for our political, economic, social and personal behaviour. And so the Church is still evolving, and within it we also are blessed to have a community which will accompany us in relating this tradition to our social and personal experience today, and in grappling with the truth of Jesus. And this is all we can do! Grapple! Because so many forms of human experience – desire, need for power, need for possessions, sexuality, death, etc. – are surrounded by Mystery about which there can never be any absolute certainty!

And we Christians are not the only ones grappling with trying to make the world a better place! In fact the Church has often adjusted its

theological and moral position towards the changing world only after it has been challenged by other groups in society. Thus, in the midst of so much evil in our rapidly-changing world (and school and university), not everything changing is bad or badly motivated! And while we all want to resist negative or destructive criticisms of the

Church, we need to humbly recognise that many changes being initiated in society (which at times differ from current Church positions) are often part of new searches for truth which challenge our taboos (issues that we don’t want to discuss)!

Furthermore, it is true that there is a great need for formation in Scripture, the Catholic faith and

the Church’s social teachings, so that we can feel sound and well-grounded in our Catholic identity, and be able to counter the negative and false criticisms that frequently come our way. However, we need to see this as a way of strengthening us so that we can open ourselves up to engaging with the world (even if it is hostile and very difficult!), and not to close ourselves off from it!

Thus, dear friends, in the face of an insecure, stormy, and often hostile world, Jesus is telling us to “not be afraid” (Matt.14:27)! We should not allow ourselves to be tempted by the false absolutes that offer us security, yet which in fact only lead us to closing our ears and our eyes - to becoming intolerant, and thus prevent us from recognising their contradictions (see John 8:3-11). Just as Jesus embraced his fear on the way to his passion and death (Mark 14:34-42), we are called to display similar courage in searching for the truth in the world. Let us not be afraid of questions that challenge even the things we have always held dear! Rather let us see them as opportunities for grappling with the Mystery that is God – like Jacob (Gen.32:23-30) - of which we slowly get glimpses as we engage with others (and maybe even with our enemies!) in building a just and peaceful world, free of intolerance.

Fr. Mike Deeb, OP
(IMCS International Chaplain)

Meet the 2003-2007 IMCS International Team



Kevin Ahern, Fr. Mike Deeb, OP, and Joseph Zobel Behalal

Kevin Ahern

I am really happy to have this opportunity to introduce myself to you, in this first newsletter of our mandate.

I first joined IMCS in 1998 when I went to college close to my home, just north of New York City. When I began at the school, I was surprised to see that there was no group for the Catholic students. To help try to create this experience I attended an event of the National Catholic Student Coalition (NCSC). With the NCSC, I was able to find a national and global community of students. It was at this meeting, where I first heard about IMCS. Soon I was the main representative of IMCS-Pax Romana at the UN in New York and on the National Team of the NCSC. In these roles, I was happy to have the chance to serve the movement, which has given me so much.

I later graduated from Fordham University where I studied Religious Studies and Anthropology.

I hope that serving on the International Team will allow me to help in the holistic (integral) formation of students around the world.

I believe that in the present context of the Church and the world, IMCS has much to offer. As an international movement, we have the responsibility to build global solidarity. As Catholics, we have the important task of proclaiming the liberating message of the Gospel in the student milieu. And as students, we have the role of critically reflecting on the world around us and finding creative solutions to its problems.

Together, we can change the world.

Joseph Zobel Behalal

During the preparatory meeting for this bulletin it was decided that I had to write a short presentation of myself I felt very embarrassed, because it is always difficult to talk about oneself. One is, in fact, exposed to the risk of presenting only the embellishing aspects and be quiet about those that would be negative. I will do my best to write a balanced presentation even though the space allocated remains very insufficient to allow me to unveil all the stages of my life. Since the ultimate goal of this exercise is to allow you to know me better, please feel you free to contact me later for more of details.

My complete name is Joseph Zobel BEHALAL MBOY II. I was born the 28.10.76 in Douala, Cameroon. I am the eighth child of a family that counts 10. Not very long ago I was studying History in the University of Yaoundé I. Alongside these studies, that I had to suspend to join the IMCS International Team, I was a monitor in the same university as well as teaching History in a secondary school and a leader of the IMCS, as well as engaged in some groups of reflection clubs and organisation of the civil society.

