

Calling All Teams: The 50 for 50 Prayer Challenge

By Ted & Eileen Kosnik, Super Regional Couple

“In truth I tell you once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven.

For where two or three of you meet in my name, I am there among them” (Matthew 18:19)

When Father Henri Caffarel and those first couples joined together to explore the sacrament of marriage they understood that prayer would be central to their efforts. The team meeting explores prayer at every turn. We begin our meal with prayer. We hear the word of God as scripture is read, meditate upon it and share insights in our prayerful response. We pray petition prayer; discuss our conjugal prayer, family prayer and daily reading of God’s word. Prayer is the essence of TOOL!

In an early letter to the couples Father Caffarel says:

“Christian marriage is not only the reciprocal gift of a man and a woman; it is also the gift and consecration of the couple to Christ. In giving themselves to each other, husband and wife open themselves to Christ. ...What Yahweh said long ago to Israel, “I will be your God and you will be my people,” Christ now says

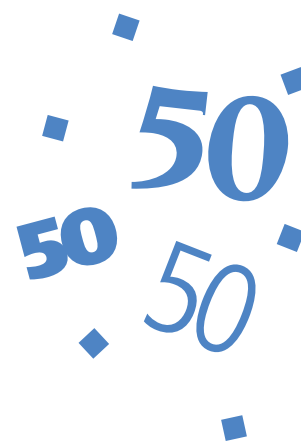
in turn to the couple. Thus bound to the couple, present in the couple, Christ aspires to give thanks to His Father and to intercede with and through the couple for the entire world.”

When the Super Regional Team met in January in San Antonio for our semi annual meeting, we brainstormed ways of celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the TOOL Movement in the United States. Many ideas were shared, but when Coastal Regional Couple, **Ruth and Jim Wagner** suggested the idea of **50**

for 50 we knew that it would be the backbone of our celebration! All the Regional Couples agreed, that no matter what other events took place, we were ALL promoting this one!

What is the idea? It is simple – each team will collectively pray for the Movement 50 hours between now and

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December 8th. Your team is free to choose the method of prayer you use. It would be great if at least some of the time was a group effort, but it is not mandatory. Some ideas suggested were to meet in front of the Eucharist and pray; go to Mass an extra time during the week; meet to say the rosary. Make it a fun time too! Go for coffee or ice cream after; make some of the time family activities. Your team can brainstorm some ideas of your own. Share your success when you share on your endeavors.

In a reflection during the general audience on August 22, 2007 Pope Benedict XVI offered Saint Gregory, a fourth-century bishop, as an example, above all, of prayer.

“Gregory teaches us, before all, the importance and necessity of prayer. He affirms that ‘it is necessary to remind oneself of God more frequently than one breathes,’ since prayer is the encounter of the thirst of God with our thirst. God thirsts that we thirst for him.

“In prayer, we have to direct our heart to God to surrender ourselves to him as an offering that should be purified and transformed. In prayer, we see everything in the light of Christ, we let down our guard and we submerge ourselves in the truth and in listening to God, nurturing the fire of our love.”

Let us submerge ourselves in prayer for the Movement so that it will be “purified and transformed.”

Now that we are committed to prayer, let us also act upon our conviction that the Movement has been a good influence in our lives as person, couple, family and community. With unselfish love let us share our joy!

Remember back to the time when you were first introduced to the concept of teams? How were you invited to an Information Meeting? We challenge you to invite at least one other

couple to an information meeting, and offer to pick them up or meet them at the meeting. It is hard to enter the unknown by yourself and the information meeting will be enhanced by your presence and your testimony.

If your prayers for the strengthening and growth of the Movement are to bear fruit we must match our prayer with action. While growth for growth’s sake is not our aim, the strengthening of Christian marriage is our aim. We need to expose as many couples as possible to the community support that TOOL offers. We need good strong Christian couples in our parishes and towns. Our children need the example of their parents and grandparents working in support of the sacrament of marriage!

So join with the teams across the country, adding your prayers to theirs, for the strengthening of TOOL. We will all be the richer for this gift of love. ■

Magnificat

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T.J. & Ellen Holt

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Serving the Lord in All Ways, At All Times

By Ted & Eileen Kosnik, Super Regional Couple

“A human heart makes the plans, Yahweh gives the answer.” (Proverbs 16:1)

In another article in this *Magnificat* we talk about the celebration of Fifty Years of TOOL in the U.S. Reflecting back on those early couples that started the first team in California, we can see the hand of God. Little did those first couples think that fifty years later we would be about 560 teams strong and growing! (See “Planting a Seed in America: The Story of Francois and Annie Vilarem”, *Magnificat*, Volume 25, Winter 2006 for the article about those first couples.)

