

Meeting with Vida Ascendente Portugal in Fatima on October, 9 2024

Monsignor Christian Nourrichard introduces the meeting:

- Baptized, we are united in Christ,

As for me, I have been designated and appointed to be your Spiritual Guide, following the international meeting in Madrid.

I thank you for the trust placed in me. I ask you to pray for me as well as for all the Spiritual Advisors spread throughout the world. We are different and complementary because we are ONE in Christ.

The meeting of the Executive Committee with Vida Ascendente Portugal was scheduled to take place following the general assembly of the Portuguese movement held in Fatima on October 8 and 9, 2024.



Around President Monique Ptak, Executive Committee (from left to right): Jaime Tamarit (Vice-President), Mercedes Montoya (Secretary), Mgr Christian Nourrichard (Ecclesiastical Assyst), Janusz Ptak (Treasurer)

As a preamble, Monique mentioned the reasons for today's meeting:

She reported on the Executive Committee's desire to meet with European movements (the pioneers a few years ago) to better understand their current difficulties, their needs, their successes, and to raise their awareness of what they can possibly share or receive from other more recent member movements in the world.

The meeting with Vida Ascendente Portugal is a first initiative that should be repeated with other European movements after an assessment of it has been carried out.

Approach also associated with the desire to present VMI for those who do not know the association and evaluate the:

- Situation of the movements since the pandemic
- Reorganization and new operating modes of the Executive Committee since the last general assembly in Madrid in September 2023
- Place of VMI in society and in the Church
- Necessary reflection on the identity of the movement, how the members of the movement perceive the meaning of their belonging to VMI, its international dimension (in support, some examples are given)

Janusz gave a Power Point presentation on VMI communication and its various aspects, emphasizing that this communication is a major issue of visibility and readability. According to him, VMI must strengthen its communication:

- externally: towards ecclesiastical and other institutions, towards the society that surrounds us in our respective countries to make ourselves known and to make known what we do in our movements
- internally: vertically from the "head" to the "base", from the "base" to the "head" as well as horizontally between the different members and teams.

PRESENTATION OF VIDA ASCENDENTE PORTUGAL

Fernanda Rodrigues, new president of Vida Ascendente Portugal who organized the meeting and the logistics of the trip with Marta Antunes are warmly thanked.

Fernanda presents her movement. She indicates having distributed a questionnaire to its members to know the situation of the groups in the movement.

A few responses were received showing a total workforce of approximately 140 people. The situation is uneven with large groups of 44, 30 and 14 people, and some groups of only 4 to 5 people.

An interesting initiative is presented: the creation of a choir that brings together the members of the group of 44 people two to three times a week.

The National Spiritual Advisor who was to speak at the meeting was not present for health reasons. It was indicated that not all groups have the possibility of having a spiritual guide.

Monique mentioned as an example the training in spiritual accompaniment of lay people conducted by the French Christian Movement of Retirees (MCR). The movement has published a booklet to support this training. A copy of this document will be sent to Fernanda.

Fernanda Antao is the treasurer of the movement.

The groups work with a theme of the year. It is also proposed to send copies of the theme of the year of the French movement.

A magazine is published three times a year.

Monsignor Nourrichard specifies that there is currently a meeting for the synod which constitutes the biggest event since the Second Vatican Council. The elements of this synod could be taken up and studied in the groups.

Monsignor suggests planning times of common prayer: daily or on the occasion of major liturgical events of the year.

Jaime presents and comments on a slide show in French outlining the main lines of the implementation of the Pastoral Care of the Elderly in Spain. A copy of this slide show will be sent to Fernanda.

Fernanda expresses her concern about the continuation of the movement in Portugal where the members are very elderly and she fears that it will be forced to stop: difficulties due to the aftermath of the pandemic with a significant reduction in numbers, members who are afraid to return to meetings; there is also a lack of transmission of responsibilities with a lack of commitment; Fernanda does not really have a team to work with her, apart from the ever-active presence of Marta.

Jaime mentions the work carried out by the Conference of Spanish Bishops on the aspect of commitment.

*Monique Ptak
Présidente VMI*



Photo : VMI

Executive Committee with Marta Melo Antunes (former President VMI and VA Portugal)