

Letter to the Nations

Lettre aux Nations

20. December 2010

EDITORIAL

Since 1960, 15 intercontinental Frater meetings have been held so far, as well as 11 international committees from 1960 to 1985, and five intercontinental committees from 1989 to 2010.

The history of *Fraternity* shows us that all these meetings have focused on very relevant and vital subjects concerning the life of the movement and its founder. The development of *Fraternity* (Frater), as a Christian movement dealing with the holistic development of the chronically ill or handicapped person and their right to life, has always been the concern of its leaders during these international meetings.

The leaders of the Intercontinental Team were particularly concerned about the organisation of the fifth Intercontinental Committee of the *Fraternidad*, during such a pessimistic time in which the global economic crisis was at its peak.

Faced with many financial and material challenges, the leaders of Frater did not give up. Instead they knew they had to find strength from the messages of Father François and from the gospel, to allow the movement to reach its expected goals. Thus, to ensure sound organisation of the fifth Intercontinental Committee, the leaders of the International Committee worked in close collaboration with the leaders of Frater at all levels, from those in the field to those at national level, together with the national team in Portugal, the host country.

Held in Oporto, Portugal, from 2 to 9 August 2010, the fifth Intercontinental Committee of Frater especially dealt with subjects specifically relating to everyday life for handicapped people, such as how to preach and how to promote their self-esteem through the following themes:

- Community of values in Frater;
- Common basic principles for training;
- The Human Rights Convention from the perspective of Frater's identity;
- Community Reflection on Encounters.

In addition to these themes, the fifth Intercontinental Committee allowed the participants to assess the activities of Frater throughout all countries and continents, to reflect on the role of the Intercontinental Core Team and to re-elect the members of the Intercontinental Core Team for another four years.

(It follows in the following page)



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All the activities on the agenda of the fifth Intercontinental Committee of Fraternity had gone well. The logistics of the meeting (welcoming and departure of participants, the working plan, the Eucharistic services, meals and accommodation) went well, all seamlessly organised by the national team in Portugal. The Oporto ecclesiastical authorities' participation in the opening ceremony showed once again the importance the universal Catholic Church gives to Frater's activities. The presentations given by the speakers were of exceptional quality and gave rise to extremely interesting discussions. The time invested by each presentation did not allow us to analyse in depth themes such as "Human Rights Convention on the rights of handicapped people according to the identity given by Frater" and "Community of values in Frater".

As had already been planned previous to the Committee and confirmed by the gathering in its final recommendations, it was suggested that the nations and continents continue to reflect on these themes until they met again at the next Intercontinental Committee in 2014.

Lastly, we gave thanks to God for the opportunity to get together again and build new interpersonal relationships despite the cultural diversity encountered in such intercontinental meetings held by the Fraternity. We also gave thanks for the richness that they brought to each individual's life and for Frater, for with its help and a small effort on everyone's part, we have made this happen.

"Fraternity: service to the world from its identity"

FIFTH INTERCONTINENTAL COMMITTEE

Oporto (Portugal), 2 to 9 August 2010

Below, we will share the most relevant aspects of the Intercontinental Meeting which was held in the *Casa Diocesana Seminario de Vilar* in Oporto, Portugal. This is only a summary of what I experienced there. If any explanations are needed or more information required on any point made below, the Intercontinental Team (continental and intercontinental coordinators) have more extensive recordings of the proceedings which include all the documents and speeches given at this Intercontinental Committee.

OPENING AND WELCOME CEREMONY

After welcoming the brethren who were invited to the Portuguese diocese, and attending the Committee's opening ceremony, we were joined by the alternate Bishop of the Diocese of Oporto, D. Antonio Taipa, the delegate for pastoral and health issues, Father Nuno Ferreira da Silva, and representatives of various diocesan movements.

The Committee began with an opening message delivered by the national coordinator, Maria Goretti Fernandes of Portugal, our host country. Afterwards, the continental coordinators introduced the following speakers:



Six people were present from AFRICA: Jean de Dieu Mopembe (Democratic Republic of Congo), continental coordinator; Jean Pierre Louya (Congo Brazzaville), joint continental coordinator; Noël Mpati (R. D. Congo), continental adviser; Xavier Mbemba (Congo

Brazzaville), joint continental adviser; and the other delegates, Jean de Dieu Habimana (Ruanda) and Jean Louis Rakotomanana (Madagascar).

Nine members from AMERICA: Claudia Padilla (Panamá), continental coordinator; Benjamín Núñez (Honduras), coordinator for area I; Max Anaya (Peru), coordinator for area II; Salete Milan (Brazil), coordinator for area III; José Jacinto González (Mexico), delegate for area I; Santiago Blanco (Bolivia), delegate for area II; José Horacio Ventura (Uruguay), coordinator for area III; Miguel Ángel Arrasate (Honduras), continental adviser; José Luís Gennaro (Argentina), joint continental adviser.



