

ERI Newsletter

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It is with great joy that we share with you a short summary of the meeting of the ERI in Lomé (Togo) last March. We thank God for having been able to realise a dream that was cut short three years ago by the pandemic: When everything was ready, with couples from different countries waiting in Lomé for the arrival of the ERI, with some ERI couples already in Paris ready for the last leg of the journey, the world came to a standstill and we all know the consequences of what happened. To have been able to experience the first ERI trip to Africa has been a reality for us that is difficult to explain in words. We do not want to start this newsletter with anything other than thanks and immense recognition to all those who have made the ERI meeting possible, and also organising the College of the SR Francophone Africa, to coincide with and facilitate the meeting.



ERI meeting, 12-18 March 2023

- Our first day in Lomé, Sunday 12, could not have begun in a better way than with a festive and joyful **Eucharist**, in the parish of Saint Lucia de Baguida. This marked the beginning of both the ERI meeting and the College of SR Francophone Africa, in the presence of numerous team members. It was



presided over by Mgr Nicodème Anani Barrigah-Benissan, Archbishop of Lomé, who we had the opportunity to visit later on Wednesday afternoon in the bishop's offices. He confirmed the support that the Episcopal Conference of Togo has given to the Teams of Our Lady, officially recognising the movement, and praising all the good that they do for couples. His words showed how well he knew the pedagogy of the movement and its strengths.



- The afternoon work continued with a **spiritual reflection** animated by Fr. Ricardo, who always helps us to enter the week of meetings inspired by the Holy Spirit. This was followed by a **sharing** that allowed us to build the ERI team and share our lives. **Prayers** and **Eucharist** accompany us every day of our meetings and help us to focus all our work. We place everything we are about to experience and what we have already experienced in the hands of the Lord. During the Lenten season, one of the most important moments was the Stations of the Cross in the parish of Saint Lucia, which welcomed us with open arms during these days in Lomé.



- We have continued with the planning and content of the next meetings we have planned. We have continued to prepare for the **International College in July 2023**. The college will be held in Aparecida (Brazil) and will have as its main theme the text of Luke 14, 28-30. "Discern in order to build". The programme has been defined, the people invited to prepare presentations, testimonies, prayers and Eucharists; and other activities that will be carried out in this College, which we are all looking forward to with great enthusiasm. It is a very important time during which we will also proceed to the handover of responsibilities, thanking those who are leaving for their service and welcoming the new couples who are starting:

Anna and Leszek GERSTE, SR Poland
 Monique and Jean DUBREZ, SR France.
 Maria de Fatima and Antonio CARIOCA, SR Portugal
 Roselene and José RUBENS, SR Brazil
 Cristina and Gustavo QUEVEDO, SR Hispanomérica South

- A large part of the meeting was also devoted to reviewing the planning and content of the **International Meeting in Turin in July 2024**. This meeting requires from all of us an extra effort in communication with the working teams already

operating in Turin. The leaders, Edgardo and Clarita, and the secretaries, Paola and Giovanni, spent three days in Turin before travelling to Lomé to see first-hand the progress in all aspects of the organisation. These are very varied and require a great deal of dedication, as an event of this magnitude involves a great deal of attention to content, logistics and spiritual matters. We ask all of you not to forget to pray for the meeting and for all the people who are working at full capacity so that everything can take place in the best possible way.



- As in all ERI meetings, we continue to work and share the situations experienced in each SR and RR, which are presented to us by their coordinators through the **Zone reports**. Knowing first-hand about the life situation of the teams is fundamental to be able to plan the necessary actions, or to be able to share good practices that allow the mutual help so necessary in the Teams.
- The activities of the secretariat, with the analysis of statistical, financial and administrative aspects, also play an important part in our meetings, as well as communication issues. Among others, we revisited the issues related to **translations**, which continue to be a challenge because they require the collaboration of many people who are selflessly giving us their help and whom we thank for their availability.
- Some of the work carried out by the **satellite teams** is now in its final phase and has been translated, as mentioned in the previous message. All the piloting material is being prepared in the various languages of the movement. The material for young people will be delivered with a provisional translation as it will need to be adapted to the reality of each SR as it is interactive material. The reflection and research team is also preparing to offer the survey to all SRs and RRs that request it.

Meeting with SR Francophone Africa. Saturday 18 March 2023

There were many moments of encounter with the leaders from 17 different African countries who were gathered in Lomé for their College. There were meetings at the Eucharist, shared meals, friendly evenings where we enjoyed dancing and fun, joy and music with the team members present.



The most important time was on Saturday 18th March, which was entirely dedicated to a meeting with the College members. Ricardo Londoño spoke about the work of Father Caffarel and married spirituality; Edgardo and Clarita gave a talk about animation and recognition of all the work being done in the SR, and Monsignor Benoit Alowonou, president of the Episcopal Conference of Togo, also gave a talk about the situation in the local church. The presentations of the SR, the College leaders and the members of the ERI also helped us to

establish a dialogue about the questions that the leaders had prepared for the ERI, to which we responded. The day ended with a beautiful Eucharistic celebration that closed the meetings of the ERI and the SR College. Everything concluded with a festive evening. We can only give thanks for all the time we have shared.



We would like to acknowledge the welcome of each and every one of the couples we met, both those from Togo and those who came from so many parts of Africa for this meeting. But we would especially like to thank Sylvestre and Bernadette, the ERI couple who co-ordinate the Eurafrika Zone, for the extraordinary preparation of the whole week, and Edith and Jérôme, the leaders of SR Francophone Africa and all their team, because for all of us it was truly an ascent of Mount Tabor.



Forthcoming activities

- ERI Meeting in Aparecida (Brazil), 17-22 July 2023
- Next International College in Aparecida (Brazil), 23-28 July 2023
- Preparatory meetings with participation of the ERI leading couple and secretaries for the International Meeting in Turin (September 2023).
- Next ERI meeting in Adelaide (Australia) 23- 29 October 2023