

THE BULLETIN



OF THE FRIENDS OF FATHER CAFFAREL

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EDITORIAL

Edgardo & Clarita Bernal Fandiño
*(Responsible Couple of the International
Leading Team of Teams of Our Lady)*



FRUITFUL CORRESPONDENCE

"Every Christian ought to ask themselves periodically how they answer God's calling, their vocation." Henri Caffarel

Dear Friends,

It is not the aim of this message, but it is inevitable, at least in passing, that we refer to the tiny virus that suddenly broke into everyone's lives and that directly or indirectly affected us in a general way, altering our daily lives as well as our economic and emotional peace.

With Clarita, my wife, we spent three days from last March 11th onwards in Paris to deal with matters relating to our responsibility within Teams before leaving for Lomé-Togo for a meeting, that in the end had to be cancelled.

A few days after our return to Bogota, during the time when we had to remain in a fifteen-day preventive quarantine, we were diagnosed with Covid-19 and because of this had to spend a few difficult weeks convalescing.

Today, we are fully recovered and look on this experience with more seriousness that we did at the time. We sincerely hope that, for our friends in the Association of the Friends of Father Caffarel, and we ask for this in our prayers, these difficult moments did not affect them too much and that this nightmare, that was unimaginable a few months ago, will end shortly for everyone.

Because of preventive social distancing, virtual communication platforms have become the new means of communicating and paradoxically, they enabled us to experience, without barriers or distance, the encouraging strength of belonging to faith communities. And this was a great emotional and spiritual help that supported and encouraged us during those difficult days.

A little more than a month ago, on May 14th, we were invited to celebrate in a virtual manner, the 70th anniversary of the Teams of Our Lady Movement's arrival in Brazil. This memorable event was one of Father Caffarel's great joys and satisfactions and it demonstrated his missionary as well as founding spirit alongside another perseverant seeker, Pedro Moncau. In 1949, Doctor Moncau wrote to Father Caffarel from São Paulo, Brazil, enquiring about the movement for young couples

that the magazine *l'Anneau d'Or* mentioned and that had fallen into his hands by chance.

During this period when we have more time than usual to nourish our spirits, we were delighted to spend time reading the correspondence between these two marvellous men that seem to be a translation into the middle of the 20th century of Paul and Timothy's conversations, taken from the Acts of the Apostles. A precious collection of the letters exists for the period 1949 to 1982 during Pedro Moncau's lifetime, as well as after his death, until 1991 with Nancy, his wife.

Father Caffarel, a prophetic missionary, who wished to spread the emerging Teams' movement beyond the frontiers of France, and Pedro Moncau, a true apostle with an ardent heart and eager to fully experience his married and family faith, began to build a great friendship, once they got to meet each other thanks to fate, as Pedro Moncau described it (the Spirit also is behind these happy coincidences).

Nancy, Pedro's wife, joined this fraternal relationship that over time made them spiritual accomplices spreading the good news of the movement throughout the continent, beginning with Brazil, which was the departure point for the "contagion."

To give you some idea of this voluminous correspondence, we have taken some passages from the letters, that began on November 30th, 1949 and that were very formal, but then became more and more friendly and affectionate over time. (The bold characters below emphasise essential passages to our mind.)

November 30th, 1949

*"Father, I apologise for writing you without an formal introduction. I obtained your address from l'Anneau d'Or magazine and it is because I read that magazine that I am writing to you. [...] Through information given to us by the Reverend Father Desmarais, **I got the impression that the aim of l'Anneau d'Or is substantially the same as the one we are pursuing.** So, I took it into my head to write to you frankly and simply too to ask you to send me a detailed presentation of what l'Anneau d'Or does... its organisation... its programme... and most particularly its technique, how the meetings are conducted, what is discussed in them, what part the men and women respectively play, etc. [...]"*

Dr. PEDRO MONCAU JUNIOR

December 15th, 1949

*"Sir, Firstly, let me tell you the joy and emotion I felt when reading your letter. It is truly remarkable to think that across the oceans, bonds are being created thanks to the l'Anneau d'Or that I founded and now run. [...]. Please be aware that any documentation that you might send me concerning your Centre will be read with the utmost attention and sympathy. Because, as you have guessed, our orientations are close cousins. **L'Anneau d'Or and the groups of couples who work alongside***

l'Anneau d'Or have the essential goal of helping couples aspire to holiness. Neither more, nor less than that. [...] One of my primary preoccupations is to create links with all those who, in the four corners of the world, are pulling in the same direction. As you will see in the article that I am sending you with this letter, an article on the groups of couples, I think that this double effort of groups of couples and the seeking of married and family spirituality, both are one of the signs of our times and represent great hope. [...]"