Seven people from EUROPE: Ilona Pinter (Austria-Hungary), continental coordinator; Marisol García (Spain), secretarial team deputy; Benoît Seppey (Switzerland), treasury team deputy; Janos Kiss (Romania), team deputy Regina Rüpel (Germany), European delegate; Stanisława Grochal (Poland), European delegate and as invited adviser Thomas Grzsiak (Poland).

Welcome team: the 4 members of the national team of PORTUGAL: Maria Goretti Fernandes da Silva, national coordinator; Fernando Ferreira, Maria Manuela Moreira and Jose Filipe Lopes.

The 3 members of the CORE TEAM (Spain): Dolors Vázquez, intercontinental coordinator; Maria Dolores Varea, deputy intercontinental coordinator and Albert Arrufat, intercontinental adviser.

We also received invaluable support from Alicia Cucala, the Core Team and from Christine Osafo, Maritza Pitty, Dulcinea Da Cruz, Carmen Rosa Loayza, Iris Taroco, Maria Carmen Mayor, Delfim André Da Silva and Silvia Monteiro.

The translation work was carried out by Santiago Gatón and Bárbara Strauss-Gatón; Kinga Obuchowicz-Pelc translated from Polish and Janos Pal translated into Hungarian.

The Spanish keynote speaker was Maria del Pino Trejo.

The Taiwanese representatives whom had been invited to take part in the Committee were not able to come; Jackson Boyako (Cameroon), the African delegate, was absent due to a problem obtaining an exit visa, as was Christine Balsan (France), European delegate, due to transport problems.

Once the participants were introduced, the Bishop D. Antonio Taipa took the floor. He welcomed the presence of Frater in Oporto. He spoke of how disabilities could be a witness to the gospel in itself: Christ was present not only as a servant but also as Christ crucified. Frater added that it required a large well of grace and spoke greatly about humanity. In that sense, he said, Frater gave a message for the whole church and humanity. He concluded with the wish that the meeting be prepared to work well, and that their stay be comfortable.

The meeting continued with a speech by Dolors Vázquez, the International Coordinator. She herself presented the proposed Committee programme, for approval by those present.

After a short break, the morning finished with the Eucharist which was presided over by Father Nuno Ferreira da Silva. In his message, he spoke of his surprise that the opening ceremony had not been held in English, something which led him to speak of the difficulties, but also advantages of the new era of globalisation. He encouraged those present to take responsibility for beginning a new revolution to face this new situation in which we live.

In the afternoon, on the first day, the agreements and recommendations of the previous Committee of 2005 was read out, in order to remind them of the subjects under discussion during the meeting.

After some group work between the continental groups, the usual presentation of reports began to give an idea of life within Frater on the various continents.

CONTINENTAL REPORTS

ASIA (Taiwan). The session began with Taiwan's report. Given the impossibility of being able to personally attend as guests in Portugal, the report was presented in the form of a film in which the Taiwanese leaders sent greetings, explained the situation of Frater and asked to be visited by the Core Team. There was also a photo show which presented several of the activities carried out there over the last five years.

AFRICA. Jean de Dieu Mopembe, African coordinator, presented the report followed by a presentation with the slides and several photos of the activities which were carried out in the last five years, both by the continental co-ordination team and the member countries.



AMERICA. Claudia Padilla, American coordinator, began by presenting the report on Area I from 2005 to 2010. Max Anaya, area coordinator, gave a report on Area II. Saleté Milan gave a report on Area III with a comprehensive summary of their activities, successes, difficulties, and objectives of the

Area. Due to a lack of time for the presentation, Claudia offered to send the written version of the continental team's report. Later on in the Committee, America was given more time to finish presenting its report.

EUROPE. Europe's report was introduced by Ilona Pinter, who related the challenges facing them on a continent where several languages were spoken. Marisol García presented information about the countries, placing emphasis on the subjects of training and the successes achieved in terms of social participation. Benoît Seppey and Ilona finished informing them about the European coordinating team's activities over the last five years.

PORTUGAL. Maria Goretti presented the report in which she explained the structure of Frater in the country hosting the Committee (Portugal), as well as the activities that were being carried out at that time to relaunch the movement in that country.

CORE TEAM. Finally, Dolors Vázquez gave the Core Team's report, following the same structure of presentation. It included a brochure illustrated with photos, listing the Core Team's activities.

