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ERI Newsletter

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In this new newsletter we will report on how the face-to-face meetings are gradually being resumed. It was with great joy that the ERI was able to meet again and especially that the International College, which had not been held for three years, was able to take place. Both meetings took place in Assisi (Italy) in July. In addition, we can announce meetings planned for the near future which are very important for our movement.

ERI Meeting, 19-23 July 2022

During these days, the ERI meeting took place at Leonori House in Assisi. The topics and work were very intense and varied during this time. Below, we point out some of the most important ones, many of which were also raised at the International College:

- The work began with a **Eucharist** celebrated by Fr Ricardo and with the presence of Fr Paulo Renato, who was able to accompany us throughout the meeting of the ERI. This was followed by **sharing** which always helps us to build our team. Every day we had times of prayer, Eucharist, reflection, and prayer to Father Caffarel which inspired us and helped us throughout this meeting.



- The initial work concentrated on reviewing everything that was going to happen at the **International College**. Given the excitement we all felt knowing that it was the first on-site College since Valencia 2019, we had to specially prepare the welcome, the contents and all the planned activities.

- The **reports** presented by the Zone Liaison couples on this occasion, focused on the **formation plans** of SR and RR, with their strengths and weaknesses, reviewing their needs and seeing what aspects might need the help of the ERI. There was also discussion about establishing programmes for formators. We continued to broaden and concretise the reflection begun some time ago on the criteria for grouping the SR and RR in the different Zones. This aims to improve the animation and life of the teams in each Zone.

- The beginning of the work on the **study theme** for 2023-2024 was commented on. It will focus on the Eucharist and is being prepared by a team from SR Spain.



- The secretariat presented an **administrative and financial** analysis of the statistics and activities. There was special emphasis on the progress of the work being carried out on the 7th floor of Rue de la Glacière where the headquarters are located. This work is nearing completion. At the subsequent General Assembly of the College, the accounts were presented and the budgets for the coming year were approved.



- Important time was also devoted to **relations with the Vatican**, with the presentation of the draft of the synodal consultation. This was sent on 8 August to the general secretariat of the Synod, His Excellency Mario Cardinal Grech. The proposal for collaboration between the Pontifical Theological Institute of John Paul II and Teams

of Our Lady in the area of formation was also reported. The names of several Teams couples were put forward to take part. On 12 August, the Institute selected six couples. They will begin their formation with a face-to-face meeting in Rome, which will be followed by on-line formation and virtual meetings during the course. It will end in June with another face-to-face meeting. We also commented on the participation of Edgardo and Clarita, Mariola and Elizeu, Giovanni and Paola, and Fr. Ricardo in the World Meeting of Families in June 2022 in Rome. These themes were also presented at the International College.

- Mariola and Elizeu presented the progress of the work of **the Satellite Teams**. This included an update to the reports previously presented at the Seville meeting, and a report from the Research and Reflection Team which is carrying out a pilot survey in SR Colombia with very positive results. This latest update was also presented at the International College.

- Much of the time of this ERI meeting was focused on analysing the meetings and organisational issues related to the next **International Gathering** in July 2024. This was to be announced at the College and now, as you know, will be held in Turin (Italy).



The ERI always has some key moments of communion and closeness with the teams of the SR or RR that hosts us. On this occasion it took place in two parts. On Wednesday afternoon, there was an interesting visit to Perugia, followed by the Eucharist and a dinner of friendship with the service team that had been assisting us during the meeting. On Saturday afternoon, there was a valuable meeting with members of Italy's Super Regional Team who came to Assisi and who introduced us to SR Italy. The ERI answered the questions raised by the Super Region, followed by a Eucharist and dinner in the gardens of the venue where



we stayed. We thank Gianni and Clelia and Father Martino for their warm welcome.



International College, 24 to 29 July 2022



The International College was marked by the joy of meeting again, the hugs, the conversations, the smiles, the different languages and cultures, the willingness to let our hearts be filled and to leave renewed... It had been a long time since the previous College and there was an important change of responsibilities, with the participation of many people for the first time in a face-to-face meeting. The welcome of SR Italy made us relive the atmosphere of fraternity that characterised the land of St. Francis and added to our enjoyment of the meeting. Twenty-two couples and thirteen spiritual counsellors were present at the College, in addition to the members of the ERI. Marcia and Paulo Faria were not at this College, as they had to retire from the international team due to health reasons. Our sincere thanks to them for their years of intense service in the



coordination of the Americas Zone, which will now be taken over by other members of the ERI.