Fr. HENRI CAFFAREL

April 5th, 1951

"Father, I received your letter of March 13th two weeks ago. From your words, I note with satisfaction that we are gradually entering into the understanding of the spirit of Teams of Our Lady. We could, indeed, unwittingly deform its spirit, despite our firm desire to aim for what is right and just. Therefore, will you please, in all honesty, together with the points that merit your approval, underline also those that need to be adjusted and remedied. [...] »

Dr. PEDRO MONCAU JUNIOR

April 18th, 1951

"Dear Friends, I have just received your letter of April 5th. I read it with great joy. You are most certainly one of the Responsible Couples with whom I feel most deeply in agreement with. Once again, I note that you highlight real and essential problems. [...]"

I do believe indeed that it is possible to start a new Team with new couples, with a responsible couple, who has no prior experience of Teams' life. But I think that it is essential that this new responsible couple sits in on one, two or three meetings of a Team of Our Lady. It also seems to be me desirable that other couples besides this responsible couple experience the same thing, and that finally, it is very important that a couple from an older Team be able to follow and accompany the starting up of a new Team as a godfather would their godchild and, in order to do this, that they would go to the first meetings, but being careful not to take over from the responsible couple, but to help them, support them, give them, before and after the meeting especially, all the useful advice and suggestions."

Fr. HENRI CAFFAREL

This glance at some excerpts of their correspondence is only an "appetiser" with which we wish to highlight the irrepressible missionary desire that Father Caffarel had to lead married couples across the world on the paths to holiness. The care and zeal in the fidelity to the founding charisma that he demonstrated for the enlargement of the movement is to be found in these texts and in the moving alignment of the thinking of these marvellous two men, Father Caffarel and Doctor

Pedro Moncau, who both undoubtedly acted with docility under the action of the Holy Spirit.

Besides this rich correspondence, Father Caffarel also undertook missionary trips to Brazil, the first in July 1957 and two others in 1962 and 1972.

This letter that Pedro Moncau sent Father Caffarel in September 1957, after his first trip, is very eloquent.

*“Dear Father, [...] The main thing about the great work that we had during and after your trip to Sao Paolo is to **notice that you succeeded in invigorating and multiplying the dynamism of a very great number of couples.** [...] In short, your visit had repercussions that, I hope very sincerely, will compensate for the great effort and the tiring moments of your trip amongst us. **Particularly for our Movement, it was like a breathe of the Holy Spirit that warmed our hearts and our souls, and revived or awakened in many the desire to give themselves to Christ and to the Church.**”*

Dr. PEDRO MONCAU JUNIOR

Father Caffarel’s spiritual heritage, that did so much good to so many and that continues to impact the lives of thousands of couples throughout the world, is experienced in an incarnate manner and with an uncontrollable strength.

Just like in Brazil, with the Moncau couple, who were apostles who understood and contributed to making his prophetic thinking on the grandeur of marriage as a path to holiness universal, we have seen many other Timothy’s and Silas throughout the world. We have seen many such precursors of Teams in their countries, who welcomed and promoted this proposition, allowing themselves to be captivated by the passionate love for the human couple, that springs from the depths of the being of Father Caffarel, the tireless missionary prophet.

We all bless Father Caffarel, are eternally grateful to him and feel blessed to have been able to know about this marvellous path. All that remains to be done is to work so that the entire world gets to know more and more about his thinking through our work and that the Church also recognises his holiness. This is what we all pray and work for on a daily basis in the Association of the Friends of Father Caffarel.

