

International Catholic Engaged Encounter
Executive Board Meeting
Minutes
October 13-17, 2003
Emmaus Retreat Centre
Arima, Trinidad

Attendees:

ICEE Committee Members-

Gerry & Ann Bach and Fr. Gary Gummersheimer	International Executive Team
Paco & Mali Rocha and Fr Alejandro Illescas Molina	Statistics & Post WE Resources Team
Jairo & Claudia Duque and Fr. Gilberto Gomez Botero	Outline and Resources Team
Terry & Jackie Greely and Fr. Tony Kerin	Finance & Secretary Team

ICEE Regional Representation-

Mexico – Guillermo & Luby Güereque and Fr David Muñiz
Central America and Spanish Caribbean - Jose Luis & Marianela Pacheco and Fr Melvin Fernandez
South Africa – Bruce & Jeanine Forest and Fr Robin Van der Spuy
Europe – Juan & Mari Marin Rubio
South America - Juan Simon & Patricia Maldonado and Fr Angel Heredia
USA – Jim & Sandy Dyk and Fr Jay Biber
Caribbean English Speaking – Francis & Annette Wattie and Fr Leonard Alfonso
Oceania – Peter & Christine Rawnsley
Canada – Peter & Paulette Amsden and Fr Tery Runstedler

Countries attending

Colombia – Demostenes & Leyla Lozano Garces
Dominica – Gilbert and Noreen Williams
Trinidad – Jose & Barbara Salazar, Carl & Patricia Mendez, Ricardo & Cintra Joachim

Translators: Paco Rocha and Jaime Graells

Monday, October 13

Delegates paid a courtesy call to Archbishop Edward Gilbert on Monday morning and the Archbishop addressed them on the importance of their work.

7:00 pm Welcome / Mass celebrated by Fr Gary Gummersheimer
Many members of the Trinidad EE community were present and Jose and Barbara's
40th wedding anniversary was commemorated.

8:00 pm Introductions
Gerry Bach welcomed everyone and asked Paco to translate for this evening. The Trinidad
representatives lit the Christ candle as a welcome to Jesus in our midst. Fr Gilberto placed the Icon of

the Holy Family and asked that we meet under the protection of the Holy Family. They are not only an inspiration for our meeting but a support and help in our mission to build strong families and homes.

1. INTRODUCTIONS BY REGION:

South Africa: Bruce and Jeanine Forrest. Joined CEE in 2000. 6 children. Live in Durban. Hope to reach out to Kenya. Delighted to be here. **and Fr Robin Van der Spuy** 15 years with CEE with Philip and Patsy Prince.

English Speaking Caribbean: Francis and Annette Wattie. Married 22 years with 2 children and with EE for 13 years. Were local coordinators for 2 years and now Caribbean coordinators with **Fr Leonard Alfonso.** Region comprises Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Barbados, Trinidad and St Vincent. **Noreen and Gilbert Williams** are from Dominica and have been married 34 years with 4 children. They have been senior presenting team for 4 years. **Jose and Barbara Salazar** are from Trinidad and have been married 40 years and have 5 children, 5 granddaughters and 2 more expected. With EE 13 years and national coordinators on two occasions. **Carl and Patricia Mendez** from Trinidad have been married 33 years 3 children, 3 grandchildren and with EE for 5 ½ years as a senior presenting couple.

Mexico: Guillermo (Memo) & Luby Güereque with **Fr David Muñiz** are the National team from Mexico. They live in Chihuahua, Mexico and have been married 30 years. With EN. for 12 years and 2 children aged 30 and 27. Fr David has been ordained 15 years and spent 10 of those with EN.

Oceania: Peter and Christine Rawnsley represent Australian and New Zealand. They live in Wellington New Zealand and have been with EE for 14 years. They have been married 33 years and have 4 children in 3 countries around the world. They were selected as the regional team with Fr Bill Warwick in 2002.

United States of America: Jim & Sandy Dyk from Richmond Virginia have been with EE for 17 years. They are married 37 years and have 2 children and 1 grandson. **Fr Jay Biber** has been a priest 18 years and 12 of those with EE.

