

A REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Annecy 2023, European meeting; Workweek Int. team

Original version: English

Dear Brothers,

Warm fraternal greetings to you all!

The International Team was invited to be present at the Assembly of the European Responsibles in Annecy, France from July 11- 17, 2023. Eric came a week earlier to facilitate a retreat in Knox, Ireland. Matthias, Honore and Tony arrived at the opening day. Fernando came later on the 14th as he was accompanying the Month of Nazareth in Sto. Domingo in Central America.



About 20 brother priests gathered at the Maison du Diocese for a week of fraternal sharing, praying and celebrating together since the Covid 19 restriction was lifted. We listened to the different presentations on the situation, statistics and status of the different regional, national and local fraternities. Concerns, challenges and calls in ministering to the migrants displaced by conflicts and climate change, working with

non-European priests, the reality of aging and lack of new members vis-à-vis the desire to plant the fraternity in new territories, areas of stagnation and of growth in fidelity to the spirituality of Jesus of Nazareth following the footsteps of Brother Charles, brought us to humble awareness, accepting our limitations and brokenness and more so, in being receptive to the grace of the Risen Lord persistently present. With the Letter from Annecy by the European brothers and a video clip in You Tube, this report is being complimented. We are grateful to the out-going European Team



of Kuno, Alain and Joe who worked hard in preparing and running around in order to create a climate of lively exchange among veterans and younger brothers. We are equally grateful to the new team of Boris

from Switzerland, Fergal from Ireland and Eddy, from Belgium (sse foto).

In the afternoon of July 17th, we bid goodbye to the assembly and headed towards Valle de Thones, a lovely village hidden beyond the lake and the mountains. We lodged in Alain's family house. The cozy cottage, the panoramic green meadows, woods, rocky mountain peaks and the silence perfectly set us into the mood to live, pray and work together. Gerard, the brother of Alain and the village chief was so kind to look



after our needs and even do errands for us. Before the day ended, we toured a little around the village, did some groceries and arranged the tasks of cooking, leading the prayers and the program of work we targeted to accomplish. We sat out on the first day to review the working draft of the Statutes prepared by Honore. We make sure that the essentials - identity, nature, mission and governance of the Fraternity – are written in a more simplified, realistic and shorter form while moving other details of the internal rules in the Directory. Our discussions allowed us to clarify and deepen our limited knowledge and superficial engagement in the fraternity. We continued in our attempt to reformulate the Directory in a more inclusive and synodal language while remaining faithful to the original French and its English translation. Here we traced a little of the beginnings and development of the Fraternity and see new perspectives for growth and missions. All these are items for deliberation and approval at the World Assembly in 2025.



As to the initial planning for the World Assembly, Africa was the first choice. However, due to travel and security constraints, Lulunta in Mendoza, Argentina will be our venue in January 2025. Fernando gladly made contacts for some initial planning with the South American Region in order to help out as host. Our prayers at the beginning and at the end of the day, the Eucharist and Adoration to the

Creator helped us to depend solely on the wisdom of the Holy Spirit that kindles the fire and guides us together in the service of the Fraternity. Even in preparing the

meals, setting the table, washing the dishes and keeping the house clean kept us on the ground. It's like we're on our mini-Month of Nazareth!

The short engagement with Gerard our host and Gerard the village priest, who kept a vibrant aura and humor in his 90's, was indeed heartwarming. Fernando left earlier on July 22nd to help close the Month of Nazareth in Sto. Domingo before heading home to Santiago, Chile.



At our culminating night, we lighted and offer a candle to each other with words of appreciation for the gifts each one shared in our fraternity. It was moving! So much had happened and transpired as we met, prayed and worked together. The fireworks on Bastille Day, the touristic place of Annecy and the rich religious traditions around Sts. Francis de Sales and Jean Francois de Chantal gifted us with a beautiful ambiance

to our coming together.

From Annecy, Matthias, Honore, Tony and Eric visited Viviers and stayed at the seminary (which is now a hotel) where Brother Charles studied for the priesthood. Spending a moment of adoration and gratitude at the chapel where he was ordained was an enchanting experience. Breathing the air, walking the corridors and touring around the town which is now a touristic place was just like drinking from the well of our beginnings. Thanks to Honore's friend, Matthias and Eric were able to come and visit Notre Dame de Neiges, now a home for Trappistines Sisters. Being immersed in the silence, enamored with the beauty of the place and the singing of the sisters and quietly praying at the chapel dedicated to Brother Charles was another homecoming experience. In all these, we held close to our hearts the realities, concerns and calls of our fraternities to whom we are sent to serve and animate.

Brothers, thank you very much for your fidelity and your desire to be faithful to Jesus of Nazareth in the footsteps of Brother Charles. What lies ahead, we surrender everything to our Loving Father with boundless confidence.

God bless us all...

Eric, Matthias, Fernando, Honore and Tony