It makes us wonder what TOOL will be like in 50 more years. Will TOOL have spread to all fifty states? How will the development of new teams strengthen couples, families, and parishes? What role will each of us play in the spread of the Movement? Are we ready to make plans and let God supply the answers?

In this issue we honor the memory of Dick Smith, one of the early leaders of Teams in the U.S. If you were present at the Conference in Chaska,

Minnesota you heard Dick and Lee Smith speak about the early years of TOOL with a sense of humor and grace. If you missed the meeting, do not miss reading the article, “Dynamic Duo of the Midwest,” by **Harry and Josie Gieske** in this issue. We especially liked the stories of training that took place in the early years at a rural site where everyone was given a flashlight for use on night-time visits to the out-house. Lee Smith had us living the experience with her!

We have served the Movement as U.S. Responsible Couple for almost five years now and it has been our privilege to know some outstanding people. **Joe and Lois Johans** were the Central Regional Couple in 2003 when Lois was diagnosed with cancer. They continued to do the work of teams through Lois’s surgery and treatment, although they were offered a replacement. We spoke by phone with Lois several weeks before her death on December, 8, 2003. She was working out a problem with a team and

wanted to let us know that progress that was being made. The work of the Lord, in the shape of teams, did not stop because of her illness.

On February 9, 2008 we had the opportunity to visit with



Carolyn Jacques who was also terminally ill. **Carolyn and Don Jacques** had completed their four-year term as South Central Regional Couple that day. Carolyn was unable to attend the installation of **TJ and Ellen Holt** as their replacement because of her illness, so we visited with her at the Jacques’ home. We talked about the work of TOOL and the role she could continue play in praying for the Movement. Hopefully Carolyn is still interceding for us as she is much closer to God that we,

having gone to the Lord less than two weeks later.

Why do we talk about these people of faith? Because they understood that we serve the Lord in all ways at all times.

Much like St. Theresa and Mother Theresa they believed in the “Little Way.” They continued to serve God and the Movement in positions of leadership as long as they had breath. When their physical strength lessened they prayed for the Movement and the couples in it. They served with joy and love. Thank you to all who have done so and are not named in this article!

Have a joyful Easter season! The Lord is Risen – indeed He has Risen. ■

Florida Celebrates Charter's 60th Anniversary, 12th Night

By Ed & Susan Klein, Southeast Regional Couple

December 8, 2007 was a big day in the Southeastern Region. The North Pinellas Sector, led by Paul and Melissa Kruschwitz, marked the 60th anniversary of the charter with a private morning Mass and social in Dunedin, Florida. They used it not only to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the charter but also to invite interested couples to share in a Teams activity. Soon after this celebration, we traveled to Fort Myers for the Fort Myers teams' first Sector

original Fort Myers teams, two teams in piloting and the Venice team. In the evening, the Fort Myers 4 team hosted us at a picnic for all their families—complete with a bonfire to roast marshmallows. A great time was had by all!

January 6th Palm Harbor 04 hosted the 12th Night of Christmas Celebration for all the Tampa Bay Teams. It started out with a beautiful mass at St. Jude's Cathedral concelebrated by Rev. Robert Morris, Vicar General of the Diocese of St. Petersburg and Chaplain for Spring Hill 04, Rev. David Toupes, Assoc. Director for Vocations for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Chaplain for Spring Hill 02, and Rev. John Gerth, Pastor of Sacred Heart Church and former Team chaplain.

Rev. Morris gave an inspiring talk about marriage and all couples renewed their vows and

he blessed them. During the Mass, four sector couples were commissioned: Jorge & Millie Cruz – West Hillsborough Sector, Ed & Cheryl Duncan – Fort Myers Sector, Harry & Anna Hunt – Spring Hill Sector and Paul & Melissa Kruschwitz – North Pinellas Sector.

