

# Letter to the Nations

#19. June 2010

## Lettre aux Nations

### EDITORIAL

#### Frater: 50 years of intercontinental work

- 1960: I International Committee in Bury
- 1961: II International Committee in Trier (Germany)
- 1963: III International Committee in Friburg (Switzerland)
- 1965: IV International Committee in Barcelona (Spain)
- 1968: V International Committee in Argenteuil (France)
- 1974: VI International Committee in Vienna (Austria)
- 1976: VII International Committee in Frankfurt (Germany)
- 1978: VIII International Committee in Loyola (Spain)
- 1980: IX International Committee in Ciney (Belgium)
- 1984: X International Committee in San José (Costa Rica)
- 1985: XI International Committee in Lyon (France).

Set-up of the intercontinental structure and the first Intercontinental Team is elected.

- 1989: I Intercontinental Committee in Sameiro (Portugal)
- 1995: II Intercontinental Committee in Salvador de Bahía (Brazil)
- 2000: III Intercontinental Committee in Weisbaden (Germany)
- 2005: IV Intercontinental Committee in El Escorial (Spain)...

V Intercontinental Committee in Oporto (Portugal), 2 to 9 August **2010**.

From its inception, Frater has tried to remain faithful to its own ethos which believes in minimum structure and maximum life.

In its desire to foster and celebrate life, Frater has gradually acquired a structure at various levels, such as at the Diocese, national and international levels. Similarly this simple style proved appropriate given our limited resources, and also our same desire to light the way by providing an accessible and welcoming service to all.

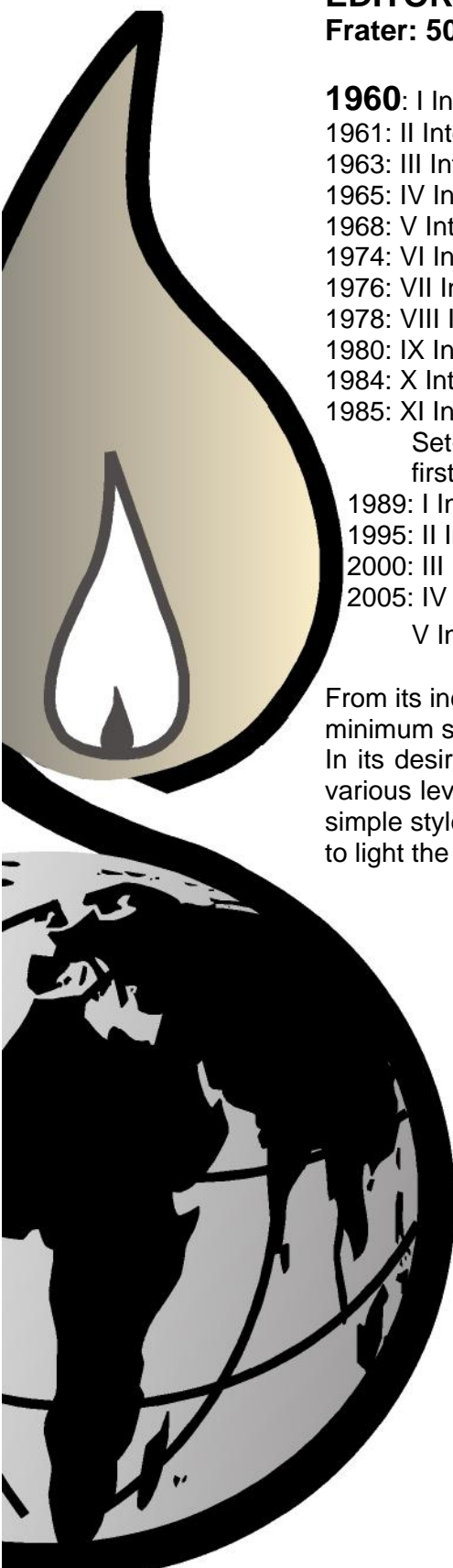
From 1961 to 1985, 11 International Committees have been held. From 1989 onwards, these Committees were called "Intercontinental Committees", since in Latin America the Frater network was already extensive and international events were held there too. Also, our movement had already begun in Africa. Greater coordination was required to ensure that we remained united, and became even more important when our inspirational leader P. François passed away.