United with you in prayer,

Edgardo & Clarita Bernal Fandiño

*A Word from the
Editor of the Cause*

Father Paul-Dominique Marcovits, o.p.

*Editor of the cause of canonisation
of Father Henri Caffarel*



How to Pray using the Prayer for the Canonisation of Father Caffarel?
(Letter to the Correspondents, June 2015)

All prayers educate us through their content. Thus, the Lord's Prayer, the Our Father, is a prayer that guides, shapes and bears the prayers of all Christians and is the model for every other prayer. Jesus himself teaches us to pray. Thus, in the light of this the greatest prayer, all other prayers shape our relationship with God, in our faith.

The prayer asking for the canonisation of Father Caffarel educates us. If we meditate upon it, word after word, we recall Father Caffarel's life. Above all, we are guided in our faith, in our trust in God, in our desire to do the Lord's will, just as Father Caffarel wanted to help us to do.

We pray, therefore, so that we may follow Christ, as well as for those who live the sacrament of marriage and the sacrament of orders, for those who are widowed... We pray that we may make progress in our private prayer, "so that all may find joy in following the Lord." By learning the prayer off by heart, the heart's orientation takes shape. We become familiar with what Father Caffarel wanted so much: that we discover that "God loves us," that, like him, we may experience the meeting with the Lord, that we may hear the call, "Come, follow me!" There are so many ways to follow Christ.

This prayer is not only “individualistic.” Like all prayers, we pray in connection with others, in the Church. Thus, this prayer joins together the Teams of Our Lady members, the widows of the Fraternity of Our Lady of the Resurrection, the Intercessors... We pray for the energy, fidelity and joy of all those who are attached to Father Caffarel. We pray also so that we may be strong and welcoming witnesses to marriage and prayer. So many people await the good news of God’s love.

Finally, in this prayer, we ask for graces and miracles for the beatification of Father Caffarel. The pertinence of our request is the following: that God answers us through the intermediary of his servant so that he may be known, so that his message may be heard in our world that so needs it: the good news of marriage, the good news of prayer and private prayer. The Lord loves us!

Father Paul-Dominique Marcovits, o.p.



In Service

News from the Association of the Friends of Father Caffarel

Contemplation of Canonization Prayer for Fr. Caffarel

Rob and Sharla Walsh, January 2020,
Correspondent Couple for the Association of the Friends of Fr. Caffarel
USA Super Region Teams of Our Lady

Sharla and I would like to share our thoughts about the Canonization Prayer for Fr. Henri Caffarel, stanza by stanza.

First of all, the prayer seems to have a chronological nature to it, for our lives as well as that of Fr. Caffarel.

First Stanza:

“God our Father, you planted deep in the heart of your servant, Henri Caffarel, a fountain of love which bound him totally to your Son and inspired him with a wonderful capacity to speak of Him.”

When Fr. Caffarel received his vocation, he shared with us, in his own words, that moment:

“March 1923. At the age of twenty, Jesus Christ, in an instant, became someone for me. Oh, nothing spectacular. On that faraway March day, I knew that I was loved and that I loved and that henceforth between Him and I, it would be for life. The die was cast.”

“I had a desire: to enter more closely into that intimacy with Christ and another desire to bring others to the same, because it was vital to my life, it gave me “la joie de vivre”, the grace to live, a motivation to live. And equally, I could only wish that others too would have this encounter with the living Christ; this discovery that God is love.”

So you see, this first stanza is the expression of these feelings that Fr. Caffarel felt at this encounter with Christ at the moment of his vocation and how he wanted everyone to know and experience this love of God. The Lord revealed Himself to Fr. Caffarel within his soul. He wants to dwell with us and so He

dwells within us and is waiting for us to come to Him and experience His love and experience heaven in our meditative and contemplative personal prayer. The Lord beckons us to come to Him in prayer so we can experience His perfect love. This thought is a contemplative experience of the pure and unconditional love of God. God is Love, so to go to Him and to know Him, is to know Love.

Second Stanza:

“A prophet for our time, he revealed the dignity and beauty of the vocation of every person, in the words Jesus addresses to each of us: “Come follow me”.