Canada: Fr Tery Rundstedler has been a priest for 19 years and served EE for 18 years and is from London Ontario, Canada. **Peter and Paulette Amsden** were in Pittsburgh but have since been selected again as National Team. They are married 35 years with 2 children, (both EE and ME experienced) and 6 grandchildren. They have been with EE for 10 years.

Europe: Juan and Mari Marin from Barcelona Spain have been married 33 years and have 5 children. They have done 10 years with EN. They were selected as coordinators this year and it is their first time to an international meeting. A little tentative since they don't speak English but they trust in the love of all for engaged couples.

Centro America y Caribe Hispana: Fr Melvin Fernandez and Jose-Luis Pacheco have gone off this evening to find an Internet connection to collect their email. **Marianela Pacheco** has been married to Jose-Luis for 20 years and they have three daughters. 10 years with EN and their 7th International meeting, they finish 6 years as regional coordinators this year.

SurAmerica: Juan-Simon Maldonado is also off at the Internet this evening. His wife **Patricia** and **Fr Angel Heredia** are expected to arrive Tuesday evening. **Leyla and Demostenes Lozano** are the Colombian coordinators and have been with EN in Bogota for 13 years. They are married 44 years and have 5 children. This is the 25th anniversary year of EN in Bogota, the strongest of all the Colombian EN communities with 30 couples per month living the weekend.

Paco and Mali Rocha are from Mexico, and are the international statistics and post weekend resources team. They are 33 years married with 3 children and 1 grandson. 20 years in EM and 19 with EN. **Fr Alejandro Illescas Molina** is a member of the Congregation of the Sons of God and has been ordained 13 years with 6 years in EN.

Jairo and Claudia Duque from Colombia, are the International Outline and Weekend resources Team with 35 years married and 3 children and 1 ½ grandsons. They have served 26 years as team; 10 years with EM and 17 years with EN. They served 6 years as South American coordinators and have been with International for 4 years and are commencing their second term with **Fr Gilberto Gomez Botero**. He was ordained in 1959. As a young priest he was invited to work with family ministry and he started EM in Bogota. He has been responsible for many Pastoral Family initiatives.

Terry and Jackie Greely with **Fr Tony Kerin** are the Finance and Secretary couple from Australia. They are 39 years married and have 4 children and 5 grandchildren. They have been with EE for 17 years. Previously they were the regional team from Oceania and before that the team for EE Victoria. Fr Tony was ordained 1977 and worked with EE since 1982. Until December last year he worked full time as a judge of the Tribunal of the Catholic Church for Victoria and Tasmania. But since March he has been appointed a parish priest for the first time in his 26 years of priesthood.

Fr Gary Gummersheimer and Gerry and Ann Bach are the International Executive Team. Gary is 24 years a priest of Belleville Diocese in Illinois. He has been with EE for 15 years. Gerry and Ann have been married 30 years and have 3 children and 2 grandchildren. They too live in Southern Illinois.

Thank you to all for sharing.

2. Review of the Agenda / Questions

The agenda was modified on the consent of the meeting and a few things were added and rearranged to enable Mass before breakfast.

Tuesday, October 14

7:30 am Mass (Main Celebrant - – Fr. Alejandro Illescas - Molina)
9:00 am Further Introductions

Juan Simon Maldonado introduced himself.

Fr Melvin Fernandez is 23 years a priest in San Jose, Costa Rica, 10 years with EN. 3 years with Jose-Luis and Marianela Pacheco as the team for Costa Rica and the Central America and Spanish Caribbean.

Fr Leonard Alphonso is a priest from Barbados and has been a priest for 17 years. Born in Trinidad

and grew up in St Lucia.

3. REVIEW MINUTES FROM THE 2002 COMMITTEE MEETING

Fr Gilberto sent a Spanish copy of the minutes to everyone on his list.

The minutes were approved by the meeting.