The last Intercontinental Committee was held in El Escorial (Spain) in 2005. The work in these events is not an easy task. There is a range of countries involved, some where Frater has just begun, others with much more experience, all with different approaches and expectations, etc. This requires excellent organization and great financial investment, as the trips and simultaneous interpretation represent a major part of the expenses that very few countries can afford.

(It follows in the following page)



1972. Frater Congress in Rome.



FRATERNIDAD CRISTIANA  
INTERCONTINENTAL  
DE PERSONAS  
CON DISCAPACIDAD

[www.fratinter.org](http://www.fratinter.org)

This effort, in every sense, may have caused some to wonder it was sensible to hold these events, or if they were necessary.

We believe that they are. In Frater, we believe in personal encounter. Personal contact is our greatest strength and is the main foundation of the movement. At the intercontinental level, these encounters are extremely rich, creating important links between Frater branches, exchange of experiences, stimuli, celebrations of faith which prove so interesting and diverse between such different cultures from countries so far away from each other.

We would like to invite all Frater branches – from the base team to the national team – to actively participate in the Intercontinental Committee, each investing their skills and collaboration towards its next meeting.

## 2010 INTERCONTINENTAL COMMITTEE PREPARATION

### INITIAL STEPS...

As you all know, just as the last Frater International Committee has come to a close, it is already time to begin preparations for the next one. Yet, the most intense part of the planning stage is right before the event.

The first consultation held in the different countries dealt with Committee participants and the topics to be addressed. It is such that when the International team meeting took place in July of 2008, we agreed to send a circular to the countries involved inviting them to participate and asking them to share their opinion on the issues in question. The circular was sent out on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008; we waited for responses through January of 2009. The responses were very few. Given the results of the circular, we have consulted the Continental Coordinators for their opinion.

Considering the opinions shared during this consultation, we approved PARTICIPATION, by delegation (3

delegates per continent), and not from every country, as was the case for the previous Committee in 2005. As a reminder, the delegates must be chosen within their respective Assemblies or Continental Committees.

With regard to the TOPICS that need to be studied within the Committee, the suggestions (which were adopted) were as follows:

- A discussion regarding Frater's identity. Especially the shared fundamentals for training at Frater (as a follow-up to the work completed in Sameiro in 1989.)

- Human rights for persons with disabilities as per the United Nations, from a religious perspective.

Once the topics decided upon (between December 2008 and July 2009), we sought out people study them within the Committee. During the International Team meeting in August of 2009, several people were nominated and an agreement was finally reached: Fernando Ferreira (Portugal) was chosen to handle first topic and Pino Trejo (Spain) was chosen to handle the second topic. The International Team outlined the major points to be addressed while still leaving it completely up to the speakers to handle.

With regards to the committee's SLOGAN, adopted to address the suggestions proposed, we decided on "Fraternity: serving the world based on its identity."

Finally, during this preparation period, on the one hand, we asked that candidates be nominated for the Intercontinental Team (Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator and Chaplain), up for election during the 2010 Committee, and on the other hand, we asked that thought be given to the steps and formalities required to realize potential relationships with the different countries, as set forth by the statutes.

people from the artistic field, have been invited for the opening of the committee, as well as for other important junctures, ...



## **IMMEDIATE PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2010 INTERCONTINENTAL COMMITTEE**

### **PARTICIPANTS**

Based on the results of the consultation, as mentioned earlier, the representatives chosen to participate in the Intercontinental Committee are as follows:

The Teams: In the host country of Portugal, Continental Teams and the Core Team.

The continental delegates elected to serve on Continental Assemblies (3 per continent)

Guests from Taiwan: Two people will be invited to participate in the Committee, as was the case in the previous committee.