Besides my passion for the intellectual debate and the confrontation of ideas, my engagement has been motivated on one hand, by the will to be an actor and non-spectator of the changes that occur around me and, on the other hand, the conviction in the strength of the group. It is obvious that in 1999, when I decided to take catechesis to receive the sacraments two years later, when I equally became a member of IMCS in Cameroon. Within the IMCS group I rediscovered not only a family to help me to grow in my knowledge of Catholic faith and the Teachings of the Church but also a space that completed my formation as Man, as citizen and as student. Coming to the IT stimulated my convictions, since I think I will be able to share with a larger number of students in the world the values taught by the IMCS. The student is an important individual for the Church and in society. The students' expectations have to be taken into account. A university more concerned of the total formation of the students is possible. These are my convictions. I transform them into challenges to face with you during the four next years.

Meet the 2003-2007 IMCS International Team (cont.)

Fr. Mike Deeb OP

Warm Greetings to all members, chaplains and friends of IMCS throughout the world!

Unlike Zobel and Kevin, I am not new to the International Team, having served as International Chaplain with the previous Team (Budi and Natália) for the previous four years (1999-2003). During this time, I have travelled quite widely, and have been privileged to meet many of you. Otherwise I have been in written communication with many others of you. However, for those of you for whom I am still either nameless or faceless, let me share a little of myself!

I am a 51 year old Dominican priest from South Africa, where I lived through the difficult time of the struggle against Apartheid, but also the joy of the achievement of freedom and democracy. I became involved with IMCS when I was a university student in Johannesburg in 1972. Since then I have served as the local Chairperson, the National President, and the full-time Assistant to the National Chaplain. After my ordination, I served as a local university Chaplain in Pietermaritzburg, as well as the Convenor for all the university chaplains in my region (KwaZulu/Natal). During this time, I was also involved with our sister movement, IYCS, at all the different levels as well.

I was privileged to participate in the IMCS Interfederal Assemblies (the Study Sessions of which were held jointly with IYCS) in Valladolid, Spain in 1978, and in Montréal, Quebec, Canada in 1982, where I got my first taste of the international movement. The International Team asked me to make myself available as International Chaplain in 1995, but for a variety of reasons this was impossible! I subsequently discovered that no-one was found to fulfil that role for the following four years, which saddened me a great deal, knowing the important role of a chaplain in the life of the movement. This led me to reflect and consult with many people within the movement and

within my religious community on the possibility of making myself available for the following four years. Eventually this emerged as possible and desirable, and my name was sent together with that of another candidate to the Secretariat of State in the Vatican, who appointed me in 1999 as the International Chaplain of both IMCS and IYCS.

The last four years provided me with a very rich experience – even if there were many difficulties too! They enabled me (together with the International Team) to appreciate the many strengths, but also the many challenges facing the movement. However, it took me nearly two years to get settled into work at an international level, and then one year later all my energy had to go into assisting the International Team with the preparation of the International Committee. I thus felt that, although I had learnt so much, I had had very little time to use what I had learnt for the movement! And I imagined that my successor would probably face the same frustration! Therefore, in discussion with the movement (and my religious superiors again), I made myself available for another mandate, resulting in my re-appointment in August 2003.

I am therefore very privileged to have the opportunity to work with Kevin and Zobel, and with all of you from whom I always learn so much, as well as to have a bit more time to share what I have learnt with the movement! So I am very hopeful that, in these coming remaining years, IMCS will grow and flourish, that through it more and more students will discover Christ and become committed leaders and agents of Good News, and that we will find ways to face the many challenges that loom ahead! I look forward to working with you all in achieving this!

God bless you all!

“So I am very hopeful that, in these coming remaining years, IMCS will grow and flourish, that through it more and more students will discover Christ and become committed leaders and agents of Good News...”

IMCS Asia Pacific

South East Asian Program: "Conflict Resolution: an Alternative Towards Peace"

After 4 years, the IMCS South East Asian Program (SEAP) came back again. This year's SEAP was held in Lucky Villa, Mea Sod, Thailand in May. The theme for this SEAP was: Conflict Resolution, An Alternative towards PEACE. The 40 participants came from Indonesia, Burma, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand and Philippines. This objective of program was to train student leaders on how to manage conflictual situations/problems of conflict so that they can train others (a training of trainers) and built network among the leaders so that they can coordinate among themselves. During this program, the participants shared many reflections from their own country, including documents, pictures, posters and paper cuttings. These all helped them to understand more about conflict. By the end of the program, the participants decided to network together and continue the discussion. The training will be published so it can be shared with others as a resource book. For more information, contact IMCS Asia Pacific.