No discussion ensued. Everyone seemed happy with the minutes as an accurate report of the meeting.

4. REGIONAL REPORTS (15 to 30 Minutes per report)

CANADA:

Peter and Paulette reported on the new administration manual now in use in Canada. World Youth Day. CEE set up and staffed a booth at the WYD expo fair. USA assisted with reimbursement of expenses incurred. Trialling a shorter weekend eliminating Friday night by lengthening Saturday and Sunday and shortening the breaks. (same content and hours) Canada National board has asked ICEE to address the Cohabitation question. (noted for later agenda item). Some communities are looking to devise a short family planning presentation. It is important not to simply call this birth control since it is the regulation of birth with the focus on new life, not just the restriction of it. It is hoped to have a generic talk soon for use throughout the region. There is a Canadian national convention in Calgary, Alberta in August 2005. All are welcome to come.

Comments:

The reason for eliminating Friday night? Because of traveling distances of some couples they could not get to the venue in time to start. What is the loss to the weekend dynamic when only one night is spent at the venue? In some parts no nights are spent. The couples go home each evening. Ultimately the weekend is for the couple and not for the community. The couple needs are paramount. There are communities in the US who do this too. Friday night does give the couples space to acclimatize to the weekend dynamic better. Couples coming from a distance for the weekend are going to have to find somewhere to stay Friday night anyway. The whole Central American and Spanish Caribbean region use only Saturday and Sunday. We need to focus on the content that is being presented and how it is received rather than being tied to a form or timetable of presentation. The follow-up weekend is spasmodic and scattered. It is not in widespread general use.

ENGLISH SPEAKING CARIBBEAN:

In Dominica there are an average of eight couples per weekend. In Trinidad weekends are held at this centre with an average attendance of 30 couples. In Guyana they are working to start weekends in the near future. They are affiliated but do not have weekends at present. All the islands have the problem of recruiting team and priests. But they are grateful for the committed team and priests they do have. There is one follow-up group in Trinidad, but it is hoped that the recent information from ICEE on follow up strategies may help to increase this. The distance between the islands makes transport expensive. They are committed to working with the Bishops conference to improve communication between the islands. The Bishops are being asked to finance in part the transport and to get the priests interested. Cohabitation is also an issue here. The profile is a little different in that many couples already have children.

Comments:

The Archbishop spoke to us of Single parent families. This is part of the cohabitation issue. In Mexico there are couples who already have children and we send them to Marriage Encounter weekends

instead. The premature sexual relations of young people is a worldwide problem. We should make a discussion on this at some time this week.

EUROPE:

Engaged encounter in Spain is working in three communities and seeking to expand at the same time. We seek unity in the essentials and liberty in the accidentals. We are trying to contact the couples who did the FDS last year and to get them to have some follow-up experience. The bishop of Gerona has authorized the weekends but we have not started yet. The community of Madrid is using another outline and this makes it difficult to help one another.

Comments:

Is ME still active in Europe? Yes, very active. ME in Europe do not want ICEE to expand in Europe. Many EE communities prefer to link with ME and the old outlines that they have adapted themselves over the years rather than use the newer international outline. The executive has done a great deal of work with International Marriage Encounter. Later this week we will receive information from the world ME meeting which pledges cooperation with EE and Retrouvaille.

Fr David spoke of the differences in the new and old outlines but he presumes there are some similarities. Imposing the outline might be less important than gaining the unity. Imposing the outline might impose the division. Spain are doing just that and they are comparing outlines but there are very important lackings in the older outline. We agree the aim is the same, but there are some issues that are essential. We need to note these.

MEXICO:

Memo & Luby reported that the copies of their report are all in both languages. Luby summarized the statistics for the period. The vision for the national team was to be true to the good work of the previous team and to move on from there. They wanted to involve all of the diocesan teams with the work that national team was doing to implement the National Criteria. They thanked the ICEE for their support. They sought to develop new leaders for various levels of EE and to promote national unity. They had the 3rd National Encounter with the presence of the ICEE team and other family pastoral agencies.