After Mass, there was a catered dinner and then an inspiring talk from Fr. Gerth on "Marriage and the Eucharist." After the talk,

couples shared desserts and a DJ played dance music. There were more than 190 people (22 teams represented) including four couples from the Ft. Myers Sector and one couple from Brazil who drove from Tallahassee to attend the event and eight chaplains. All teams were encouraged to bring couples who are not in Teams but might be interested as their guests for the evening. The total included 39 guests. ■



Coastal and Mid-Atlantic Regions make December 8th Pilgrimage to National Shrine

By Jim & Ruth Wagner, Coastal Regional Couple

Teams members from the Coastal and Mid-Atlantic Regions who reside near Washington, D.C., marked the 60th anniversary of the Charter of Teams of Our Lady with a December 8th pilgrimage to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. More than 100 Teams couples and families joined for a prayer service in the Chapel of

the Immaculate Heart of Mary where we celebrated not only the Charter, but also kicked off a year-long celebration throughout 2008 of the 50th anniversary of Teams in the United States. It was especially moving to hold the pilgrimage in the National Shrine, a holy place that has been called "America's Catholic Church." As Mary is the patroness of Teams, we dedicated our pilgrimage to her, recalling the



New Ft. Myers Sector Couple Ed and Cheryl Duncan (left) with Southeast Regional Couple Ed and Susan Klein.

Event—a mass and social. At the social, we officially created the Fort Myers Sector and installed Ed and Cheryl Duncan as Sector Couple. The Fort Myers Sector has five teams—two

words that Mary spoke to Bernadette at Lourdes: "I am the Immaculate Conception" – the one most pure from the beginning and for ever.

We also took the opportunity of the pilgrimage to present three couples who had accepted positions of leadership in Teams in the Coastal Region: Dave and Martha Sparrow (Sector Couple for the Mixing Bowl Sector); Dave and Diane Beauchamp (Sector Couple for Loudoun County Sector); and Patrick and Christian Cobb (Liaison Couple for the Prince William County pre-Sector). Knowing that Teams will flourish as a movement only as long as our base remains strong and nurtured, attendees prayed for these new leadership couples and applauded their selfless dedication to Teams.

After the prayer service, Teams members and families moved to the main church of the basilica for reserved seating at the Solemn Mass of the Immaculate Conception. The Mass, celebrated by the Papal Nuncio in the United States, was broadcast nationally on the Eternal Word Television Network. ■



From left: Jim and Ruth Wagner, Coastal Regional Couple; Dave and Marta Sparrow, Mixing Bowl Sector Couple; Christian and Pat Cobb, Prince William County pre-Sector Liaison Couple; Dave Beauchamp, Loudoun County Sector Couple. Missing from photo is Diane Beauchamp.

One Tank Get-Aways

By Joe & Diane Manuel, Lake Erie Regional Couple

In October, we traveled from our home in Orchard Park, New York (near Buffalo) to the Pittsburgh area to meet with the Sector Couples there. It was a wonderful meeting and a great opportunity to get to know these couples. We will be meeting again with them in the next few months to get an update on what has happened since our last meeting. We have much to share with them from the Super Regional meeting in San Antonio.

A year ago in San Antonio, we learned that the Lake Erie Region would be responsible to support English-speaking Teams of Our Lady in Toronto. Our internal reaction was that it would never happen. Within months we found ourselves in a flurry of e-mails between Ted and Eileen and ourselves and the Toronto area. It didn't take long before we were in Toronto for an initial meeting with our Team. This has been an amazing process. The couples are young enough to gasp when we mentioned that we have been married 40 years. All have very young children or are pregnant and at our last meeting we met two of the new babies. The depth of sharing and willingness to be open is more than a shot in the arm for us. We grow with each encounter.

When we met them the very first time they outlined their plan to have Teams in each section of Toronto.

We also, on that first trip north of the border, met with another couple west of Toronto and did an



Karolina & Peter Gardzinski of Toronto at an information meeting.

information meeting. This couple had just returned to Canada after college in the States and was in the process of re-connecting with married friends, a process that

was more difficult than they thought. Their plan is to be ready by spring for a Team.

As we left, they said that we were missionaries in a foreign land. They are so appreciative to us for traveling so far. We look forward to each meeting and only hope the weather will be cooperative. As with everything else in life, we get much more than we give. ■

Dynamic Duo of the Midwest

Back in 1967, an energetic couple from Rochester, Minnesota was asked by Fr. Larry Gavin (assistant pastor of their parish) to attend a conference for the Sisters of Saint Francis in Winona, MN to discuss family life.

At the reception following the program, the couple met Father Robert McCreary, who was a speaker at the conference and a Team chaplain in D.C. Fr. McCreary acquainted this couple with the Teams of Our Lady.