Having gone to Troussures, France on December 10, 2017 and standing at the gravesite of Fr. Caffarel, we noticed the first date on his headstone is his date of Baptism, then Ordination and then death.

These are followed by the words:

“Viens et Suis-Moi” (Come and Follow Me)

There is great significance that when we are baptized, we are called to be Priest, Prophet and King. As a man called to the ministerial priesthood as well the common priesthood, we believe that Fr. Caffarel, is calling attention for each of us to embrace that shared responsibility of the role of priest, prophet and king.



The Catechism of the Catholic Church is clear about the priestly office: ***Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ. ... “to be a holy priesthood” (1 Peter 2:5). By Baptism they share in the priesthood of Christ, in his prophetic and royal mission. They are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people ...” (1 Peter 2:9). Baptism gives a share in the common priesthood of all believers (CCC, 1267, 1268).*** (Note: The Catechism also references the common priesthood in paragraphs 1141, 1143, 1268, 1305, 1535, 1547, 1591, and 1592.) Suffice it to say that Fr. Caffarel placed great importance on our Baptism and all that it implied. When we are Baptized, our soul is imbued with the Holy Spirit.

Besides the priestly office, there is also a prophetic and a kingly one. In the ministerial priesthood, these are fulfilled by preaching and teaching and in governance of the Church.

So, the vocation of a priest is to live a holy life. The vocation of a married couple is to live a holy life. Therefore, when we respond to Christ's beckoning to come and follow Him, and use the graces of our Sacraments, to surrender our will to the will of the Father, we are endeavoring to, "Be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect." The marriage of our two Sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony create a powerful and forceful bond and a wonderful demonstration of God's love for the world.

Jesus, in the New Testament, makes a request to follow Him, twenty two times.

Third Stanza:

"He made couples enthusiastic about the greatness of the sacrament of marriage, the sign of Christ's fruitful love for the Church and of His union with her".

St. Paul describes Christ's love for the Church and the spousal love in marriage in (Ephesians 5:21-33) as a "great mystery". We, as married couples, are the icon of Christ and His love for His bride, the Church! Fr. Caffarel describes these two loves, in this way, in his talk at Chantilly, France on May 3, 1987:

".... The result was that I had before me couples in whom dwelt two loves: love of their spouse and love of Christ. At first sight, one might think that conjugal love and the love of Christ are each all-consuming and intransigent, but they had the curious experience of discovering that these two loves, which are absolute, fitted perfectly together in their spiritual life without their really being able to understand the uniting of the love of spouse and the love of Christ; this is why they were eager to discover how to progress towards holiness with those two loves in their heart. The first meeting, very joyful, full of optimism, flowing from the great joy, which was theirs, of loving each other and loving Christ. They put thirty six questions to me and suddenly my apprehensions disappeared, I was even surprised to feel so much at ease, and then I understood why I was so much at ease; for the previous 10 or 15 years I had had a relationship of love with Christ, and in the company of these couples, who spoke to me of their love, I discovered that in the life of the couple were to be found the laws which I had discovered in my relationship with Christ; the laws of love are the same everywhere. And this is what immediately won me over and made me enthusiastic, we were going to be able to help each other, they would bring to me the concrete life which they were leading, and I would

bring to them such notions as I had about spirituality. How many times have I said to myself that I would by no means have developed in the way I did if, instead of meeting these four couples, I had at the commencement of my ministry discovered marriage in the confessional; I would have got to know the moral difficulties and the psychological difficulties, I would have formed a much more sombre idea of the union of man and woman; fortunately it was with these four couples that I became interested in marriage.

The second orientation: all of them. without exception, had no difficulty with the thought that their vocation was – holiness: holiness seemed to them to be the flowering of love, the completion of their conjugal love and of their love of Christ. And then, this thought immediately led them to discover in a wholly new way the sacrament of marriage, not just a formality but a source of prodigious grace, Christ coming to save love, ailing since original sin, and bringing to it much needed help and huge graces”.

Therefore, after meeting those couples who wanted to seek holiness, Fr. Caffarel started the Teams Movement for Sacramentally married couples.