Comments:

The Mexican team set an example for all of us. It is inspiring as well. Bachs and Maldonados commented on the wonderful experience of the 3rd National Encounter. When asked if they wanted to continue on with their work, Memo mentioned that in Mexico there is no re election possible. The transition to new teams is a helpful dynamic to review and revise the work we do with renewed energy. The spending of a weekend together by the outgoing and incoming team is a great idea.

CENTRO AMERICANA Y CARIBE:

They thanked God for what had happened and thanked ICEE for the support that had been given to their endeavours. The relations between the couples looking after the countries improved. The criteria for meetings were determined. Support for Nicaragua and Puerto Rico became a reality with FDS being held. The Workshopping workshop was a great help. It gave the chance for our region with Maldonados and other coordinators from South America to meet together and work on the writing of the talks. Their report considered the work being done in all the countries of the region. Excellent relations with EM are usual throughout the region. There are difficulties with doing weekends in Cuba but they are political and not problems of enthusiasm. They are finding a way around this.

Comments:

There was some discussion about how we involve permanent deacons in the support of the weekend. Seminarians are also a group to consider with regard to their involvement. The CEE is a community for all the Church members. CEE has something to offer everyone. The situation of the deacons as sacramental minister bears reflection. It is not so much a question of the deacon's standing in the Church but a matter of his experience and therefore ability to share that with the engaged couples. Everyone has to start somewhere and we all share what we have to share. Much of the priest's talks are doctrine anyway. It is not so much about experience but about vocation.

Lunch

10/10 Dialogue (Paco & Mali Rocha and Fr Alejandro) Theme: Discovering Love Again.

OCEANIA:

The English speakers quietly read the report while it was read aloud in Spanish translation.

Comments:

An explanation of the honeymooners weekend and the two consecutive Saturday format was given. Independently of which countries have done what, there is a constant approach of flexibility in times of lack whether it be of, participants or team couples and priests.

SOUTH AFRICA:

There are three communities in South Africa. Johannesburg 700km from Durban and Cape Town is 1500km from Durban. We are widespread but we cover the three main cities. Our area includes other countries like Zimbabwe and Mauritius and some interest in Kenya. So far only South Africa has the weekend. The number of engaged couples has increased. The population is 10% catholic in South Africa. In Cape Town and Johannesburg CEE is the official program of the diocese. In Johannesburg they work with the other one day course offered by the Diocese. CEE are a small, close and dynamic community. They have invited Seminarians to observe the weekend. Cohabitation is a problem for them as well. We do not judge them but encourage them to be chaste. They have done weekends without a priest, not by choice, but in desperation. Patsy and Philip Prince send their regards.

Comments:

Fr Robin approached the Archbishop of Cape Town with an invitation to participate on the weekend. He said he also had other things to do. But he thought again and asked the team to present the content of CEE to the final year seminarians at his seminary. It was successful and well received and now all final year students are expected to participate on a weekend. On the first weekend where this happened the engaged couples did not know the two men attending together were seminarians. This caused some confusion for the couples! But fortunately all was explained later. It is a valuable asset to have new priests who know the weekend from personal experience.

SUDAMERICA:

Juan Simon reported on the developments in a most active period for CEE in South America. They have divided the countries they have worked with into Active and Expanding countries, temporarily Recessed countries, Informal countries and Non autonomous countries. The development within each category of country is covered in their written report. Of significant interest are the negotiations with

EM in many of the countries. There is good will on both sides but because EM is in the powerful position in these places the move for autonomy of CEE needs to be promoted by EM leadership, since CEE has done all it can and some EM communities remain unmoved.

Comments:

Time was short and all comments were deferred as this matter is marked for later discussion.

UNITED STATES:

There are 150 local communities and 175 dioceses, and the number of couples to make the weekend increased by 1 to 2% last year. Catholic weddings are in substantial decline. The national board has focused on three areas. Content of weekend, nurturing communities, and outward expansion and evangelisation. The promotional video was screened. Some of the people interviewed looked familiar!

