The international dimension of the Emmaus movement, which in 2019 celebrates 70 years of existence since the first community at Neuilly-Plaisance in the eastern suburb of Paris (France) and 50 years since its first international assembly in Bern (Switzerland), has been present since very early on in its history.

The response both in France and internationally to the radio appeal made by Abbé Pierre on 1 February 1954, asking for his fellow citizens ‘come to the aid’ of those “sleeping rough”, unexpectedly triggered the creation of the Emmaus movement.

During the period between 1955 and 1963 Abbé Pierre was invited to visit countries all around the globe to talk about his initiative and his work combating extreme poverty. While the number of Emmaus communities was growing in France, he travelled the world and encouraged the creation of communities in Europe (Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and Italy), South America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru and Uruguay), North America (Canada and the US), Asia (South Korea and Japan) and Lebanon. He travelled to these and many more countries, including Portugal, Austria, India, Gabon, Senegal, Germany, Rwanda and Indonesia.

During these trips, Abbé Pierre brought together a large number of local initiatives which were already helping the most excluded. Many of these organisations identified with Emmaus’ values and solidarity practices and joined the movement, much to Abbé Pierre’s great satisfaction.

Having lived through the two world wars, Abbé Pierre was part of the Resistance against the Nazi forces from 1942, and became aware early on that “a world governed according to the pleasure of the fortunate and not the deliverance of those who suffer unjustly is inevitable doomed to breed hatred.”

His knowledge of the world, the international challenges particularly for developing countries, and the issues related to not respecting the fundamental rights of each person, regardless of their way of life, their country, their continent, were at the heart of Abbé Pierre’s reflections and actions, and therefore at the heart of the Emmaus movement from its origins.

1. Faim et soif (Hunger and Thirst), no.2, August 1954, 2nd cover.
Together with the most excluded, the Emmaus groups have also developed and adapted innovative actions at grassroots level to attack the structural causes of poverty and to endeavour to bring about social transformation in the numerous societies in which they act.

Today the Emmaus movement has around 350 member organisations in 37 countries

THE EMMAUS MOVEMENT HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN INTERNATIONAL SPACE OF:

- **HUMAN SOLIDARITY** based on the unconditional welcome of anyone in need. The movement seeks to nurture mutual understanding between companions across 4 continents. In the past, from 1963 until the 1990s, this was through the international work camps where young people devoted some weeks of their holidays to work with Emmaus as ragpickers; nowadays, Emmaus international work camps, for example, bring together companions, friends and leaders from around the world.

- **ECONOMIC SOLIDARITY** thanks to the pooling of resources from groups around the world for capacity building and to finance their local actions.

- **POLITICAL SOLIDARITY**, through support provided for local, national and international political campaigns, conducted with the movements and allied associations, regarding different subjects including hunger in the world, decolonisation, the democratic process in Benin, migration and the impunity of multinationals.

Because in a globalised world, the fight against the causes of poverty and exclusion can only be won at a global level!