ASSESSMENT OF REPORTS

After the reports, there was a period during which many issues were discussed. From this session, we are only going to transcribe the text that the Committee have called "Assessment of reports" and draw several conclusions at the end.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The reports were very, if not too, long. Several subjects were repeated within them, which made them very dense and difficult to follow by the Committee participants.

They recognised how difficult it was to sum up five years of life within Frater in the 45 minutes of presentation time allotted them. It also transpired that it was difficult to unify

and summarise the different subjects and the priorities contained in the countries' reports. It was recalled that the task of presenting reports was not an exam, but an opportunity for countries to share their experiences, and encourage others to understand that experience.

It was appreciated in particular as a phase of mutual sharing of knowledge and communication. Reports were also an opportunity to look at ourselves and advance with seriousness.



The reports were said to be gifts that we offered each other. Being able to listen to each other was a store of wealth, helped us see common things that opened new horizons. They were filled with riches, and confirmed that we were on the right path, in view of the number of similar experiences that had occurred in such different places. The reports fulfilled their responsibility to give a voice to the poor, being one of the values in which the Committee prided itself: the fact of speaking and being listened to, gave dignity to the speaker.

It was recalled that in addition to speaking, it was necessary to practise the speech in the place where they were going to be heard, especially when interpretation was required to achieve cultural diversity, on top of how difficult it was to quickly grasp what was being said.

Holding the presentations at the beginning of the Committee helped to bring the other speeches that were to be made into line with what had already been said, with the practical and current reality of Frater. In this way, the subjects could best respond to the specific situation of Frater.

SUGGESTIONS

It was suggested that the reports be summarised even more in order to be more effective and leave more time to work on the subjects chosen for the Committee.

Spreading the reports over several days, during the period of the Committee, would prevent them from becoming too tedious.

It was requested if it was at all possible to translate them in advance in order to give more time for dialogue and comments.

Simple expressions were requested during the presentation which could be understood by everyone, in particular to better aid their translation.

Care should be taken to include photos in the reports.

It was recalled that the Intercontinental Committee had to give preference to the continental experiences that the countries were actually experiencing. In the various continental meetings, a forum already existed for each country to talk about real life in turn. The Intercontinental Committee was where the life of brotherhood between the continents was coordinated and lived out, as they learnt how to work together.

In terms of the types of presentation given, the use of new technologies such as Internet was touched upon. It was highlighted as a positive factor, particularly since it was indispensable for work and to get organised, but it also had a negative side particularly in terms of personal contact. New technologies were emphasised as a way to obtain information easily even though personal contact was irreplaceable.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTINENTAL REPORTS:

- The Intercontinental Team should review how reports were to be prepared. Discussing this subject would help them identify a better way to present them.
- At the initiative of the African participants, the unification of Frater's logo (logotype): it was a sign of unity that we should have. It was proposed to begin a representative and democratic process to carry this out.

- Generational change: discuss the subject of whether the leaders of Frater were able to hand over their responsibility to those who were arriving. How to train leaders. How to make Frater's response more relevant to new situations and its complementarities with other organisations.
- To keep in contact with those who participated in the Committee, the already existing communication must be strengthened. This was shown by replying when a question was posed, and making efforts to progress in the subjects that were raised.
- Obligation and responsibility to transmit what the Intercontinental Committee talked about and decided with the other brethren.
- Expansion to other countries is one of our tasks of evangelization, not an impediment or something to be forgotten. There are desires to expand among us (USA, China, Nigeria, etc.). The continents needed each other, as did the continents. As an example, it was proposed to lead renovation in Europe from the eastern countries.
- An effort was required to raise, and send funds, so that the Core Team could visit Taiwan as requested. The possibility of making a film was also suggested, that would be sent to Taiwan explaining all that the Intercontinental Committee had achieved.

Within this assessment, it was expressly requested that the Belgium's attitude towards *Intercontinental Fraternity* be clarified which had arisen in the European report. The participants were surprised about their dissenting attitude and desire not to get involved.

Information that had reached them on the subject was shared, and opinions were collected within the Committee; it was also requested that the Intercontinental Team work as a whole on this issue.

SYMPOSIUM: Community of values in Frater

Claudia Padilla introduced the theme and moderated the conference. She said that although this subject had already been touched upon on the respective continents, depending on the situation, it was an important subject for the functioning and sustenance of the movement and its activities.

She recalled that the Intercontinental Team wished for the subject to be discussed at the Committee because it was something general that concerned everyone. Solidarity was an aspect that had to be understood and be carried out in practice in our brotherhood. The Intercontinental Team asked María Dolores Varea to lead this discussion on the community of values in Frater.