Comments:

God bless America!

5. SPANISH OUTLINE CHANGES & UPDATES:

Jose-Luis spoke of his concern for couples today. The first five years are an important time in every marriage and Central America has experienced that if the couples form communities well in that first five years their understanding and living of their marriages is much more deeply felt. In the meeting in Singapore in 1997 there was a letter received from Cardinal Trujillo where he asked CEE to walk with couples during this five year period.

Discussion: It was noted that of the goals and objectives of ICEE in the handbook, number 9 refers to the promotion of support groups for post weekend and newly married couples during the first four or five years of marriage.

Evening Meal

Some of the misunderstandings arise from the fact that some teams do not have the latest copy of the ICEE handbook. The handbook and the by laws are available from Fr Gilberto's website. If you do not have a document simply email Fr Gilberto and he will email it to you. The weekend outline is not on the website for copyright and unauthorized use protection. Electronic copies are available from central supply.

The Spanish outline has been adapted and revised for the Central American circumstances. Jose-Luis presented it in hard copy and electronic copy and asked the outline team to review and approve it's use. Juan-Simon suggested that of all the Spanish outlines there are differences. There is the English translated one which is the US Spanish version. The Mexican Spanish outline. And now the Central American outline. The idioms are different in diverse regions. Every outline requires some, even if only minor, local adjustment. The Core Concept paper distributed by US from their National Board would empower communities to make these changes. The problem with local adjustments is that they can become isolating if we do not engage the rest of the world communities and regions as part of the development process.

To conclude the outline theme, it was suggested in 1995 that there be a task force to determine just one

outline for all Spanish speaking countries. This task force met and found that minor variations were to be expected. At the 2000 meeting the US outline was determined to be the International outline and substantial alterations need to be approved by the International outline team.

Wednesday, October 15

7:30 am Mass (Main Celebrant - – Fr. Tony Kerin)

9:00am

6. Team A report: Statistics

Paco presented the statistical report and noted a number of conclusions that can be drawn from numbers. The lower number of weekends, the lower number of couples experiencing the weekend, the alterations to the regions such as the separation of Oceania and East Asia. The Workshop training weekend was held in Costa Rica and in Mexico. Post Encounter resources, topics and community participation was also noted.

RESOLUTION 1.

It was resolved that the statistics be kept for the calendar year, January to December, and that profile details for the Diocese and Country be gathered from the Diocesan Annual Reports to the Vatican, the Anuario Pontificio (Pontifical Yearbook) which is available at all Diocesan Offices.

7. Team B report Finances

Fr Tony commenced with a secretarial background briefing on the structure and funding of ICEE and the distinction between the Executive Board and the Executive Committee. The International structure of regions was also explained. Jackie Greely then outlined the statement of accounts for 14 months (due to the change of meeting date to August in San Diego last year).

Fr Tony commented upon the picture behind the raw figures of the financial statement. The regional reports give solid testimony to the inspiring, heroic and personal sacrifices being made to achieve the expansion, and the efforts being made by ICEE to assist EE to obtain autonomy from ME in some places. This is expensive and costly but necessary work. It comes at a cost. This cost could not be met without the enormous, generous and substantial contribution from the United States. The meeting was unanimous in its applause for the US team and the US National Board for its financial support of International CEE. ICEE cannot do much for US CEE financially, but we can repay them in kind. They have asked Fr Tony to be the Keynote at the Norfolk VA convention next year. There will be no fee for this. ICEE will pay Fr Tony's expenses and this will be a gift from ICEE to the United States, as a mark of our gratitude for their continuing generosity. They make the work of ICEE possible.

Discussion:

The Dominican Republic has for the past three years been working at supporting CEE in Cuba with providing priests etc. They cannot afford for this to continue but they need help for another three years. The question was asked whether a District in the US might want to sponsor this sort of activity as its own. If so then is it possible? The same point was made last year in San Diego. It is okay if it is cleared through ICEE. The problem is that these projects can adversely affect the overall contributions to ICEE and this would be counterproductive in the long term. This is the reason that ICEE approval would be essential. Every region should look to the couples that they serve and to whether they could use some

of the money the couples pay to fund local expansion as well. The vision talk is essential to every weekend, no matter where it is held.