Fourth Stanza:

He showed that priests and couples are called to live a vocation of love. He was a guide to widows: love is stronger than death.

“.....And then, one day, during the prayer, one of the women addressed God in these terms: “Lord, we thank you for the marriage of our two sacraments: the priesthood and marriage.” I think this insight was very far-seeing, and I think it is part of the dynamism of the startup, the alliance of the priesthood, which represents the Church, and the thinking of the Church, and the couples who bring their richness, their needs, their questions and the necessity of a dialogue so that the teaching of the Church should not be disconnected from the concrete realities of their life, but rather that it should try to respond not only to the needs of the couples but also to their aspirations. And throughout the whole life of the Teams we have held firmly to this notion of the marriage of the two sacraments. We had four meetings – that was all, but it was sufficient, I can say, to decide for me what was my vocation. Thanks to these meetings I developed tremendous enthusiasm and then, in July 1940, I came back after three times escaping from the Germans, I was appointed curate to a parish, and straight away I met other couples and spoke to them about the experience

we had had. And they asked me to let them have this same experience of meetings of couples”.

Unfortunately, not all of the husbands came back from the war. This encouraged Fr. Caffarel to begin other groups: Fraternity of Our Lady of the Resurrection (FOLOR), Community of Anna the Prophetess, (CAP) and Hope and Life. These are groups that promote the continuation of the committed love of widows and widowers who chose to remain faithful to that original spouse. Thus, the prayer that “Love is stronger than death.” is a proclamation of that great love.

Fifth Stanza:

Prompted by the Holy Spirit, he accompanied many Christians on the path of prayer. Seized by a devouring fire, he was a dwelling place for you, Lord.

After turning the leadership of the Teams of Our Lady over to a qualified couple, he opened a “House of Prayer” in Troussures, France. There he directed retreats to teach couples and individuals to pray.

He felt that everything in his life was a result of prayer.

There are now 71,430 couples in the world that belong to the Teams of Our Lady. In addition, there are widows, widowers, and those involved in the newer Movement for the Elderly, La Vie Devant Nous, which are in excess of 300 people. We do not know of the number of couples who were members of the various Movements, that have died since the beginning of the Movements, but we are sure that they number in the thousands. Fr. Caffarel fulfilled his role as Priest, Prophet and King both in his Ministerial and Common Priesthood, in a way that could only have been achieved through the intervention of the Holy Spirit.

We can envision a great mass of humanity being led by this giant of a man in the eyes of the Eternal High Priest, toward the heavenly banquet! Fr. Caffarel was truly a dwelling place for God and has brought thousands to Him.

Sixth Stanza:

God our Father, through the intercession of Our Lady, we ask you to hasten the day when the Church will proclaim the holiness of his life, so that people everywhere will discover the joy of following your Son in accordance with their particular vocations in the Holy Spirit.

There are several things that stand out when we read this intercessory stanza: First, we noticed it is addressed to the “Father”. Second, we noticed that we want Our Lady to intercede on our behalf. We have always heard that Jesus will not refuse the requests of His Mother and She is our Teams Patroness. Third, we are asking that the Church will make the proclamation that the life of Fr. Caffarel was Holy, recognizing the authority of the Church on earth. We particularly think of the Intercessors, a group begun in 1960, when, “Fr. Caffarel, well aware of the difficulties that marriages faced in the then “contemporary society” called for volunteers to engage in interceding especially for marriages and the Christian family”...and so, the Intercessors were born!

Seventh Stanza:

God our Father, we invoke the intercession of Fr. Caffarel for and here is where we indicate the particular favor being sought.

The process of a person to move from “Servant of God” to “Beatified” requires a miracle, that is “complete, instantaneous and durable” as well as scientifically inexplicable and must be declared so by doctors. Once this has occurred, the doctors sign off and the situation goes to a panel of theologians to determine if this is within the realm of God’s wishes and the procedure moves to the Cardinals of the Congregation of the Causes of the Saints, who are entrusted with ensuring that the Beatification is in the Church’s best interest. This is a very costly process, as there are so many involved in the verification. All of the documents written by or about the candidate (Fr. Caffarel), need to be digitalized and reviewed and catalogued.