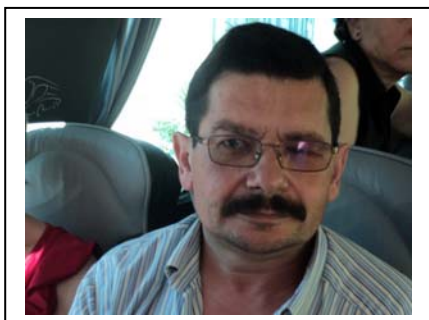


María Dolores then emphasised that although there was a written text, it was to be studied by the participants, and not left on the floor, but for it to be given life subsequently. She reiterated their intention to deal with the theme to help them understand how we could share at every level, both in terms of human, financial, and spiritual resources. She pointed out that while the common objective was clear, fraternal identity was more ready to share what it possessed. She recalled the importance of “sharing” from the smallest to the biggest thing, the result being always to enrich everyone's lives.

We would like to inform you that this is one of the themes which shall be discussed over the coming period. The text and work material for countries will be sent in due time, as will material on other subjects, and are to be studied by the base teams in the countries.

THEME: COMMON BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR TRAINING

The first theme dealt with by the Committee was training in Frater. Its objective was to grow in knowledge and put into practice common principles for our training in Frater. This work so far has been based on fundamental principles which were approved in the Sameiro Intercontinental Committee in 1989 and what was discussed on training in our Intercontinental Constitutions.



This theme has been discussed in all the meetings of the Intercontinental Team. They have been monitoring constantly what has been done continents and has dealt with problems to do with weaknesses, due to the lack of training, and how it has affected the identity of the movement.

The fruit of this work was the commitment of the whole of Intercontinental Team to make training move forward, being an essential issue for Frater.

The theme of the Basic Principles of Training in the Committee was taught from a perspective “looking inwards”, in order to deepen its identity and spirituality. Training is spirituality because it is built on the talent within Frater. That was why the life of the members had to be impregnated by it and consolidated by the teams.

The Committee’s work consisted, firstly, of sharing materials and experiences; since then, there has been time to discuss it together and continue proposing a minimum basis for training to be considered by Frater. Fernando Ferreira Nunes, in charge of training in Portugal, was the one who presented the subject to the participants. Fernando moderated the conference consisting of different testimonies about

how this training had been carried out: America presented the process that it has used by developing a Training Plan for the continent; Africa presented how it had led training in the Western zone of the Democratic Republic of Congo; and Europe presented the training that Frater had delivered in Switzerland.

Group discussions focused on three questions: 1) What does training mean? 2) What does training in Frater aim to be? 3) How do we launch and develop training in Frater in practice? In order not to spend too much time on it, we did not write down all the points and dialogue made once the conclusions of the groups were gathered. As mentioned above, the answers and all the information are in the Committee records kept by the Intercontinental Team.

The work ended with conclusions contributed by Fernando: We must not forget that Frater is a Christian movement and has a specific character. Training has to be a reflection of this. It is important to pursue reflection on the theme. More than the theory, it is life that counts: to see, judge, participate, commit, love each other and be a witness; there cannot be testimony if there are no several principles, if there isn’t life”.

Visit to Oporto and Sameiro (Braga) Friday, August 6th

The day was devoted to resting and conviviality between the participants of the Committee. It involved a day out to visit the Port wine cellars in Vilanova de Gaia.



Visit to Oporto and Sameiro (Braga)



Lunch was held in the Hostel of Sameiro (Braga), where the Intercontinental Committee took place held in 1989.

After that, we made the most of becoming reacquainted with our brothers from Braga in a room inside the Sameiro Sanctuary. Maria Goretti and Dolors presented why the delegates of Portugal wished to join them and the Intercontinental Committee's mission. Everyone introduced themselves and the floor was given over particularly to the Committee delegates who had been in Sameiro in 1989: Stanislaw Grochal, Max Anaya, Maria Dolores Varea, Albert Arrufat and the translators Santiago and Barbara. On returning to Oporto, a panoramic visit of the town was organized.



THEME: THE CONVENTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ON DISABLED PEOPLE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF OUR IDENTITY

The main reason for the Intercontinental Team to choose this subject, which did not appear to be a theme that concerned Frater, was its commitment to the outside world. Of course, it was chosen because it enabled the meeting to reflect on the first steps of evangelization by Jesus, as it was him who first recognised the dignity of those who were marginalised, on the sidelines, by the roadside, or hoping that someone would give them a chance. Jesus told them to get up and walk, giving them a purpose, and giving them back human dignity.



Maria del Pino Trejo, from the Canary Islands (Spain) presented the theme. She belonged to HOAC (*Hermandad Obrera de Acción Católica* – Working Brethren for Catholic Action). She had worked for a few years in the permanent National Commission of HOAC in Madrid. She was asked to lead the subject after listening to her in one of the National Assemblies of Frater Spain where she gave a talk to the brethren on the social commitment of Christians.