IMCS-Indonesia Students Work for Democracy

On 25 May 2004, PMKRI celebrated its 57th anniversary with an event focusing on "To become Agents of Social Change based on the Spirit of Students and Catholics to Build a Democratic Indonesia." As part of the event, PMKRI held free dental treatment services and a reflection night with Taize prayer. As part of the main event, PMKRI celebrated with a Mass, a speech by PMKRI's founder, and a documentary of PMKRI. On the last day, PMKRI celebrated with a jogging event, where the members wore white t-shirts with the logo "We Want a Civil and Good President." In the third week of June, PMKRI invited the presidential candidates to a debate with the theme "Rearranging Political Communications to Solve Communal Conflicts in Indonesia."

In the end of May, PMKRI joined with the Muslim, Protestant, Hindu and Buddhists students in the FKPI (Forum of National Indonesia Youth). FKPI plans to have dialogues with all of the presidential and vice-presidential candidates about their vision, mission, and programs for the next five years. After the dialogue, FKPI will ask them to sign an agreement which touches on the issues of law enforcement, violence, and corruption in the government. The candidates are to resign if they cannot uphold this contract when they come into power. As of June, 4 of the 5 vice-presidential candidates have signed this contract.



IMCS Asia Pacific Members at the World Social Forum 2004

AICUF-India Continues to Focus on the Empowerment of Dalit Students and Tibetan Refugees

In May, AICUF-India held two exposure camps focusing on Dalits and Refugees. As part of the Dalit exposure camp, 53 students from all over India analyzed the past, present and future situation of the Dalits.

To experience the struggles of the more victimized Dalit women, an analysis of the new trends and perspectives of Dalit women empowerment was presented to the students. The village exposure paved way practically to reason out students themselves in the victim's perspective. All this, along with various other experiences helped the students to evaluate alternatives.

AICUF also held an exposure camp in Himachal Pradesh to get direct experience of Tibetan refugees. As part of the program, the students looked at different political, social, and cultural realities of the Tibetans. The program ended with the positive hope that Tibet will be freed someday.

Other IMCS Movement News:

- **Malaysia Catholic Student Council (MCSC)** held its annual meeting in April. MCSC is undertaking a project called "Stay In Touch Always" or SITA to enable university students on holidays the opportunity to become the Light and Salt in their own parishes back in their hometowns.
- **Hanoi Movement of Catholics Students (HMCS)** is preparing for their Diocesan Youth Gathering for 12-14 August which will be taken place in Major Seminary of Hanoi.
- **Catholic Students Association of Thailand (CUCT)** held its General Seminar and Annual Assembly on May 19th to 23rd focusing on Consumerism. The main venues of exposure were the night market, morning market, Garbage area with the garbage collector and House of Art.

IMCS Pan Africa

IMCS- PAX ROMANA , Africa and

A New Approach in the Fight Against the HIV

It is not any more a secret that, when one speaks about the pandemic of the HIV AIDS, Africa is the continent where the situation is more critical. The 15th international conference on the HIV, held recently in Taiwan, has, once again, underlined this fact. When we take into account that the young people from 15 to 25 years represent about a third of the HIV positives in the world and that the majority lives in Africa, one understands why IMCS in Africa has made of this struggle against this evil, its principal war-horse.

After a first stage the previous years devoted to mass campaigns, the new team of coordination decided to add to that a strategy giving priority to *actions of proximity* based on exchanges and talks. This idea was supported by the last Pan African assembly held in Lome, Togo, in December 2002, primarily aims at encouraging the students to make the HIV Test to know their serologic statute, which is the only means, we are convinced, to raise awareness about this problem allowing to develop among the students an attitude so as to not to stigmatize their comrades with the HIV virus or patients already with AIDS. The Pan African team undertakes to convey this new approach through training courses at sub-regional level.

Since the beginning of their mandate the Pan African Coordination already organized two, one in Ghana for English speaking Western Africa in July 2003 and the other for French-speaking Western Africa in Burkina Faso in June 2004. At this moment they are preparing a similar session for Madagascar.

*Jules Waharé,
(Panafrikan Coordinator)*



Formation Camp in Tunisia

Every year the Northern Africa sub-Sahara student communities are invited to participate in a week-long camp to deepen their faith and get to know each other. This year the Camp will be held in Sousse, Tunisia. The theme will be: " how to give testimony of Jesus in a

Muslim context". IMCS Pan African chaplain Father Etienne Traille accompanied for some days the students in their reflections. During the camp, the student communities reflected on the question of affiliating to the IMCS in order to create links with their countries of origin and prepare their come back home.