8. CORRESPONDENCE:

Fr Tony mentioned that he had written on 26 September to the Holy Father, via the Apostolic Nuncio in Trinidad, affirming our fidelity to Church teaching and asking his blessing on our meeting and discernment. It is attached to these minutes. We await a reply in due course.

Lunch

10/10 Dialogue Question: The Gifts of CEE

Jackie & Terry Greely and Fr Tony Kerin followed by 10 minutes sharing in the big group.

9. Team C Report Outline and Resources

Fr Gilberto reminded us of the agreement of the world representatives of Marriage Encounter, Retrouvaille and Engaged Encounter as it not only promotes the sacrament of marriage but also strengthens marriage in the Catholic Church. For Engaged Encounter the way this is done is through the weekend. EE has done this very well so far and continues to do so but it can do more. The main instrument for achieving this is the outline. This guides the weekend and guarantees the doctrinal orientation, pedagogy and methodology of the weekend.

The outline is good, very good, but not perfect. To improve the outline we suggest as a resource, not an imposition, the following theological points. We do not intend to change the outline but to clarify some theological points.

- The natural institution of marriage which pre existed the sacrament established by Christ.
- Called to be one. Unity is one concept of this as a community of life and love. That is good but it is necessary to enrich it with its other meaning referring to one man and one women as opposed to polygamy.
- The concept of indissolubility should be presented with more than a prohibition of divorce, but as a call by God to persevere in the commitment to the deeper feeling of fundamental fidelity. The trend to serial relationships is a threat. Loving one person for life is not only desirable but possible.
- The concept of fertility as a gift of the creator is addressed in various parts of the weekend. It is not a right of the individual without the mission of a married couple.
- Marriage Commitment is where the consent is important liturgically, canonically, anthropologically psycho-socially and spiritually.

Therefore it is proposed that the outline teams of international and US work together to make these improvements where possible and to bring the results to the next meeting in Norfolk VA.

The theological underpinning of our outline needs to remain faithful to Church teaching and it will continue to do this if it is sound theologically.

Fr Gilberto was thanked for the amount of work he had done to distill the Propositions of the International Theological Commission on Marriage 1977 down to three pages! It is noted that these points are not a suggested alteration to the outline itself, but rather a background paper to assist in the workshopping of talks.

RESOLUTION 2:

To include a list of resources, background papers and references on the website.

10. International Executive Team report:

The IET met in Buenos Aires with the ME leadership in South America and the Kremers of Worldwide Marriage Encounter. Kremers had to return early due to a death in the family. However later Kremers from ME and Bates from Retrouvaille met with Bachs in Southern Illinois. A later meeting was held in Kansas City. At the first meeting the mission statement was formed. It represents a big step in cementing relations between these ministries. The brochure is in preparation and this will assist the integration of the ministries.

Recommendations for rewording or additions to the brochure are to be emailed to Gerry and Ann Bach. We compliment them on the work that they have accomplished so far in this endeavor that will change the world. It is starting to have an effect already. We move on.

11. REGIONAL REALIGNMENT

Proposal for South America region to be divided into North and South regions.

It was proposed by Maldonados that Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela be the Region North and Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay and Brazil be the Region South.

Arguments for and against were discussed in a considered depth that did credit to all parties.

The voting was unanimous to divide the region.

The Regions will be known as South America North (SAN) and South America South (SAS).

Peter Amsden put forward the reminder that **every community, district or region is committed to sending US\$1 per couple who participate in the weekend to International** to make possible the expansion. The whole meeting consented to this reminder unanimously.

Thursday, October 16

7:30 am Mass (Main Celebrant - – Fr. Gilberto Gomez Botero)

9:00am

12. EXPANSION FUNDS REQUESTS

IET:

Due to the lack of funds the allocations can only be made on an availability basis, but we will still take requests even if they are not able to be met at this time.

