

Hoping in the Lord

June 17, 2007

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Great is the faithfulness of God!

You have received the good news that we (an ad hoc group) have come to an agreement on the way forward for peace and unity in our community. Thank you for your incessant prayers and fasting. God has heard the prayers of us all.

Why have all these negative things happened to us? I connect it to God's call to Lamentations for this year. It seems it was not enough that 3 elders resigned last February 20 to take command responsibility for the collective guilt of everyone in CFC. God got our attention, but not quite. We did not learn the lessons of Lamentations. So God had to disturb us, this time severely. The conflict among top leaders intensified and reverberated throughout the whole global community. The enemy of course was very much at work. And CFC came close to the brink.

What has God taught us? What do we have to seriously think and pray about in the months to come? There are many.

- Satan is very much against the work of God, especially in CFC. So we must be vigilant in spiritual warfare.
- Elders are also sinners and can fail God and brethren. So keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, and live your life for him and depend on him, and no one else.
- Satan's favorite work is division, and will especially target elders. So we all, leaders and members alike, should love and be loyal to each other, especially as we face disagreements that arise.
- Dialogue is important. We must talk to each other, according to Biblical principles and community processes.
- Truth and justice are critical, as truth will set us free while justice helps us relate as true brethren. So we must not talk or act in darkness, but openly and with love.
- Authority in the community is important for peace and unity. So all should submit to such authority, but such is active submission and not blind obedience.
- We are a Catholic community and officially recognized by the bishops and various bishops' conferences throughout the world, as well as the Holy See (Vatican). So we must live out our life and mission in communion with the bishops and recognize, defer to and actively submit to their authority as shepherds of their dioceses.
- The work goes on in spite of us and only in the power of the Spirit. So we must always be connected and submitted to the source of grace and power, and humbly admit that apart from God we are nothing.

There are many other lessons. You will have your own, according to your own situation in your particular CFC community. Let us all look into our hearts in humility, and allow the Lord to teach

us His ways. “Let us search and examine our ways that we may return to the Lord!” (Lam 3:40).

I do believe God has even greater work in store for CFC in the coming years as we go for gold. This time of Lamentations is a time of purification. Let us allow God to do His work in us, so that He will be able to continue to do His work through us.

I take this opportunity to ask forgiveness from anyone whom I have hurt by any word or action, and for my part in bringing lamentations to anyone and in causing any conflict in our community. I deeply regret being the cause of anyone feeling pain, discouragement, frustration, anger or hopelessness. And I extend my hand of peace to everyone.

May we all experience healing and reconciliation. “Lead us back to you, O Lord, that we may be restored: give us anew such days as we had of old.” (Lam 5:21). I love CFC and I love you all.

Imploring the mercy and blessings of the God who is Father of us all, I am your brother and servant.

frank padilla