University Chaplains' Meeting

For 3 years now, IMCS-Africa has initiated a program of seminars for University Chaplains. After Lomé (2001), Nairobi (2002) and Johannesburg (2003), the fourth meeting, held in Debre-Zeit, Ethiopia, gathered 20 Jesuits from 14 countries working in the pastoral ministry at tertiary level. This meeting was a historic event as it was the largest gathering of Jesuits in the country since 1557 when the first Jesuit sent by Saint Ignatius of Loyola arrived in Ethiopia. As part of the meeting, a final statement was produced about the common vision of the Jesuit ministry at tertiary level.

Other themes were also discussed:

- 1) How the African Synod message that was held 10 years ago, had been received;
- 2) 2) How to face the challenge of HIV/AIDS pandemic in campuses.

Archbishop Berhaneyesus of Addis-Ababa, presided over the opening mass and the Apostolic Nuncio, H.G. Ramiro Moliner Inglès, over the closing celebration.

Christian Advocacy in Africa

From June 26 to July 4, the International Team was associated in a workshop with ICMICA in Cameroon. With participants from IMCS, ICMICA and Justice and Peace Commissions of Central and Western Africa, the workshop was articulated around the theme "Christian social Advocacy". Its main aim was to enable the participants to clearly understand the mechanisms of the United Nations' System, the

African regional organizations and the Church. The workshop gave training on the possibility of using these mechanisms for Advocacy actions in relation to questions like Peace, Human Rights, Development. Zobel took part in this meeting and gave a talk on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

JECI-MIEC Europe



European Youth Forum

The European Team is actively involved in the common youth platform at European level – European Youth Forum. Even with little human resources it is following the actual issues and is contributing to the work of the commissions and common gatherings.

European Students' Summerweek

“Promoting European Citizenship in Students' Milieu through Non-formal Education”

This was an opportunity for the European movements of JECI-MIEC to raise the issue of citizenship and active participation. During the meeting the participants identified the idea of citizenship not only relating it to the constitutional rights of the citizens in the state, but as well the moral responsibility and consciousness of active participation in the local, national and European community. It was clarified the understanding and the importance of different educational and learning processes. The participants identified later on the challenges for themselves and the role they are playing or could play as students in their milieu. The final moment of the meeting was to develop possible concrete action they could make immediately or when they are back to their movements.

European Congress

“Integral Education for ALL”

12th – 26th September 2004

The European Congress is nearly to take place in Barcelona, Spain (Catalonia). This is the biggest gathering of the European movements of JECI and MIEC, which takes every 4 years. This time there was a decision taken to follow-up the issues, raised up during the International Committees JECI and MIEC in 2003. We believe that this could be a main guideline for the European Coordination for the next 4 years.

Besides that, the 50th anniversary of the European Coordination will be launched during the European Congress. It is a special moment for all the movements in the Coordination to reflect on the past in order to challenge the present for the future. The celebration will continue the whole next year till the European Committee 2005.

Communications and Discussion Forums

The European Coordination is still working on the improvements to facilitate the dialogue among the movements. For this purpose the Internet forums were created to share different ideas on several topics. You can visit it at our website www.jeci-miec-europe.org. As well we would like to inform that the fax number of the European Secretariat has changed to -32-2-2182542. The new e-mail address office@jeci-miec-europe.org was created for easier management of the e-mails' flow.

European Team

Currently there is only one European Coordinator (instead of two in normal occasion). In this regard there was created a European Commission, which main task was to support and share the work with the European Team.

Recently, the national movement from Portugal, MCE, has proposed a candidature of Renato Oliveira to take the position of a second European Team member. The election will take place at the European Committee, right after the European Congress.

Nevertheless, the European Commission will be maintained and new members will be elected during the European Committee for two years mandate.

If you have any comments, suggestions, or reflections for the IMCS Forum, please send them to miecimcs@wanadoo.fr.

MIEC-JECI Latin America

Greeting to all, wishing to extend our ties of solidarity and commitment in the construction of the Kingdom of the Lord.

Our main responsibility at the moment focuses in rethinking the pastoral & administrative efficiency, of the Latin-American Secretariat (SLA) which we consider as a space of accompaniment and articulation of the experiences of faith of the secondary and university students of Latin America and the Caribbean.

We - Rosario Zapata (UNEC-PERU), Rafael Cisneros (MUC-BOLIVIA), Fr. Angel Saboya (JEC-Peru)- received the responsibility to guide this process of reflection, in close collaboration with the Movements; with many fears, but also with a lot of hope to put ourselves at the service of the other.