A few questions were proposed so that they could be answered directly in the room in plenary session, which were the following:

- From the articles of the Convention mentioned in the speech, which one is being carried out? Highlight one concrete example from each country.

- From the articles mentioned in this Convention, which would should be carried out as a priority?

She explained that the talk was just the start of a reflection process that had to be fleshed out in the diverse places where Frater was established. She was trying to help the movement discern where it should be going by posing that question. As shall be seen below in the Agreements of the Committee, such will be the working theme for the period 2010-2012. The Intercontinental Team will develop more material so that the base teams of Frater can study it.

In the contributions made in plenary session of the Committee, the great divergences between the continents and countries were acknowledged on this theme of the Human Rights of Disabled People. There was a great difference between them in terms of the establishment of legal instruments which enables the disabled to exercise their rights. Before talking about the prioritisation of articles, they first had to convince all those countries that had ratified the Convention to apply it. There were still great disparities in many places where disabled people did not know enough about their rights, but did not denounce the lack of them. In other places, however, they were already demanding that their rights be respected, as a result of the commitment of disabled people and the paradigm of change. Disability now is not considered a health problem, but a socio-cultural issue.

Report on the COMMUNITY CONTEMPLATION ON ENCOUNTERS

The Committee provided the opportunity to report back on what had been carried out, one by one, within the context of Contemplation on Encounters in Frater, coordinated by the International Team and which began in 2008 upon a proposal of the American Team.

The reports and debate were moderated by Miguel Ángel Arrasate, the American continental advisor. He began by sharing and commenting on the richness of what he was able to collect in the period when the replies from countries on the reflection were coming in.

Those replies formed the basis of reflection that Miguel Ángel had developed on Encounters, and from them, he proposed that groups work on them. In continents, they worked on the two following questions:



1. Give an example of a real encounter that you have experienced or personally known.

For **Europe**, Christine Osafo presented the case of Janos, from Romania. It recounted the experience of Janos as a young disabled person, who had serious addictions following an accident and lived in the countryside with his sick mother. Frater in Romania visited him in a group (30 – 35 people). Out of that encounter sprung a relationship: he got over his depression and accepted his responsibilities at a personal level (free-time and leisure) which had obliged him to keep in contact with them. He had found his joy for life again.

For **Africa**, Jean Pierre Louya presented the case of Mrs Helenne, 78 years old, who was working in a parish of Brazzaville with Frater and with health visitors. She was also ill with diabetes, and took it upon herself to visit sick people and run errands for them. She was sad because no-one remembered her or visited her, even though she had visited so many and spent so much time caring for the sick. Her mindset changed when she received another visit from Frater.

They took the opportunity to pray together during the encounter.

For **America**, Claudia Padilla presented the encounter led by Max Anaya and a friend in Peru. There was a lad who, ever since being mistreated on the streets as a child, never ever left the house. He could not even receive visits at home it was difficult accessing the flat (they began by talking through the door). He agreed to go outside and meet up for a drink with them. Later on, he started to take part in activities in the parish. He gained confidence when he saw how well he was being treated, and now he is following catechism classes.

They also narrated a second case from the Dominican Republic. A woman, and mother of two sons, had been abandoned by her husband after becoming a paraplegic during the birth of her second child. She lived in a place which could be better described as a hole in the ground. Her whole vision was reduced to seeing the feet of people passing by. After two visits by Frater, she was able to attend one of Frater's meetings where she spoke about the fact that in middle of all the sadness that surrounded her, what she had missed and what she needed most was contact with people.

2. What values do such encounters highlight, in terms of the gift of fraternal life and our sense of responsibility along the way?

In the case presented by Europe, they highlighted how the group's visit gave him great joy and healed his heart. The young person who had felt low managed to overcome his problems and get out of the situation. Frater offers opportunities for those who do not accept society. Taking responsibility last a lifetime, and does not occur in one action.

In **Africa's** case, the values observed included how they found Mrs Helenne in a lost state (after having done so much, no-one remembered her); she hated everyone because they did not do for her what she had done for others. Only Frater gave her what she was hoping for. After the encounter, she

reconciled herself with the world; she received the gift of a healed heart. She felt comforted, she reconciled herself with God. The members of the Core Team who gave their opinion on this case had already met her during their last visit. They said that this was not a unique case, but there had been opportunities to visit several former leaders of Frater, who were no longer active, and the gift the Core Team brought to them was Frater's recognition of everything they had accomplished.