Countries from all over the world participate in supporting the “Association of the Friends of Fr. Caffarel”. This organization alerts and informs Teams members of the progress of his Canonization. The Association also produces a bulletin of their information updates and the proceeds of these subscriptions contribute to the support of this process, listed above. We hope that every Team couple and Team Priest will subscribe to the Association of the Friends of Fr. Caffarel by going to henri-caffarel.org

We encourage you to prayerfully consider joining this Association for the cause of the Canonization of Fr. Henri Caffarel.

Please note that in the case of a particular favor obtained through the intercession of Fr. Caffarel, you should immediately contact:

1. Your local Bishop or Archbishop. Please provide all medical documents and history of the situation and individual involved.
2. Postulator: Association of the Friends of Fr. Caffarel, 49 rue de la Glacière, F-75013, Paris, France

How can we help?

Pray for an approved miracle.

Join the Association of the Friends of Fr. Caffarel.

Make known the life and works of our holy founder: Fr. Henri Caffarel. A great deal of information on Fr. Caffarel is found on the website www.teamsofourlady.org

Please commit the Canonization prayer to heart. You will be able to pray it anytime you want!

In saying and contemplating this prayer, you will see that Fr. Caffarel was loved and directed, through prayer and by God. Please practice this prayer as part of your holy lives.

Your servants in Christ,
Rob and Sharla Walsh

Correspondent Couple for the Association of the Friends of Fr. Caffarel
USA Super Region Teams of Our Lady



FROM FATHER CAFFAREL'S ARCHIVES

Married Prayer

L'Anneau d'Or, "Marriage, that Great Sacrament,"
Special issue 111-112, May-August 1963, p. 243-248

MARRIED PRAYER

Amongst young couples, who acquired a good Christian training before marriage, many doubtlessly adopt the habit of married prayer. But often, it does not last long, either because married prayer after a few years turns into family prayer, or because they give up more or less quickly taking advantage of the first pretext that comes along.

Might it not be a question of them not knowing the reason behind practising it, how to do it, how to overcome the difficulties it presents and the benefits it holds?

Why practise Married Prayer

The argument of tradition hardly plays in favour of married prayer. When young couples do pray together, it is often because it is a sort of requirement of their love—a requirement which is moreover not very well thought out and analysed—it is in the hope that maybe it will encourage a more perfect intimacy between them. A legitimate reason, certainly, but insufficient; that is why they are quickly disappointed. One of our correspondents explains it like this, *"From the start, I was disappointed by our married prayer. I expected more intimacy with my husband, I took it to be a means to make myself known, to reveal my inner life to him. I had the wrong idea of married prayer. The disappointment came from the fact that our prayer was for us and not for God. Whereas it is about praising God together, seeking together his will for our*

couple and not, primarily, deepening our married intimacy and getting to know ourselves better. So much the better if these are the effects of our prayer, but they are not the purpose of it.”¹

Nor is it enough either to evoke, as some do without going further, God’s right to be worshipped by his creatures. Undoubtedly, couples, just like any other community, ought to pay homage to God in their prayer; but this argument, if it applies to all Muslim, Jewish or Catholic homes, leaves aside the specific *raison d’être* of married prayer in Christian homes.

Rather, let us start with the concept of Christian marriage. It is not only a reciprocal gift of man and woman; it is also the gift, the consecration of the couple to Christ. Christ is present in this couple who has given themselves to him; and that is why St John Chrysostom called the Christian home a “little church.” It is true that his presence can already be confirmed when two or three are united in Christ’s name (Mt 18:20); but in the couple’s case, there is more and it is better: a pact, an alliance, in the Biblical meaning of the word, between Christ and the couple. What Yahweh used to say before, “*I will be your God and you will be my people,*” Christ in turn says it to couples. Connected in this way to couples and present in the home, Christ is eager to give thanks to his Father, to intercede with and through the spouses in favour of the entire world.