Almost two months have gone by since we started in this SLA our commitment to accompany the Movements and our aim to find efficient mechanisms of service for the youth remains unshaken. In Latin America and the Caribbean the Movements are process of building, from their

own particularities, proactive actions of solidarity and justice; inspired in the Love of the God of Life.

Our mandate finishes in September; after our short and intense mandate, we will call a Latin-American Committee (XIII CLA), where our challenges and expectations will be specified and articulated upon the road to transform our faith in history. Carrying the mark of a happy, creative Jesus, capable of announcing the liberating God, in the middle of the adversities.

We would like to conclude by thanking the Lord for our experience and for what we have learnt in the SLA, which encourages us to continue with the evangelising task. And because in each Movement in Chile, Peru, Equator, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, our resurrected Christ is alive.

Fraternally.

Rosary Zapata, Rafael Cisneros, P. Angel Saboya.
SLA MIEC JECI

Middle East

The main activities for the Middle East in the upcoming months will be:

- The Middle East Chaplaincy Gathering from the 20-22nd August,
- Regional Training Session with the theme: 'Me & U and a new way of living' to be held from the 22-28th August. This will be a training session for leaders from: Lebanon; Syria; Jordan; Egypt; Palestine; and for the first time YCS Dubai and a group of young people from Iraq.



Fr. Nageeb Makhail, OP, with IMCS IT members
Fr. Mike and Kevin

Visit of Iraqi Dominican

In March, Fr. Nageeb Makhail, OP, the superior of the Dominicans in Iraq visited the office to talk with IMCS and IYCS about the possibilities of renewing Catholic student movements there. Fr. Makhail shared with us the many difficulties facing Iraqis because of the war. We spoke especially about the difficult situation for Christian students and the efforts being done to help them including organizing buses to bring the students from the villages to the universities. The Dominicans have been in Iraq since 1750 and presently there are 10 Dominican brothers, 190 Dominican sisters and over 500 lay Dominicans.

North America

Hello! My name is Monica Cavanagh and I am a western regional representative for the CCSA (IMCS Canada). I have been blessed in my calling to this role this year in that I have met many great people and have met Jesus in so many different ways through them.

Our group in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan is busy planning the next western regional conference for October 2004. The CCSA is becoming much more active in Canada's western provinces and it is so exciting to see the new growth and enthusiasm! The theme from our conference fits well with the new energy that is rising in us out west: "Rejoice in the Lord Always!" What we hope to share with each other is the joy we find in serving Christ.

Our national leadership conference in the new year will focus on another aspect of our lives as young Catholics. With all of the responsibilities,

opportunities and choices that continue to arise along my journey with Christ, I find it increasingly challenging to stay close to the Lord. The conference

theme "Upon this Rock" reminds me that all of these activities must be based on Christ and can only be completed through His strength. Day to day, God

offers us His grace through no merit of our own so that we can continue to build on the foundation He offers. May God's good grace be upon you and may we be open to God's fruitful work in our lives.

Rejoicing Always!

Monica



Dear Members of the IMCS:

Over the past few months, the NCSC (IMCS-USA) has accomplished a lot in its various areas. We've recently published a **new website** at www.catholicstudent.org.

You can also check the website to find out more information on our **Annual Leadership Conference**, "Ask Me Why I Serve the Church," in Washington, DC, over December 29, 2004 – January 2, 2005. We would like to invite all the IMCS sister movements to our conference.

NCSC has been working with our newly formed **Development Team** on fundraising. This newly formed team consists of past and present NCSC students working on the development of the organization in terms of alumni, membership, the office, finances, etc. This volunteer team works closely with the Executive Board (fully student run).

We've formed a partnership with the USCCB-organized **Coalition of Catholic Organizations**

against Human Trafficking (<http://www.usccb.org/mrs/traffickingweb3.htm>).

Hopefully through our partnership, we can help educate college students of these problems as well as other world issues. Other notable organizations in the Coalition include Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services, various USCCB Subcommittees, and other national and international organizations.

Like every year, we will co-host a **Bishops' Reception** at the November Annual Bishops' Meeting. The reception will take place November 17, 2004, in Washington, DC. With the Alliance of Campus Ministry and the USCCB Subcommittee on Higher Education. NCSC is also formulating a **campus ministry workshop** for the bishops' meeting in June 2005.