Members of the Portuguese Fraternity who would like to join are welcome to participate in some of our meetings.

The President of the Portuguese Episcopal Conference (Archbishop of Braga), the Diocesan Bishop of Porto, the Seminary Rector and seminarians, religious figures, members of the Pastoral of Health and other movements, the President of the University, as well as

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERCONTINENTAL COMMITTEE**

The goal of the 5th Intercontinental Committee of Frater, like the previous committees, is to bring together all of the Continental Coordination Teams, delegations from each continent, and all other people in support of our cause and whose presence we deem useful.

The Intercontinental Committee represents an opportunity to conduct research, open dialogue and exchange information with the goal of bringing the spirit of the Fraternity to life throughout the different continents. It is also a time of communion between all the members of the Christian Fraternity and Persons with Disabilities throughout the world.

We hope to reach our main objective by completing these specific tasks:

Providing information on the Fraternity's current situation in all countries and continents.

Evaluating the work of the Fraternity on the different continents as well as the

work of the continental and intercontinental teams.

Evaluating the growth of the Fraternity on the various continents.

If need be, as active members of the National Fraternities, asserting the requests for affiliation with the Intercontinental Fraternity,

Defining our position and the action plan for the two main issues:

- As far as training is concerned, reflecting on the shared ground between all countries and continents so that they all work on certain fundamental issues using a common methodology from a faith-based perspective, thereby reinforcing the cohesion and unity of the Fraternity.



- Raising social awareness by making known the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by using an engaging approach that is also faithful to the Christian-identified Fraternity.

Electing the Intercontinental Core Group made up of an Assistant Intercontinental Coordinator and an Intercontinental Chaplain and assigning this team their mission.

Voting on the budget and assigning the Intercontinental Team its mission to manage planned activities.

Examining the material and/or financial aid in line with international solidarity and

according to the criteria established by the Movement.

## **ANTICIPATED RESULTS**

In light of the above objectives, we hope to see the following results from the Intercontinental Committee:

- Improved knowledge of the current situation of Frater in each country and on each continent.
- Approval of the Fraternity's expansion plan for the 2010 to 2014 period.
- Intercontinental activity planning for the four years to come.
- Election of a new Intercontinental Core Group for the upcoming period
- Budget approval and assignment of its management to the Intercontinental Team.
- A more in-depth knowledge of and effort to adopt the suggestions proposed in the 1989 Sameiro document on establishing common ground for training in all countries.
- Gaining a better understanding of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and assuming an engaged role in defending these rights.
- Providing support and motivation to the Fraternity in the host country of Portugal.
- Raising awareness about the persons with disabilities in the Porto society through the presence of Fraternity members as well as the committee activities.

## **ACTIVITIES**

With these goals in mind, we are planning the following activities:

- The opening act and the beginning of the committee. This is an opportunity to commune with our hosts. We will begin with a reminder of the previous Committee agreements and the approval of the current committee's work proposition.

- Planning of meetings by continent and by country in order to prepare the topics pertaining to each country and the shared topics.

- Presenting reports submitted by the Continental Teams on the activities completed, the current situation and the growth of the Fraternity on every continent and in each country since the previous Intercontinental Committee in 2005. The Portugal Team, who is hosting us, and the Core Team, will also present their activities.

- Reflection on the « Community of values. » All Fraternity members throughout the world must strengthen their union as well as their human and material resources in order to be able to survive.

- Presentation of the topic: "Shared fundamentals for training". We would like to see the document on this topic, which was voted on and chosen during the 1989 Sameiro Committee, further developed. We nominate Fernando Ferreira as moderator of this topic during the current committee, who will be in charge of Training in Portugal.

- Presentation of the topic: "The Convention of Rights of People with Disabilities, from an identity perspective". Reflection on the identity of the Fraternity is required in order to know where we stand and how to proceed. Rather than spend too much time on legal issues, actually taking action is what really matters. In order to do so, it is necessary to be familiar with the convention beforehand, which is possible thanks to the information available on this topic. Pino Trejo, a Catholic female activist from Spain, will be the speaker in charge of presenting this topic.