About the same time, the couple read an article by Msgr. Knott

of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in their diocesan newspaper. The article described the Teams of Our Lady Movement for married couples and gave the name of Andy and Loretta Favret, who were the first Regional Couple of the Teams in the U.S., as the contact for further information. Therein began a long series of correspondence by phone and mail between this couple and the Favrets with the result of the first team being formed in Rochester. Dick and Lee Smith were that inquiring and persevering couple who took the initiative to start Teams in Minnesota and the Midwest.

Pursuing their new found love in the Team's concept of married spirituality, Lee Smith participated in the 1971 Team's training session in Elberon, New Jersey while Dick stayed home in Rochester to attend to their seven children and his accounting business.

Lee's participation in the Elberon session was an eye opening experience, and she realized that what she and Dick had been doing, as a Team, was not quite an authentic Teams of Our Lady experience. They were missing the focus on the spirituality of the couple and marriage as a pathway to holiness. Bringing these facts to the attention of their Team led to its dissolution. But Dick and Lee were undaunted in their enthusiasm for the concept and goals of Teams and quickly formed a new Team, serving as the first RC. Their enthusiasm led to the formation of more teams in the Rochester area as they took on the service roles of information, pilot, and liaison couple.

The enthusiasm and energy of Dick and Lee did not go unnoticed by the Teams leadership in the United States. Dick and Lee were asked to be first the Coordinating Couple and then Sector Couple of Rochester in 1973, a role they undertook with great devotion and effectiveness. In 1976, they were asked to succeed Bob and Marie Wallace as the U.S. Regional couple. By late 1980, with almost 200 teams in the United States, the international Teams leadership decided it was time for the US Region to become a "Super Region." The Smiths

along with the past Regional Couples and Frs. Edwin Dill and Frank Galles met in Bethany, Delaware to divide the U.S. teams into three Regions. And even though Dick and Lee were just finishing their five years of service as Regional Couple, they agreed to serve as the first Super Regional Couple, which they undertook from 1981 to 1985.

Dick's professional experience as a certified public accountant was put to the service of the Teams Movement in the United States. Through his efforts, the Teams in 1977-8 drafted a set of By-Laws and subsequently Articles of Incorporation in the state of Minnesota for the Teams of Our Lady. By becoming incorporated as a 501(c)(3), tax-exempt organization, donations to the Teams became tax deductible. During this period, Dick also

used his office space to house the Movement's paper files and study materials. Much to his chagrin, a flood in the late 70s inundated his office and some Team materials were lost. For many years after their tenure as Super-Regional Couple, Dick continued to handle all the paperwork for the annual IRS and Minnesota tax reports.

Dick and Lee Smith were always eager to participate in local and national Teams gatherings whenever and wherever they could. They last participated in the national Teams gathering of July, 2007 in Chaska, Minnesota. Despite his advancing illness from cancer, Dick was his usual upbeat self, exuding his enthusiasm for Teams and the Teams couples. Richard "Dick" Smith was called home to the Father on January 3, 2008, bringing to a close the remarkable contribution to Teams of this "Dynamic Duo of the Midwest." May he forever enjoy God's favor! ■



Dick and Lee Smith served as the first Super Regional Couple of the US Teams. Dick passed away on January 3, 2008.

They Answered the Call

New Central Regional Couple: Don and Carolyn Chleborad

Don and Carolyn Chleborad began their duties as Central Region Couple in January.

Don and Carolyn have been involved with Teams Of Our Lady in Des Moines, Iowa for the past 19 years. Ron and Regina Rasmussen and Joe and Lois Johanns from the Ames Sector piloted two Des Moines Teams. Don and Carolyn were part of Team #2.

Don retired from the federal government in 2000 after 35 years and Carolyn retired in

2006 from Mercy Medical Center in Des Moines as a medical technologist.

Don and Carolyn met 44 years ago when a friend of his married a friend of hers and they were in the wedding party. They have been married for 42 years and have six children and nine grandchildren. Three children are married and two of them are in TOOL in Des Moines--Ann and Brian Moylan and Bob and Martha Chleborad. Ann and Brian

have served as Sector Couple for Des Moines.

Don and Carolyn are active in their church community and have been involved with many movements within the church over the years. TOOL has made and continues to make a growing influence on their marriage and life. ■



Don and Carolyn Chleborad, Des Moines, Iowa, are the new Central Regional Couple.