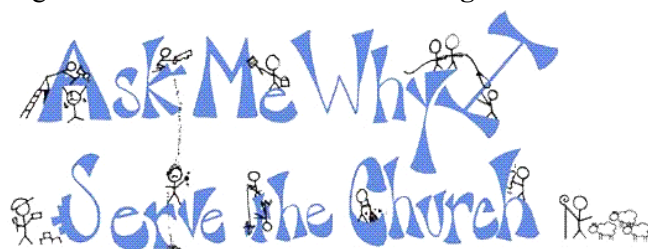
We hope to send a delegate to the **ICM** in November, but we must first discern the National Chair for 2005 (set to take place at our September meeting).

God bless you and all the work you do!

In His Love,

Kimanh Nguyen

2004 National Chair



IMCS Asia Pacific Celebrates 50 Years at the World Social Forum

Mumbai, India: IMCS Asia Pacific actively participated in the World Social Forum 16 – 21 January, 2004, Mumbai, India. IMCS played an important role in this meeting with the All India Catholic University Federation – AICUF (IMCS-India) a member of the India General Council for the event. As part of this important global meeting, IMCS Asia Pacific organized several events including two conferences as part of the Inter-Continental Youth Camp on

“Youth say No to religious sectarianism and fundamentalism” and “Students rights in the marginalized perspective.” IMCS Asia also worked with ICMICA for a skill training workshop on “Peace building” and an event for Catholics at the WSF.

As part of these events, IMCS Asia Pacific launched the 50th anniversary year of the region.

All of IMCS joins with them in celebrating this occasion.



IMCS Members at the WSF

IMCS Statement on Integral Education to the UN

United Nations Headquarters: At the 42nd Session of the UN Commission for Social Development, Pax Romana (ICMICA-IMCS) submitted a written statement speaking on the importance of education as part of the public sector.

Among other things, the statement calls upon governments to promote and protect the right to education (including higher education) and to promote the concept of integral education. The full statement can be found at www.imcs-miec.org.

IMCS Study Session on Catholic Social Teaching and the MDGs



Students at the IMCS Study Session

From March 18th-20th, IMCS worked with the NCSC (IMCS USA) to organize the second annual Study Session on Peace and Development at the United Nations in New York. The focus of this year's Study Session was “Catholic Social Teaching and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).” The event drew 25 student leaders from around North America, including leaders in the NCSC and CCSA. As part of the Session the

students met with high level UN officials, representatives of other Catholic NGOs, and the Holy See Mission. The Final Statement of the Session and the resource materials developed for the event can be found on the IMCS website:

www.imcs-miec.org.

For more information on the UN MDGs visit:

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>

UN Symposium on Catholic Social Teaching

United Nations Headquarters: On Thursday, April 1st IMCS and ICMICA organized the Pax Romana Intellectual Symposium on Catholic Social Teachings for UN Delegates, UN Secretariat Staff and NGOs. As part of the symposium IMCS IT member Kevin Ahern spoke to

the UN Delegates on the role of Catholic NGOs, using Pax Romana (ICMICA-IMCS) as an example. Other speakers included Dr. Joe Holland of ICMICA-USA and Msgr. Francis Dewane, the Under Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

UN Commission on Human Rights

Geneva, Switzerland: From 15 March to 23 April, the 60th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights met in Geneva. Pax Romana (ICMICA-IMCS) presented interventions to the Commission on the following issues: The right of peoples to self-determination and its application to peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation, The situation of the caste-based discrimination, The situation of minorities, especially women and religious minorities, Civil and political rights, especially freedom of expression Effective functioning of human rights mechanisms

ICMICA-Pax Romana took the lead at the Commission. IMCS Pan Africa Team member Jules Yaovi Wahare attended the Commission as part of the Pax Romana Internship Program.

For more information visit the ICMICA Website at www.paxromana.org and the UN Human Rights Website: <http://www.unhchr.ch>. ICMICA also helped set up a Web Monitoring and Documentation Website at <http://www.unchr.info/>.

IMCS IT Official Visit to the Vatican

From May 30th to June 6th the IMCS IT and the IYCS IT had a joint visit to the Vatican. Over the course of the week, the two Teams met with many different Vatican dicasteries, religious orders and friends. The visit was a chance for both new Teams to introduce themselves, share the visions and activities of both organizations and look for new forms of collaboration. During the visit, both Teams were invited to the Public Audience with the Pope, who extended his blessings on all the members of IMCS and IYCS. Some of the highlights of the visit include:

- Meetings with the Vatican Secretariat of State,
- Meetings with the Pontifical Councils for the Laity, Justice and Peace, Social Communications, Inter-religious Dialogue, Cor Unum and others,
- Meetings with the Superiors of the Dominicans, Jesuits, Salesians, Good Shepherd Sisters and others,
- Interview on Vatican Radio,
- Lunch with Fr. Leo Perera former IMCS Asia Pacific Regional Chaplain and dinner with Fr. Esteban Ortiz, SDB, former IMCS and IYCS Latin American Chaplain.