Claudia, in respect to the case presented by **America**, the values highlighted were trust, "how to be with", knowing how to listen, be listened to, spontaneity; and as gifts, giving freely, responsibility, asking questions, self-sacrifice and knowing how to be, etc. There was also the value of the joy for life, the responsibility of faith, and the recognition for Frater. The encounter showed how to be responsible and tests us so we can learn how to travel with others.



ELECTION OF THE NEW INTERCONTINENTAL CORE TEAM

The final day of the Intercontinental Committee, on Sunday 8 August, involved activities ranging from the adoption of the recommendations and agreements by the present Committee, to the election of those who will form the Core Team for the next term. It was carried out as follows below.

Reflexion on the role of the Core Team

When organizing the Committee, the Intercontinental Team thought it would be good for all the participants to be aware of the importance of being and serving in the Core Team before their election. As a framework for this reflection, the former intercontinental coordinator, Chico Cerignoni, wrote a few ideas down on the functions of the Core Team

In the Committee, Jean de Dieu Mopembe was responsible for presenting and commenting on these ideas from his own experience.

In short, he said that *there are five principles that the leaders in Frater have to follow: to feel that they are being sent out on a mission, to be life-filled, live out the gospel, not act alone and be responsible throughout their lives.*

Jean de Dieu also highlighted changes in the way they worked together, including those which involved moving forward with decisions not being taken "vertically" but shared by the whole team.

The Core Team is at the service of the whole of Frater. It has to carry out what Fraternidad has entrusted it while respecting the Constitution. As responsibility within Frater, it is an invitation to experience a life of intense service and unity throughout Frater.

After presenting this reflection, words were then given on the subject. The former leaders and members of the intercontinental team were also remembered.

It was reiterated that the structures and the team's action arise from life, like a precious inheritance that we have received. Whatever was heard in the reflection has been lived out; it is a living experience. With gladness we realise that these words are more authentic because of what the Core Team has experienced. When the Core Team carries out a visit on each continent, it is like it is visiting the whole of Frater (worldwide). It is good to remember that we are all called to responsibility, not to be isolated but united. The words of Chico express the work that we have to carry out in

the field: to be co-workers, in love with life, and called to serve with our hearts. To remember means: “to return to live in our hearts”. This helps us to value the service of the Core Team as being complementary to the work of the continental and national teams.

Election of the new Core Team

Firstly, the names of the persons eligible to vote and that were present were read out again. Thus, there were 23 persons who could vote and were read out on the first day of the Committee.

The process used to present the candidates was recalled, but as the situation arose that there were no new candidates, they could only opt to re-elect or not the present members of the Core Team.



The table was set up for the election comprising one representative member per continent (previously chosen in continental meetings) and the person who would preside as the secretary for the election. Around the table were Jean Louis Rakotomanana (for Africa), Salette Milan for America), and Benoît Seppey (for Europe). Marisol García presided as secretary.

The articles of the Intercontinental Constitution referring to the Core Team were read out and the candidates were invited to speak: Maria Dolores Varea, Dolores Vázquez and Father Albert Arrufat. From different points of view, the candidates were demonstrating their availability by being re-elected for another term.

A secret ballot was held and cast on paper slips. After the second count, the result was 19 votes FOR and four blank votes. The team was re-elected for another term of four years (2010 – 2014), made up of:

MARIA DOLORS VÁZQUEZ AZNAR, as intercontinental coordinator.

MARIA DOLORES VAREA ANDRÉS, as deputy intercontinental coordinator.

Father ALBERT ARRUFAT PRADES, as intercontinental advisor.

Recommendations for the Core Team

After the election of the Core Team, the following recommendations were made:

- That they continue in the same line, drawing strength from the Holy Spirit.
- To continue visiting the continents. The positive impact that these visits had was appreciated. It is true that the conditions are not very favourable but with love difficulties can be resolved.
- To continue supporting the continental teams. The close relationships that they had maintained with them had worked. The projects that are underway, with the support of the Core Team, had to continue and give impetus to others. It was suggested that they contact the Pius XII Foundation and other institutions to raise more funds to finance their activities.
- Help to discover the value of difference and their richness. Improve communication and listening skills, always providing good information on what was being done.
- Germany thinks it would be desirable that the Core Team make visits to the countries of Europe where they have not yet been and particularly to all those that are not yet members. They would be able to see what life was like there and serve to support the National Teams in these countries. The Core Team thinks that what was being presented was a task corresponding more to the European coordinating team, and particularly given the Core Team's few financial means. They thought it was important to respect the structures in place.
- Continue in the same sense of service, in good spirits, supported by prayer.

AGREEMENTS OF THE INTERCONTINENTAL COMMITTEE 2010

The final agreements taken by the Intercontinental Committee below were made on subjects covered in the meeting, namely:

1. To keep communication free-flowing.

Maintain constant communication.

