

Meeting of 1st October: VMI assessment

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1) The shut-down has led the VMI Executive Committee to work by videoconference (twice a month in April and May, once a month afterwards), to ensure continuity in the exercise of our responsibilities to our members ; While these conditions allow us to produce technical documents (bulletin n°80 containing the speeches of the Congress "the Richness of Age", the newsletter which continued to be published every month...), it is difficult to exchange on fundamental issues, such as the feedback on certain speeches or the analysis of the conclusions of the Congress to define work paths. For the time being, with a Belgian and a Spaniard as members of the Executive Committee, whose respective countries are experiencing a resurgence of the epidemic, we are still forced to work by videoconference.

2) VMI was asked by Vittorio Scelzo to obtain information on how the lock-down was experienced in the countries where the Movement is present and on the initiatives taken by the leaders of the Movement to care for the elderly in their countries. Disappointment: what we were given was mainly government measures. Nevertheless, in the letters received there were some interesting facts and some measures taken: - Benin notes that the government, for the fight against the virus, relies on NGOs and religious congregations.

- in Uganda: the confinement has brought young people back to their families and made them fear the spread of the virus; hence the setting up of a health watch between neighbours to identify a case of covid-19 very quickly.

- in Tanzania, it was noted that there was an increased need for elders to pray in times of pandemic, hence very strict recommendations from the Church for religious services.

- In Mauritius, the use of mobile phones was maximised and everyone was encouraged to check in regularly with neighbours.

- in France, the MCR set up a daily internet section "Confined... but not isolated" which contained a short meditation, a text in which the author expressed his or her experience of shut-down, advice or "little tips" to reorganise his or her life; there were up to 6,000 subscribers to this section and some posts were distributed more widely, outside the MCR.

Shut-down has provoked very strong reactions regarding the treatment of residents in EHPADs

Sant'Egidio officials in Italy and France have violently criticised "lockdown within lockdown". Experts, such as Michel Delaunay, former Minister of Family and Solidarity, Marie de Hennezel, have spoken out to deplore this type of institution. Wouldn't it be appropriate to reflect on this type of accommodation?

We relayed to our leaders the campaign implemented in August by the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life "The elderly are your grandparents". The deadlines are too short for us to be able to report on the experiences implemented. Despite covid-19, which is very strong in some countries, the Movement continues its activities; in South America, the continental leader invited the members of the different countries to take part, on October 1st, in the World Day dedicated to the elderly. This was decided by the UN GA and which VMI has decided to join to celebrate the elderly. Peru, where the health crisis is particularly virulent, responded to this invitation and its leader asked the president to send a message of friendship and encouragement which was to be broadcast during the day of celebration on October 1st (if it can take place at all!).

3) Which project...?

Nothing has been implemented to date; I am issuing an opinion that commits only me, the President: why not join the dynamic of the campaign proposed by the Dicastery and explore the

intergenerational path... To be continued... The health crisis is upsetting our lifestyles and affecting our commitments; the life of our Movement, like that of other institutions, is quite disrupted: Should we not ask ourselves about the future, about how to respond to the mission entrusted to us, in a context that strongly limits exchanges and face-to-face work?