It is not only during married prayer, but at all times that Christ, present in the couple’s life, intends to praise the Father through them. The fact remains that the highlight of the couple’s worship is married prayer. And in the evening, when a man and wife pray in the quiet of their room, the prayer of his beloved Son is heard by the Father of Heaven, because the Holy Spirit inspires their feelings.

As long as we do not rise to these heights, we cannot grasp correctly nor promote effectively married prayer. The need for and grandeur of it can only be explained within the perspective of the sacrament of marriage. In a word, when Christ sacramentally unites a man and a woman, it is in order to found a sanctuary, this sanctuary, this “house of God” that is the Christian home. And there, he will be able to celebrate with the couple and through the couple

¹ This and subsequent answers and quotations emerged from the survey on prayer and the couple that was conducted within the Teams of Our Lady Movement.

the great filial worship of praise, adoration and intercession that he came to establish on earth.

Prerequisites

Firstly, in order to be able to talk about “married” prayer, there must be a couple. A true couple, meaning a man and a woman united not only materially, but also spiritually—the visible union being the sign of the union of their souls.

An initial prerequisite is that during the prayer time all disagreement ceases, that peace between the spouses is restored if necessary. In one home that responded to our survey, the spouses always began their married prayer by saying three times, like the priest at the altar, *“Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us; grant us peace.”* And like the priest and the deacon during solemn mass, they gave each other the kiss of peace.

Second prerequisite: that the husband and wife renew their faith in the pact that Christ concluded with them, in his presence in their midst. Let them realise that Christ is impatient to praise the Father through them, since they have put themselves at his service.

Third prerequisite: that together, they listen to Christ. How, indeed, can you pray like Christ and in union with him, if you have not firstly sought to understand his thoughts, feelings, intentions in order to take them on and express them to God?

Listening to Christ means beginning the prayer moment by reading the Bible, then being quiet and meditating together. Then seeking the Lord’s thoughts in terms of the day that has gone by and the one that is to come. Then, and only then, having listened and understood, talk to God, talk to him spontaneously, express thoughts and feelings with the simplicity of a child speaking to their parents. It is also a good idea to use liturgical prayers, which the Church intends for the enlightenment of our personal prayer.

All of this, in theory, seems easy; how is it then that so many couples neglect or give up married prayer? It is useful to consider their reluctances and difficulties.

Difficulties

In Christian homes themselves, there are impenitent individualists. One husband writes, *"I never felt the need to join my wife in order to pray to the Lord, neither before marriage, nor in captivity, nor upon my return, nor now."*

There are few such deliberate oppositions like this one. Many dislike this kind of prayer because they do not know what it is. However, it is true that some temperaments find it more difficult than others to express their inner life. *"Modesty, my secret garden, my husband's unacknowledged fear of losing his masculine prestige,"* all explain the reluctance of many.

Others speak of a divergence in their spirituality. One couple was on the point of giving up married prayer for this very reason. *"My husband,"* wrote the wife, *"was raised by the Jesuits, and I by the Dominicans. We believed that because of this we could not reach true spiritual unity."* Do you know what happened to them? Children! And that led them to rediscover God, and this time it was not a Dominican god or a Jesuit one, but simply God.

These spiritual differences, stemming from different backgrounds, need to be overcome and resolved. But resolved does not mean levelled. Tolerant spiritual differences can make for a richer harmony than an absolute synchronisation of religious views.

Benefits

Those who have enough faith and courage to overcome difficulties soon experience the benefits of married prayer. I will present these benefits as they emerged from the survey.

It would be wrong, let us make it clear, to justify married prayer above all by its happy effects: when Christians pray, it is primarily to honour God. Nevertheless, there are many and precious benefits that arise from this kind of couple's prayer. And there is nothing surprising about that: did Christ not say that if you first sought the Kingdom of God the rest would be given as well? These benefits are not all noticeable and measurable. However, many are.

A Belgian couple wrote, *"We prayed to praise God and God gave us, as a result, a magnificent gift: by formulating aloud our intimate prayer, we communicated to each other the very depth of our soul and the most secret impulse of our inner life. It is enough to have practised married prayer just a little to be able to say that thanks to it, often after many years of marriage, we discover our spouse's soul, as well as the movements and aspirations of their*

inner life. We measure the full price of this discovery when we admit that the deep knowledge of someone is the first condition of esteem and true love."