When a card or e-mail is sent, to acknowledge receipt and reply as soon as possible to the questions that are posed.

Take into account that in Europe, there were many languages, which meant there were serious communication problems. There are also challenges as much to finance the translations, as the time necessary to write them.

2. To begin looking for **candidates** of the next Core Team; the process to search for candidates has begun, and the Committee is committed to carrying this out.

3. For countries to try to take responsibility for their **contributions** and give in proportion to their means. It was recalled that 50% of the countries' contributions go to Frater Continental and the other 50% to Frater Intercontinental. If it was possible, the contributions should also be sent at the start of the year, to allow the budget forecast for activities to be made.

4. For countries not to wait until the last minute to finance the holding of the Intercontinental Committee.

5. **Requests for help**, when faced with needs (emergencies), should be communicated through the continental coordinators.

6. To respond to **Taiwan's** request, that they be visited by the Core Team.

7. For the Intercontinental Team to be responsible for working on the **Committee's themes**, endeavouring to make sure that their decisions reach the base teams.

To make sure that everything discussed in the Committee reaches the bases, doing all that was necessary to achieve this.

8. To propose that work is carried out in stages over the next four years, until the next Intercontinental Committee:

a) That the continents commit to **Training** and share progress on this theme with the other continents. Although the importance of having common Training Bases was recognised, as examined by the present Committee meeting, the theme of training now formed part of Frater's very identity. In this sense, nothing specific had been agreed on this theme.

b) The theme of the **Convention** of Human Rights will be worked upon until 2012.

c) The reflection initiated on the **community of values in Frater**, will be worked upon from 2012 to 2014.

d) That they carry on working on **Common reflections**.

9. For as many reference documents to be written in **Braille** as possible. It was then suggested that audio recordings be made instead of writing in Braille, as it was easier.

SCHEDULE OF THE CONTINENTAL MEETINGS AND NEXT INTERCONTINENTAL COMMITTEE

To help organise the calendar of the next period, the places and dates of the next continental meetings were given:

- America, in 2013.
- Africa will try to organise its meeting before the next Intercontinental Committee, that is, at the beginning of 2014, in Rwanda.
- Europe said that its continental meeting would be held in 2012, probably in Poland.

It was suggested that **the next Intercontinental Committee** be held within four years, in **2014**.

The possibility of holding it in America was put forward.



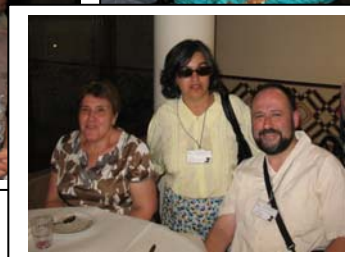
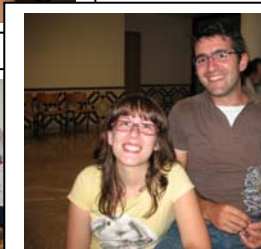
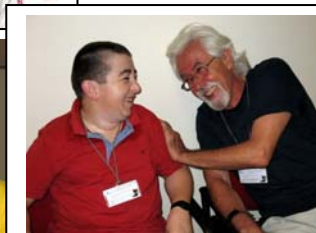
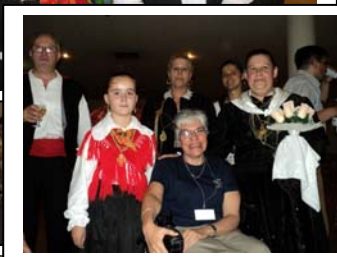
Moments of celebration and prayer

Each day, common prayers were led by a continental team.

Each day, the Communion was celebrated in the chapel of the *Seminário de Vilar* congress centre. In one of these acts, Xabier Mbemba, the deputy adviser for Africa, celebrated the anniversary of his ordination.

As in the opening ceremony, we concluded the 2010 Committee by celebrating the **Eucharist** in which we gave thanks for our experiences and everything the Committee had discussed.

A ceremony to send off the Intercontinental Team in their mission for Frater for the coming period was given by those present.



Moments of festivity and conviviality

There were festive moments during the Intercontinental Committee:

- Night of **Cultural Traditions in Portugal**. A performance by a traditional group from Santo Tirso in which members of Frater were involved.

- The **Party of Nations**. Items brought from the different countries were exchanged, and with typical dress and traditional music, we experienced the gladness of being part of the Intercontinental Committee together.