For more information on these Vatican departments go to www.vatican.va.



IMCS International Team with Pope John Paul II

IMCS Co-Organizes Meeting of Major Youth NGOs

Geneva, Switzerland: From July 11th to 13th, IMCS helped organize the first International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations (ICMYO). Kevin Ahern, representing IMCS has been helping to plan this meeting for over one year with the European Youth Forum and the World Organization of the Scout Movement. As part of this meeting, the major membership-based international youth organizations came together with the

regional youth platforms. In addition to finding ways to cooperate at the regional levels, the meeting looked to how the youth organizations could better cooperate in relation to the youth related events organized by the United Nations, the International Labor Organization (ILO), and the World Bank. As part of the event, IMCS was nominated to represent students in the High Level Consultations on Youth Unemployment with the ILO.

World Chaplains Conference

IMCS chaplains/campus ministers from Australia, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, USA and other countries participated in the recent inter-religious World Chaplain Conference, Dreaming Landscape held in Brisbane, Australia (July 1-7 2004). IMCS Asia Pacific took an active role in the meeting with Mr. Jerald Joseph (Lay Chaplain from IMCS Asia Pacific) and Ms. Theresa Wong (IMCS Asia Pacific

Coordinator) attending. About 250 participants from all over the world gathered to look at three main “landscapes:” Landscape of Faith and Religion, Landscape of Justice and Respect, and the Landscape of Learning Communities.

For more information on the event, visit: <http://www.une.edu.au/dreaming04/index.html>.

IMCS Events at World Youth Day 2005



XX.
Weltjugendtag
Köln 2005

IMCS is continuing to work on taking an active role in the upcoming 2005 World Youth Day (August 16 - 21, 2005) to be held in Germany.

IMCS is working closely with IYCS and the AKH (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Katholischer Hochschulgemeinden—IMCS Germany) to organize a number of events for students. These events will include student centers where students can meet, share experiences,

relax, and network. IMCS is also working with IYCS on an event for the members of IMCS and IYCS.

The IMCS IT will be sending out more information soon. There will also be a section on the new IMCS Website on IMCS related events.

For more information on the WYD, please visit www.wyd2005.org.

Students Building Peace at the Outbreak of World War II

Sixty-five years ago over 500 leaders of IMCS national federations (then known only as Pax Romana) gathered together from around the world in Washington, DC and New York City for the 18th Annual Pax Romana World Congress.

This first Pax Romana event outside of Europe, began in Washington, DC at Catholic University of America with a Study Week on Student Catholic Action (August 27th-September 2nd). The participants from Europe, Asia, and the Americas then moved to Fordham University in New York for the Congress (September 3rd-8th).

As part of the Congress, the students met with many important leaders in the Church and the World, including President Franklyn Roosevelt and Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, the founders of the Catholic Worker movement. The main organizer of the Congress was the first non-European president of Pax Romana (IMCS), Edward Kirchner.

One of the most defining moments of the Congress however, took place not at the Congress, but in Europe, when Germany invaded Poland starting the Second World War. Immediately, as their countries were going



to war, the students at the Congress including German, Polish, and French students were able to again (as in the first 1921 Pax Romana meeting) overcome their warring national identities to pray together for peace.

As a result of the conflict many of the students were stranded in the United States and were unable to return back to Europe. Some found ways to return home, while others such as Rudi Salat worked in Latin America to promote Pax Romana (IMCS).

During the War, Pax Romana (IMCS) would have a temporary International Secretariat at Catholic University in Washington. From that office, Edward Kirchner and Rudi Salat would be able to help Pax Romana (IMCS) expand into Latin America and helped coordinate the movement's important efforts in providing relief efforts for students negatively affected by the War. Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray, SJ would serve as a Chaplain to the team working at the Washington office.

By bringing together students for peace in the face of war, the 1939 Congress again showed the true meaning of IMCS's original name of "Pax Romana."

