



FRATERNIDAD CRISTIANA
INTERCONTINENTAL
DE PERSONAS
CON DISCAPACIDAD

INTERCONTINENTAL COMMUNITY CONTEMPLATION

WHAT IS IT?

The Intercontinental Fraternity, in coordination with the central co-ordinating team, is inviting worldwide members to participate in a series of contemplative biblical readings. The theme of the readings is “**Encounters**”. Personal encounters are a fundamental component of who we are. They do not replace or exclude other features of the Fraternity like the team, spiritual learning and social change, but make them richer and stronger.

WHY?

- Because the Intercontinental Fraternity “listens” to the WORD (of God and fellow man – especially of those who suffer);
- Because we believe that reaching out to people in encounters is something important that should not be neglected;
- Because this event is a way to continue the contemplations held at our last Intercontinental meeting; by looking at John 13 and Matthew 25, we learned how to listen to one another and discovered we are all part of a “humble fraternity of the last”;
- Because we need to feel we belong, together, united in a common goal; a goal that brings us together through our faith;
- Because having a network is important for what we create and do, so that collaboration between members in different countries is not exceptional but instead becomes a part of daily life.

HOW?

An invitation will be sent simultaneously to all the national and continental co-ordinating teams, who will decide how to best inform their respective fraternities at different levels (at encounters, conferences and local meetings for example).

Each country’s coordinating team will collect responses.

All responses should then be sent to Frater Intercontinental’s central team either by e-mail: info@fratinter.org or fratinter@gmail.com, or if you don’t have Internet or received this message by other means, by mailing them directly to Frater Intercontinental’s core team:

FRATER INTERCONTIENTAL
Avda. Los Pinos, 242
12100 GRAO-CASTELLÓN (Spain).

Once countries have submitted their summaries, a report will be compiled and sent back to each country in order to share results with local groups. This will provide an opportunity to make new comments on the results.

WHEN?

Please reply as soon as possible so all responses can be processed.

Responses should be sent no later than **January 31, 2009** (November 2008 in Latin America).



CONTEMPLATION: ENCOUNTERS

"Through a simple encounter, you give yourself fully..."
(P. François)

REASONS FOR CONTEMPLATION

Excerpts of messages from Father François:

CHRISTMAS 1957

I have often felt the power of embracing others and in the first encounter between two people... Is it possible to extend the power of embracing from our small circle of friends to everyone around us? If I am happy because I myself have been embraced, can I not embrace someone else in turn?...

The most important feature of embracing is that it happens spontaneously. Just as a football player always waits for the ball, I must also wait for the "other" so that every one of my brothers can be embraced rather than tolerated as an inconvenience that I have to put up with. This brings us to a second feature of embracing – forgetting oneself. I cannot spontaneously reach out to the "other" if I remain caught up in myself.

CHRISTMAS 1964

Through a simple encounter, you give yourself fully...

It was a simple encounter that was much appreciated. A ray of light entered a dark room and shined on long after its bearer had departed.

Do you understand the long-term impact your encounter will have? You will begin to understand the true needs of your brother and sister. You knew nothing about them before. You visited your brother and he would now like to thank you. You visited your brother and he would now like to encourage others to do the same. A rock has dropped into a pond, causing waves to spread over the water's surface.

EASTER 1962

Let us go honestly and warmly towards our brother and sister... let us go to meet them... wearing no mask... Above all, let us not take what is his. We will only fail and cause him suffering. This old crutch must fall away of its own accord...

Other texts: EASTER 1978, 1981. INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER, January 1971

EVANGELICAL REFERENCES:

Luke 7, 36-50 Jesus is invited into a Pharisee's house.

Luke 19, 1-10 Jesus visits the house of Zacchaeus.

FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION:

- Try to imagine the scenes of the story: picture the people and what they are doing. Concentrate.
- Think of similar experiences you have had in your own life.

Questionnaire:

- Which people go to see or visit Jesus?
- Which people does Jesus go to see?
- What things does Jesus focus on?
- What happens during these encounters?
- How do people react in Jesus's presence?
- What is the outcome of these encounters?

Elements to share with the group:

1. What changes occur in the people who are visited?
2. What changes are occurring or have occurred in us as the result of encounters?
3. Do our encounters allow Jesus's presence to be felt by us and by those we encounter?

ELEMENTS FOR GROUP MEETINGS:

1. Get the meeting going with the reading of a prayer or a Message text.
2. Read the Scriptures together as a group.
3. Share thoughts, doubts and comments on your personal contemplations.
4. Pool together your answers to the previous three questions.
5. Give thanks together if the encounter experience is perceived by the group as being the Gospel.
6. Suggest a personal or group commitment as a result of this thanks.

To further enrich the contemplation process, suggest the reading of other texts we know about encounters or embracing others (either in the Scriptures, our experiences, songs, popular traditions etc.).

PRAYER FOR EMBRACING OTHERS (based on a message from Father François)

*Dear Lord, let us feel the power of an embrace,
and the value of an encounter.
Embracing happens spontaneously.
It goes hand and hand with that which is unexpected.
To embrace, we must be awaiting the other.
To confidently, and fully embrace
he who is the other,
and not someone to tolerate and put up with.
To do this requires forgetting who we are.
We cannot go spontaneously to the other
if we are closed within ourselves.
Lord, we give you thanks
for through embracing we see the face of the other,
we move beyond appearances,
and try to attain what is real.
Lord, please guide us to not trick he who we embrace.
Lord, let us feel the following words:
"May all those who suffer on Earth live in peace,
for the Lord Christ embraces them,
and for him, we shall embrace one another".*