



Equipes Notre-Dame ERI Mail

The internationality of the Teams of Our Lady

Two years ago, the ERI produced the book "Development and Internationalisation of the Movement of the Teams of Our Lady". With this publication, the ERI wanted to offer all the team members an overview of the expansion of the Movement over time and space, and to accompany it with some reflections on formation and the basic foundations of the life and development of the Teams of Our Lady.

The Introduction rightly recalled Father Caffarel's joy at seeing the growth of END in Brazil and, also mentioned his concern that the rapid spread of the Movement should not potentially diminish the commitment to deep and serious formation.

When we look at what has happened over the years since 1939, we can see how, year after year, Teams of Our Lady has covered the geography of our Common Home. The ERI publication speaks of "shock waves" in the increase of presence and participation (1939–1959, there were twenty countries; 1960–1969, another nine; 1970–end 1999, another 22; and so far this century, we see 33 new countries).

There are now more than 90 national territories where the Teams are present. A respectable and significant figure.

Thinking about this international dimension leads us to rethink once again about the meaning of what we are living and what we are doing. It is not a question of thinking about how to become propagandists eager to be present in many places, or about turning our Movement into a group of proselytisers anxious to cover territories without restraint. No. The meaning of internationality must fundamentally be the ongoing concern that the gift of God's grace, which is made present in the life of couples through the Sacraments, may be appreciated and lived by more couples in the world.

Hence the concern of our founder must become the constant concern of all of us. Quantitative growth must necessarily be accompanied by more and better formation. It has

been a conscious desire of the ERI that the ongoing formation of team members should occupy a prominent place in its work.

Internationality, a characteristic that responds to the catholicity of the Church, has allowed us to appreciate how, in different cultures and different countries, we see the interests, cares and problems common to the reality of the life of couples. Internationality enriches experience, knowledge and diversity. It implies recognising that, despite the differences that may appear, we share a common charism, and our vocation has repercussions on other horizons. In internationality we are all enriched.

It is good to bear in mind that, from the outset, the idea was not to create a kind of "federation" of teams in different places or associated national autonomies, but to maintain the unity of a single Movement in all the richness and diversity of these nations. This has been seen to be possible and praiseworthy. For this reason, the international dimension fosters unity and increases the sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ and to the Teams of Our Lady. As long as our own charism, mysticism and pedagogy are faithfully maintained, this unity can be guaranteed in the multiplicity of places, languages and cultures.

A characteristic of our internationality and a sign of the desire for exchange between team members of different origins, is the institution of the International Gatherings. Lourdes, Rome, Fatima, Santiago de Compostela, Brasilia... have seen the arrival of thousands of team members from different places for their respective six-yearly gatherings.

Next year, it will be the city of Turin, in enchanting Italy, which will be the venue for our International Gathering. It will be a new opportunity to experience that real sense of unity in the internationality of Teams of Our Lady.

May the Lord grant us faith, hope and love, to live the enthusiasm of sharing together the life choices and testimonies of other brothers and sisters around the world.

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