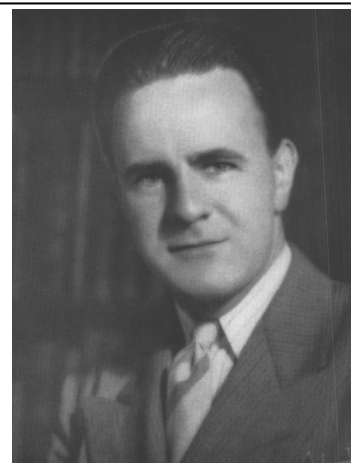
Memorial- Edward Kirchner

On October 5th, IMCS Pax Romana lost a true friend, Edward "Ed" Kirchner, the 17th International President of IMCS-Pax Romana.

In the 1930s, Ed served as the executive director of Pax Romana (IMCS) federation at the time, Phi Kappa Theta. In 1938, he was elected as the first non-European President of Pax Romana (IMCS). As President, he helped represent Pax Romana at the League of Nations. During World War II, Ed ran the Pax Romana (IMCS) temporary international headquarters in Washington, DC.

After the War, Kirchner helped resettle over 8 million refugees as Director of the United Nations International Resettlement Organization Center in Munich. During the Second Vatican Council, he served as the personal assistant to theologian, John Courtney Murray, SJ, who helped draft the Declaration on Religious Freedom.

In 1967, Ed helped found the ICMICA federation in the United States. Kirchner's involvement in Pax Romana continued until the last years of his life. In 1982 Ed's son Joe worked with the IMCS IT to found the National Catholic Student Coalition (IMCS-USA). During the 1980s and 1990s he and his wife Louisa (another former IMCS member) spent their time serving as the main representatives of Pax Romana (ICMICA-IMCS) to the United Nations in New York.



Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo - Feminist, Prime Minister, Engineer

“The responsibility of University students takes on new breadth when considered in a Christian perspective. Our whole life, our openness to the world is nothing but our contribution to the coming of the Kingdom of God”

Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo 1957



On July 10th, IMCS lost another friend, Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, the 26th President of IMCS Pax Romana (1956-1958). After serving on the International Team, Maria became active in politics in her native Portugal serving as the first woman Prime Minister (1979-1980). Maria Pintasilgo, has also held the posts of Minister of Social Affairs, State Secretary for Social Security, and Minister of Social Affairs.

As Ambassador to UNESCO, she was a member of the Executive Council as well as a member of the Portuguese Delegation to the UN General Assembly. Throughout her life, she was active in women’s issues and ecumenical dialogue.

An industrial engineer, she Pintasilgo held a key research post with the National Nuclear Energy Commission. As an author, her works include: *The New Feminism*, *To Think the Church Anew* and *Roads for Our Joint Effort*.

In 1986, Maria Pintasilgo ran for the Presidency of Portugal, winning the primary election and showing the depth of her popularity among the Portuguese people. She served in the European Parliament from 1987 to 1989.

Upcoming Events

International Formation Session

From November 14th – 25th, IMCS will hold a joint International Formation Session with IYCS focusing on: “Students Building Global Alternatives to Intolerance.” The Session, being held in Paris, will bring together representatives from the IMCS and IYCS Regional Teams, NCSC, CCSA, and MECQ for a joint Study Session on the theme and separate Statutory Sessions for each movement. This will be the first decision making body of IMCS to meet in Paris since the movement moved to the city in the 1970s.

As part of the Session, the participants will examine the problems of the world relating to intolerance from three perspectives: Political and Economic Intolerance, Social and Cultural Intolerance, and Religious Intolerance. IMCS hopes that the discussions from this session will help lead to reflection and action at the local level on these issues.

The Statutory Session (ICM) will discuss many important issues relating to the state and future of IMCS. More information will be sent out soon to the Regional Teams and National Movements. For more information, please contact the IMCS International Team.

Students Building Global Alternatives to Intolerance



November 14th to 25th

IMCS

International

- active on behalf of its members as a Non Governmental Organization in Consultative Status with the United Nations, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe, with Teams in Geneva, New York and Paris,
- a space for national student groups to meet, share ideas and act collectively

Movement

- made up of over 75 autonomous national student federations,
- coordinated by an International Team in Paris and five regional secretariats,

Catholic

- a recognized International Catholic Organization by the Vatican,
- committed to living the “Gospel in the modern world” by reflecting, praying, and acting on issues of social justice,

Students

- concerned with the Integral Formation of the student as a person (including spiritual, intellectual and social aspects),
- committed to help students to get involved as social actors in the university, the Church and in the world, here and now.

For more information on the national IMCS federation in your country or how to start a new one contact:

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