- Dialogue on community-level reflection: VISITS. We will devote a certain amount of time at Committee to taking stock of the responses regarding the Gospel,

submitted by the different countries. We propose the subject of personal contacts for new reflection based given that it is an equally important topic.

- The election of the Core Team's Intercontinental coordinator who will serve until the next Intercontinental Committee. Prior to the election, it would be wise to devote some time to deep reflection on the function and mission of the intercontinental coordination of the Core Team.



### **THE 2010 COMMITTEE'S PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE DIFFERENT COUNTRIES**

For this committee, the Intercontinental Team decided, during the 2009 meeting, that the work to be done by the different countries should be decided upon **AFTER** the committee, which is why, through the circular, we have invited the different countries and teams to collaborate on the preparation of this committee from within their different countries. This press release was sent to all countries during late January/beginning February, 2010. If there are individuals who did not receive this communiqué, they can get it from their continental coordinator.

We also think it would be worthwhile to share information with the continental coordinators on the actions taken and training modalities used in different countries. As for the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well, we think it would be useful to glean information for the groups and encourage them to ask questions in order

to better familiarize themselves with the topic.

Based on the conclusions drawn at the close of the committee, we will provide you with a sort of work tool which will allow you to learn more about these two topics: TRAINING, and the work of the Fraternity in terms of the CONVENTION.

### REMINDER...

In order to better plan for the Committee, and to encourage everyone's participation, we would like to remind you of the most important points that will be addressed:

### TOPICS TO BE ADDRESSED

REPORTS. Getting the information out in such a way that the respective continental coordinators will receive it.

COMMUNICATION OF VALUES. Reflecting on solidarity within our Fraternity.

### MAIN TOPICS

- SHARED FUNDAMENTALS FOR FRATER TRAINING

- THE CONVENTION OF THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AS IT RELATES TO FRATER'S IDENTITY.

The study of the preparatory circular, which includes the 1989 Sameiro document as well as the United Nations convention, along with all documentation available on the convention in our respective languages.

REPORT ON COMMON REFLECTION REGARDING VISITS. We will take another look at the previous input received in order to further reflect on biblical texts.

THE FUNCTION OF THE CORE TEAM AS INTERCONTINENTAL COORDINATOR.

We will raise awareness regarding the function and tasks of the Core Team as a mark of the unity of the entire Fraternity.

PRAYER. Each team coordinator, along with the delegations, will nominate one another to lead in a moment of prayer during the committee.

We would now like to invite you to join us in the following prayer to bring the committee, which presents many

challenges to all the Fraternity, to a close on a positive note.

### PRAYER FOR THE INTERCONTINENTAL COMMITTEE

LORD OUR GOD,  
WE GIVE UP OUR WORRIES  
AND ASPIRATIONS TO YOU,  
WE GIVE YOU OUR  
RELATIONSHIPS,  
WHICH WE WANT TO BE  
FRATERNAL.  
WE GIVE YOU OUR LIVES,  
AND THE PLACE YOU HAVE  
PROVIDED US,  
WITH WHICH WE WANT TO  
USE TO SERVE TO THE BEST  
OF OUR ABILITIES.  
WE GIVE UP EVERYTHING TO  
YOU THROUGH JESUS,  
IN HIS LIFE OF WORK,  
IN HIS LIFE OF DEVOTION,  
IN HIS LOVE FOR THE POOR,  
AND HIS DEATH ON THE  
CROSS,  
IN HIS LIFE AND  
RESURRECTION.  
WE PRAY THAT OUR  
INTERCONTINENTAL  
COMMITTEE CONTRIBUTES  
TO THE SPREAD OF THE  
GOOD NEWS, AND THAT IT  
MAY GAIN RECOGNITION  
AND LOVE THROUGHOUT  
THE WORLD.

**AMEN**