FINANCIAL BALANCE SHEET OF THE COMMITTEE
(Approximate summary)

INCOME (in €)

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM FRATER

(07/2007) First contribution from Spain to the Committee	10,900.00
(08/2009) Contribution from Switzerland	300.00
(12/2009) Second contribution from Spain to the Committee (for the African meeting)	6,000.00
(12/2009) Third contribution from Spain to the Committee	19,000.00
(04/2010) Frater Spain	1,857.00
(05/2010) Frater Switzerland	5,000.00
(07/2010) Frater from a diocese in France	1,000.00
(07/2010) Frater Germany	1,000.00
(07/2010) Frater Europe (various donations: Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium)	1,787.00
(2009-2010) Frater Spain (total of donations made by dioceses in Spain)	3,354.38
TOTAL	50,198.38

DONATIONS

(2009-2010) Total of donations by people and entities to the Intercontinental Committee	2,085.00
TOTAL	2,085.00

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM COMMITTEE PARTICIPANTS

- America (for transport and accommodation)	9,044.19
- Europe (for transport and accommodation)	4,718.00
- Europe (translations)	304.00
- Portugal (for preparation costs of committee 2009-2010)	774.00
- Portugal (extra meals for guests)	605.00
- Portugal (accommodation of the national team + extra contributions for accommodation)	2,640.00
- Portugal (solicitor's fees)	144.08
- Portugal (various organisation costs + lunch in Sameiro)	432.89
- Intercontinental Core Team (for transport and accommodation)	1,919.00
TOTAL	20,581.16

TOTAL INCOME FOR THE INTERCONTINENTAL COMMITTEE	72,847.54
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<i>PENDING</i>	
- Africa (reimbursement after returning their ticket and remainder from the purchase of airfares)	3,000.00
- Pending payment from the Mission for the African Continental Team for its participation in the Intercontinental Committee.	10,000.00

EXPENSE STATEMENT (in €)

Advance from the African Continental Meeting held in January 2010	6,000.00
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Preparation costs of 2009-2010 committee in Portugal	774.00
Various organization expenses, Portugal team	222.89
Solicitor and visa formalities	144.08
Sending documents for visa formalities	1,226.63
Total expenses for preparation of Intercontinental Committee	2,367.60

AFRICA (Transport, 1 st delivery 05/2010)	10,000.00
AFRICA (Transport , 2 nd delivery 07/2010)	2,500.00
AMERICA (Transport)	20,984.19
EUROPE (Transport)	2,379.00
CORE TEAM (Transport)	285.60
Translators (Transport)	433.00
Total transport for participants from the Intercontinental Team	36,581.79

ACCOMODATION of all the participants in the <i>Seminário de Vilar</i> congress centre (Oporto)	13,606.00
Use of EQUIPMENT (Rooms, simultaneous interpretation cabins, headphones)	2,500.00
TRADUCTION – INTERPRETATION	5,304.00
Various expenses (Board, cards, paper, telephone, photocopies)	269.49
BUS day out in Sameiro	908.00
Lunch in Hostel in Sameiro	210.00
Extra meals, guests	605.00
Bank charges	71.10
Total expenses during the Intercontinental Committee	23,473.59

TOTAL EXPENSES OF THE INTERCONTINENTAL COMMITTEE	68,422.98
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NB: It may be that some expenses generated may be missing, and are not specified here because they have been paid for by the participants or the organization and have not been included, and therefore will not affect the final balance.

AS OF SEPTEMBER 2010, THIS WAS THE APPROXIAMATE CALCULATION WHICH SEEMS TO REFLECT THE STATE OF THE INTERCONTINENTAL COMMITTEE ACCOUNTS:

TOTAL INCOME FOR THE INTERCONTINENTAL COMMITTEE	72,864.54
TOTAL EXPENSES OF THE INTERCONTINENTAL COMMITTEE	68,422.98
Approximate surplus to keep for the following INTERCONTINENTAL COMMITTEE	4,441.56

With this balance we would like to acknowledge and give thanks for the contributions given by Frater's members, who by responding to the Intercontinental Core Team's call, enabled the Intercontinental Committee to take place.

We are especially grateful for Frater's efforts in Africa and America for giving human and financial resources, while taking into account the huge distances covered and the high travel costs.

Similarly, we would like to thank Frater in Europe for contributing human resources and their financial solidarity, for without it, it would not have been possible to hold the Intercontinental Committee meeting either. We are especially grateful to Frater in Portugal for the extra help they gave to the organization of the committee and for sharing the few material resources they had, as well as to Spain for their generous financial contributions which they collected through fundraising over several years in the run up to the Intercontinental Committee.

We hope that we can continue growing in mutual solidarity, particularly to strengthen the activities planned by Frater, by consolidating our efforts and spending time to get to know others. It is our responsibility, as members of *Fraternidad*, to sustain the movement by giving our time and sharing our belongings.

Should any point need clarifying, we are available for any information requested, whether it concerns the balancing of accounts of the management of the activities carried out.