The prayers, the Eucharist, the Adoration Vigil sustained all our work. It is what nourishes and encourages us to continue to serve the team members of our SR and RR. Formation through presentations was also an important point. The testimonies given by different people who opened their hearts to make us part of their lives touched us deeply. Among others, we mention the presentation given by Edgardo and Clarita on "Serving in imitation of Mary", to help us prepare for the study topic we will be working on

next year. This was followed by a testimony from the Polish/Central Europe SR couple, Helena and Pawel. Fr Ricardo spoke about the ministerial priesthood and the priesthood of the laity. His talk helped us to value this grace of our movement, that is, the communion between the two sacraments, which was one of the great intuitions of Fr. Caffarel. There was also a testimony by Dom Moacir and Nelson & Lu from SR Brazil; a presentation on our Common Home given by Professor Rossana Virgili, which placed us in the framework of Laudato Sí, and which was followed by a beautiful testimony from an Italian couple, who live Franciscan spirituality on a daily basis. Fr Turk helped us to rethink our resilience

after the pandemic, followed by a testimony from the former Responsible Couple for the Lebanon Region. Many of the impressions, comments and questions after these talks or after any other activity were shared through a blog that was a very useful communication tool for all of us.



We had time for a sit-down that helped us to reflect on our service, and we had the opportunity to meet in mixed teams to share experiences and communicate all the good and not so good things we have experienced over the years. We were also able to meet with the SR and RR couples in our Zone in various meetings..... All of this was animated by the parable of the Talents, which allowed us to reflect on the good things that Teams offers us.

"He entrusted his goods to them..." echoed throughout the days of the meeting. Moments of animation, recreational activities, a visit to the beautiful city of Assisi and a shared dinner at a venue that supports the reintegration of people with various problems in their lives, added to our experiences.





The announcement of the next **International Gathering** to be held in Turin from 15 to 20 July 2024, was a moment of great emotion. We can already make plans and reserve this important date in our calendars.

From September onwards, we will start asking for an estimate of participants from SR and RR in order to begin pre-booking and calculating the number of attendees, which is estimated to be around 9000 people. From this moment on, we ask you all to pray for the successful progress of all the preparations that this great meeting entails, and for the commitment of many team members in SR Italy who will make themselves available to the service teams that will need to be put in place for this meeting to become a reality.

During the final Eucharist at the College, the commitment of the new Responsible Couples who were present throughout the meeting and accompanied by their spiritual counsellors, filled us with joy. We welcomed:

- Edith and Jérôme EKOUE KOVI, the new couple responsible for SR French-speaking Africa, and their spiritual counsellor, Fr Paul NOMANYO
- Enza and Mauro BARLETTANI, the new couple responsible for SR Italy, and their spiritual counsellor, Fr Martino, who will continue to accompany the new leaders of the Super Region
- Georgina and Youssef BOUTROS, the new couple responsible for the Region of Lebanon, and their spiritual counsellor, Fr Joseph Abdel SATER
- Malek and Angelik JABRA HORANI, the new couple responsible for the Region of Syria, and their spiritual counsellor, Fr Amer KASSAR
- Catherine and Manfred VICTOIRE, the new couple responsible for the Region of Mauritius, and their spiritual counsellor, Fr Michel MURA
- Also present were Severina and Mindaugas ŠEDZIAL, representing the pre-region of Lithuania, who will be accompanied in their service by their spiritual counsellor, Fr Kestutis KÉVALAS.

We thank all of them for their generous 'yes'. We also thank Gianni and Clelia, our hosts, who said goodbye at this meeting. As we return to our SR and RR, we are reminded that all this is meaningless if we do not put in first place all the people in the teams whom we love and who are the reason for this dedication.



Forthcoming activities:

- o ERI meeting in Paris, 6-11 December 2022
- o Celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Founding Charter, 8 December 2022
- o ERI Meeting in Lomé (Togo), March 2023
- o Next International College in Guayaquil (Ecuador), July 2023