South America:

Seek support to realize the meeting of the leadership of the countries in the region to enable the transition in South America to take place. Support for one air fare per country would leave the countries to take care of the other two airfares themselves while also guaranteeing at least one member from each country will be present. We therefore seek \$4,200 for this purpose.

Mexico:

We want to thank you for all the moral support and for the support to make this trip to this meeting. The situation in Mexico is financially difficult. There is much unemployment. Nevertheless economically

speaking we are self sufficient. We are opening new dioceses and we are able to support them in this. There are other countries that need the support more than we do. It is a pity we are not able to offer them assistance as well.

South Africa:

We have no needs for funds at the moment and if we do in the future, we will advise.

English Caribbean:

We want to expand to Antigua and St Lucia and Guyana. Last weekend just to send one priest and one couple 35 minutes away to St Vincent it cost US\$500. We would seek \$3000 to fund the expansion.

Centro America y Caribe Hispanic:

Continue support for Nicaragua and Cuba. If it is possible to support the regular meeting early in 2004. Probably the meeting will be in Guatemala. We need assistance to get the team to this meeting. We seek US\$3,750.

Europe:

The expansion in the dioceses of Spain is being financed by the communities themselves. We can handle this ourselves. If we are to able to expand to France, Belgium, Portugal and Italy we would need funds and so if we ask in the future it will be a good sign.

Canada:

We are not looking for any funding at this time. We are able to assist our own communities but we would seek rather your prayers for our national meeting in November and the regional meetings next year.

United States:

We seek your help. Brooklyn / New York have about 4000 weddings per year and we want to get EE reestablished there. Philadelphia also has many catholic weddings. We want more Spanish speaking weekends and weekends for those too poor attend. We want you to include us in your prayers at every weekend you conduct.

Oceania:

We thank you for the generosity in bringing us here. We have no immediate plans for expansion and so we do not need funds at this time.

IET:

We have received no requests by email from regions not present.

We have total requests for this year for US\$10,950. We will honor these requests as the funds become available. We thank you for the work you are doing and we pray that we can meet all the requests.

13. REGIONAL CONTACTS:

Address list was circulated for corrections to be made and the list with these additions is appended.

RESOLUTION 3:

It was resolved that we dedicate the work of ICEE to the patronage of the Holy Family.

It was resolved that the Executive Committee would take this matter further and enable each region to celebrate this patronage in its most locally suitable manner.

14. DISCUSSION ON COHABITATION:

75% of couples attending the weekend in Oceania are cohabiting. We treat them with a loving acceptance of where they are now, while every opportunity is taken to gently challenge them with the values of EE and Church teaching, especially commitment and choice. In this way we seek to instill confidence in their commitment.

The US mentioned that we are dealing with four generations of attitudes. Our older presenting teams, our junior teams, the engaged couples and importantly the engaged couples' children. Addressing the engaged as future and potential parents with our values as something for them to share with their children.

We should ensure that presenting teams recognize cohabitation as a social reality. Don't judge but be life-giving. In the English speaking Caribbean there is the historical twist of the connection with slavery. Only the master class were able to marry.

Europe seeks to encourage and explain our values but not condemn the couples. Instead call them to be more than they are. South Africa use the betrothal opportunity to evoke a new commitment to chastity. In Mexico couples celebrate secondary chastity by wearing a lapel pin.

There are also couples who are sexually active who do not cohabit. Sometimes a pregnancy leads the couple to live together. Fr Gilberto mentioned that the best solution to a pre marital pregnancy is a safe delivery rather than a hasty and bad marriage. Marriage may not be the best solution for a bad cohabitation.

We need to acknowledge Cohabitation. But the weekend is not just about the threat of this phenomenon to family life and values. We need to be careful that we do not talk about cohabitation to the point that the couples think this is the only issue we consider important.

In summary: Don't tell the couples what to do! Tell them that we love them and what we hold important and inspire them to embrace these values and Church teaching as their own and to share them with their own children.

