

# 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 and the International College in Aparecida (Brazil) last July. We thank SR Brazil, especially Lu and Nelson, the SR Responsible Couple, for the extraordinary welcome and for organizing the facilities for the meeting, given the impossibility of holding it in Ecuador. Guayaquil was initially planned as the venue, but the convergence of several questions and unforeseen factors led the ERI to change. We would also like to thank Marilú et Chárbel from SR Hispano-America South for their understanding of this change.



## ERI meeting, 17 to 22 July 2023



On this occasion the ERI began its meeting with a **Eucharist** presided by Fr Ricardo Londoño. This always places us in the presence of God before we begin our work. The meeting continued in the afternoon with a spiritual reflection and a time of conjugal dialogue. As usual, this helps us to enter the meeting inspired by the Holy Spirit. The sharing at the end of the afternoon allowed us to have time to share about our life and to

continue team building. Throughout the ERI meeting days, the Eucharist and prayers helped us to place our work in the hands of the Lord and Our Lady, to give thanks for their constant presence and to feel supported in our service.

- Part of the work focused on the step-by-step review of the contents of the **International College** that was to follow, which we will discuss below. And of course, there was the continuation of all the planning and content work for the **International Gathering in Turin in July 2024**. In this regard, an important task was to finalize the fine-tuning of the Turin website the Italian team was about to make public, as well as reviewing the registration system that was released on the last day of July. Meetings with the Turin organizing team continue to take place and a further meeting will be held this September with the International Leading Couple, Edgardo and Clarita, and the responsible couple for secretary, Paola and Giovanni. Time was also spent reviewing the **International Formation Sessions** that will take place at the end of the Gathering.





- As in all the ERI meetings, we continued working on and sharing about the situations experienced in each SR and RR, and these are presented to us by the **Zone** Liaison Couples through their **zone reports**. Administrative and economic issues, as well as those related to the work of the Satellite Teams, were reviewed and prepared for presentation at the International College that was to follow. We also spent a significant amount of time preparing for the next ERI meeting in October in Adelaide (Australia), which will culminate in a meeting to better understand the reality of the teams in Oceania and to animate the team members who will be present.
- In each of its meetings, the ERI always pays a visit to the local bishop to introduce ourselves and to demonstrate our closeness and willingness to collaborate with the Church. On this occasion, we had a very cordial **visit** with Mons. Orlando Brandes, **Archbishop** of the Archdiocese of Aparecida, a strong supporter of the Teams of Our Lady. We thank him for his kind words and encouragement to continue to work with the couples and members of Teams, who do so much good in the Church.



### **Meeting with SR Brazil, Saturday 22nd July**

The meeting with SR Brazil team members took place on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> with two moving meetings. The morning began with a rosary on the esplanade of the Sanctuary of Aparecida with the pilgrimage of team members coming from different regions of Brazil. It culminated with a Eucharist in the Basilica, co-



presided by the SR Spiritual Counsellor, Monsignor Dom Moacir Arantes. The ERI is very grateful for the effort put into the trip and for the change of date, of the pilgrimage, that was initially planned to take place in May but was moved to coincide with the college in order to be able to share this moment of fraternity and encounter

In the afternoon, we had the opportunity for an in-depth meeting with the members of the SR Brazil College, including Province and Regional leaders, and the Service Team who had come from different cities across this huge country. We were able to share in the presentation of the SR. This always helps us to get to know the teams better, as well as the opportunity to respond to the questions and concerns raised by the SR.





## International College 23 to 29 July

- The College used the text from Luke 14, 28-30 as its guiding theme: "Discern in order to build". Twenty couples and thirteen Spiritual Counsellors were able to attend. We thank them for their efforts to be present, and for participating with great enthusiasm in this meeting, which nourishes us in our mission.



- The Eucharist, the prayers, the Adoration vigil, and the rosary: These have all been important markers on our route, and significant activities at the College. These moments of sharing help us to build the international community, formed by leaders and their Spiritual Counsellors with the ERI. We experienced a special moment in the morning prayer when, thanks to the technology, we connected to the couple responsible for Syria, who due to problems with visas could not participate in person.



- The presentations and testimonies were all very inspiring, and have motivated us to set out on this journey with strength. We could mention, among others, the initial presentation by the leaders, Edgardo and Clarita, about the construction of a tower, as a message for the Teams of Our Lady, reminding us of the foundations and the roads travelled from the beginnings and for more than eighty years until today. The overview of the situation of the Church in Brazil by Monsignor Ricardo Hoepfers, Secretary General of the National Conference of the Bishops of Brazil, gave special emphasis to the important social action carried out by the Church. The presentation by prominent theologian, Rafael



Luciani, member of the Theological Commission of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality, gave rise to an interesting discussion with many questions about synodality as an exercise of co-responsibility in the Church. Louis de Raynal gave a testimony about the relevance of Fr Henri Caffarel's thinking in today's Church. Edith and Jerome and their chaplain, Fr Paul, from SR French-speaking Africa, presented a reflection on the

concrete points of endeavor as an instrument for discernment. And finally, there was a presentation by the ERI Secretariat Couple, Giovanni and Paola, on economic co-responsibility in Teams. All these presentations were supported and complemented by numerous testimonies shared by some of the couples and members present at the College, and on video by the participants in the course held at the Pontifical Institute John Paul II in Rome.

- There were also times for Zone meetings and for sharing in mixed teams, to enable reflections on what was heard, as well as in-depth discussion on the exercise of responsibility. There was also time for sharing in teams about a fun activity on the construction of a tower, and what it means for the creation of connections in the community.
- We also learnt more about the work of the Satellite Teams. This included: new piloting material, material for young couples, and survey material to better understand our base teams. There was also a pastoral letter to sensitize team members about the need for evangelization to accompany couples in a second union.



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- We thank SR Brazil, for their time in preparing the reception of this College, the musical welcome on the opening day, the time dedicated to the visit to the Sanctuary



of Aparecida and the dinner, the evening of friendship, in which music and celebration were again very present, as well as the joy of meeting with all those who participated in its preparation.

- Finally, there were words of sending forth and the final Eucharist, in which we thanked all those who concluded their service, and we welcomed the couples and the members who accompany them in their new mission:

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 Hispano-América South  
 Severina and Mindaugas SEDZIAI, Baltic region





We would like to conclude by reiterating our words of thanks to Lu and Nelson, to all the Service Team, to the participants in the College, and to all the team members represented by them, encouraging them to live these remaining months before the International Meeting in Turin 2024, with strength and nourished by the Eucharist.



### **Forthcoming activities**

- Preparatory meetings with participation of the ERI Responsible Couple and Secretariat Couple for the International Meeting in Turin (September 2023).
- Next ERI meeting in Adelaide (Australia), 23- 29 October 2023
- ERI meeting in Turin (Italy), 5-10 May 2024
- ERI Meeting in Turin (Italy), 6-10 July 2024
- International College in Turin (Italy), 11-14 July 2024
- International Meeting in Turin (Italy), 15 to 20 July 2024
- International Formation Sessions in Oropa (Italy), 20 - 23 July 2024