Speaking of this mutual knowledge, another couple recalled the legend according to which if two lovers drink from the same cup they will be able to know the other's thoughts. And they added, *"Married prayer is much more effective! When we pray together, our two souls no longer give the impression of being hermetic to each other."*

Another benefit that is close to the previous ones is the fact that married prayer appears to be one of the great factors of spiritual unity and even of unity itself between spouses. A young couple wrote, *"Married prayer is the thing that forged our common soul."* Many older couples could also say the same thing, and I am convinced, for my part, that a certain quality of union, of intimacy between spouses will never be achieved by those who neglect the practice of married prayer.

It is impossible to create unity without putting an end to discord and this is a new benefit of married prayer. Listen to this testimonial, *"We were going to be separated for several weeks, and shortly before the departure, we had an argument. The atmosphere was tense, we felt that this hour was going to be inexorably ruined by pride that prevented us from taking the first step. One of us, however, suggested that we kneel down. And then, before God, of course we had to get rid of our vanity and stop playing at who was the strongest. In his presence, we asked each other for forgiveness and, as each of us prayed in turn aloud, that night we were able to have an exchange of a hitherto unexpected truth and intensity."*

I would also add that married prayer is the great stimulus of personal Christian life.

Undoubtedly out of modesty, those who sent us in their testimonials remain silent about another benefit that is easy nonetheless to notice. I mean the spiritual fruitfulness of the home. Magnificently radiant spouses exist and their lives touch those around them. Sometimes, they are lucky enough to hear an unbeliever confide in them their desire to know better this Christ whom they have discovered in their home. There is no doubt that married prayer has a lot to do with apostolic fruitfulness.

What then is the secret of all these benefits of married prayer? I do not hesitate in answering: the sacrament of marriage, of which it is a "high point." Unfortunately, too many married Christians seem to ignore it and we often hear the following: We do not mind using the sacrament of Penance and the

Eucharist, but what must we do to access the treasure trove of graces of our sacrament? By suggesting married prayer to them is a means of giving them the key to this treasure. And this is not a mere theoretical piece of advice, because I can tell you that many times in the answers to the survey the link between married prayer and the sacrament of marriage was mentioned! These four little sentences from different couples bear witness to that, *“With married prayer, it is as if we are getting married again.” “It is an extension of our sacrament of marriage.” “One of its raison d’être is that it sustains the grace of marriage within us.”* And finally, *“It is as if, every night, we repeated the sacramental yes.”* This is excellent theology.

Henri Caffarel



Prayer for the Canonisation of the Servant of God, Henri Caffarel

God, our Father,
You planted deep in the heart of your servant, Henri Caffarel,
A fountain of love, which bound him totally to your Son
And inspired him with a wonderful capacity to speak of Him.

A prophet for our time,
He revealed the dignity and beauty of the vocation of every person
In the words Jesus addresses to each of us: "Come follow me."

He made couples enthusiastic about the greatness of the sacrament of marriage,
The sign of Christ's fruitful love for the Church and of His union with her.
He showed that priests and couples
Are called to live a vocation of love.
He was a guide to widows: love is stronger than death.
Prompted by the Holy Spirit,
He accompanied many Christians on the path of prayer.
Seized by a devouring fire, he was a dwelling place for you, Lord.

God, our Father,
Through the intercession of Our Lady,
We ask you to hasten the day
When the Church will proclaim the holiness of his life,
So that people everywhere will discover the joy of following your Son
In accordance with their particular vocations in the Holy Spirit.

God our Father, we invoke the intercession of Father Caffarel for.....
(Indicate the particular favour being sought)

**Prayer approved by Monsignor Andre Vingt-Trois – Archbishop of Paris.
"Nihil obstat": 4th January 2006 – "Imprimatur": 5th January 2006.**

*In the case of a particular favour obtained through the intercession of Father Caffarel,
Contact: The Postulator, Association "Les Amis du Père Caffarel"
49 rue de la Glacière – F 75013 PARIS*

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