15. LEADERSHIP DISCERNMENT PROCESS

The local community discernment process was adapted to meet the needs of the International Leadership. The explanation of who was eligible for re selection and who was not eligible, the roles of the Executive and the staggered take over was given.

Romans 12: 1-8 was read in English and Spanish.

Teams were asked to share briefly their response to the first three questions sent to them prior to the meeting.

All the couples were asked whether they were open to being selected. Ten couples said yes and the first

ballot results gave everyone an idea of the feeling of the meeting.

The second ballot saw four couples clearly separated from the other six and the consensus of the meeting was that this was a sign sufficient to declare a result.

Bachs, Rochas, Maldonados and Watties were selected.

While the other couples went to the chapel to pray, the new executive discussed their working arrangements and Portfolios were allocated.

Francis and Annette Wattie and Fr Leonard Alfonso will take over Finance and begin their three year service in Virginia USA next year. **Juan Simon and Patricia Maldonado and Fr Angel Heredia** will look after the statistics and post weekend resources beginning immediately. Outline and weekend resources will be **Paco and Mali Rocha** and **Gerry and Ann Bach and Fr Gary Gummersheimer** will be the Executive Team. **Fr Alejandro Illescas Molina** is resigning from the executive due to his lack of activity in presenting weekends since he moved to Spain. Rochas will engage another priest to work with them.

After Dinner the group went on a Caribbean Cruise around the islands in the bay. There was much dancing and partying, especially on the top deck, under the stars.

Friday, October 17

16. Meeting of Executive Committee 2005

After morning prayer the discussion moved on to a venue for the Executive Committee Meeting in 2005. Bid forms for this event will be sent out shortly.

The Executive committee will meet next year at Norfolk Virginia 4 – 8 October 2004
The next International Board meeting will be held in 2006 to coincide with the US National convention, likely to be held in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Places expressing interest for 2005 are

- Cape Town South Africa
- Calgary, Canada to coincide with the National Canadian convention in October 2005
- In South America to coincide with their Regional meeting that year
- Central America and Spanish Caribbean are going to check at their next meeting to see if any country would be interested.

17. Vote on proposition 6 from minutes of the San Diego Executive meeting, concerning a change to the handbook that will distinguish the representation for 1. Active Self sufficient, 2. Active non self sufficient and 3. Inactive communities.

The feeling of the meeting was to pass the vote unanimously. But it was cautiously noted that the exact wording would be best determined now rather than leave it to after a vote. It was determined that the wording needs a great deal of work and so the executive committee will work on this and submit it for your consideration. Please email if you want to include any criteria for these distinguishing characteristics.

Resolution 4:

The beginning of the board meeting every three years will distribute a copy of the International Handbook because there are new teams who do not know about it.

18. WEBSITE

The web site is currently down and off line. The development is only part of the cost. There is also the on going cost and need to maintain and update it. Maldonados mentioned that this area would come into their responsibility on the executive committee. Would it be convenient for the committee team with *statistics and resources* portfolio take responsibility for the website? Not to do it all themselves but to see that it is done. The meeting agreed with this proposal. Maldonados mentioned that they have an idea to circulate half yearly updates, ideas and prayers.

Final Mass:

Celebrated by Fr Neil Rodriguez of the Trinidad Community and accompanied by the singing of the local choir and musicians. After Communion the attached response to our letter to the Pope, a letter from **Cardinal Angelo Sodano, from the Vatican Secretariat of State**, was read in English and Spanish.

19. ALLOCATION OF EXPANSION FUNDS

During Lunch Gerry indicated that since funds were short for expansion \$1000 had been allocated to Central America (\$250 being for the Nicaragua weekend and \$750 for the regional meeting). \$1000 for English Speaking Caribbean and \$4000 for South America to assist in the division of the region at the next regional meeting.

20. CLOSE OF MEETING

He then closed the meeting. Delegates went to the beach, shopping and prepared themselves for the “Trini Lime” on Friday evening.