T. J. and Ellen Holt head South Central Region

T.J. and Ellen Holt's tenure as regional couple began at their Annual Sector Day held on Saturday, February 9, 2008. The day began with Daniel Cardinal DiNardo celebrating Mass and presenting the morning session. "What a wonderful message he presented to all the married couples in attendance: 'Be strong, be patient, be the domestic church within our church on our journey.' It was a very uplifting speech."

The Holts' journey in Teams began over eight years ago.

After being in team Kingwood, TX 06 for only eight months, they felt called to answer the request for a Regional Prayer Couple, which proved rewarding and challenging for them. After being Regional Prayer Couple for two years, they were asked to become the National Prayer Couple.

The Holts were National Prayer Couple for two years before they were asked to be Sector Couple for Sector B in the North Houston area. Although giving up the role as National Prayer Couple was difficult for them, their years of being Sector Couple were blessed by meeting many wonderful

people and experiencing Teams growth in their area.

T.J. and Ellen have been married for 14 years. They have three daughters, Samantha, 13, Ashley, 10 and Hannah, 8. They reside in Kingwood, Texas, just north of Houston. T.J. works in the energy industry and Ellen is a teacher and chauffeur of their daughters' after school activities.

"We are grateful for this opportunity to serve. We look forward to creating new friendships within Teams. Most of all, we ask for your prayers as we serve in this capacity." ■



T.J. Holt, Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, Msgr. Chester Borski, S.T.L., and Ellen Holt at the Annual Sector Day.

Still Living The National Conference

By Jose & Maria Cabral, New England Region, Fall River #4P

The Celebration of the 49 years of TOOL in the United States at the 2007 National Conference Chaska, Minnesota is still very vivid in our life!

What inspired us to feel this way that we can't stop talking about the National Conference?

- The presence of the children.
- The people we met.
- The lectures we heard.
- The location where the conference was held.

The presence of seeing so many young children attend the National Conference really inspired us; from teenagers to an infant boy only months. We will never forget the baby Thomas as we participated in the Mass celebration of the Feast of St Thomas.

We marveled at the thought of actually meeting the couples that founded the TOOL in the United States. To hear their testimonies and the hardships they encountered at the beginning and to see how Teams has expanded throughout the United States. We can truly say our Heavenly Mother and God were really at work in the hearts of the families that took

on the responsibility to lead this ministry.

All the lectures we heard were beautiful from the first day to the last. A topic that really touched us was "Teaching Mass." Fr. Michael Schmitz explained from beginning to the end of Mass, and what each step symbolized. We were touched by the explanation of a simple genuflect. It was so powerful that we no longer take the gesture for granted. At every Mass we attend, we genuflect in honor of God's presence in the offering of ourselves.

The location of the Oak Ridge Conference Center was splendid each day until our departure. The meals, service and desserts were fabulous. Just to mention one of many feelings of the presence of our Heavenly Mother, on one of the day when events were to be held outside, it rained and when the time arrived to go outside the sun came out and everything was dry. Another sign of God's presence was the walk around the pond. The sunset and sunrise and their sparkling reflection in the water felt like we were in Heaven. Again, we were amazed at the little flowers along both sides of the path. We felt as if God was providing

us with a carpet as we walked around the pond.

This is only a few of many memories that are still imbedded in our hearts. We appreciate all the hard work that went on behind the scenes that made it possible for the conference to be a success. We thank Our Heavenly Mother for touching our hearts to attend this marvelous conference. Thank you! ■

Rest In Peace

Beverly Burrell
Toledo OH 01

Ana Fernandez
Fall River MA 05

Carolyn Jacques
Kingwood TX 02

Gloria Pietrocini
Aurora OH 01

Dick Smith

*Please pray for the
deceased members
of Teams*



Jesus' Way

By Ted & Eileen Kosnik, Super Regional Couple

Remember when everyone other word from the mouths of people were WWJD?
What would Jesus do?

When Jesus was picking his apostles he asked an interesting assortment of people: a tax collector, a persecutor, and a bunch of farmers, fisherman and tradesmen. When he spoke to people and changed their lives, he did it at a well, from a boat, on a hillside, walking down the street. These are valuable lessons for us to learn. Too often we feel that we have to hand-pick the people we will tell about TOOL, or ask to help with a project. We are fussier than Jesus himself!

Let's have an attitude adjustment! Let us really think about what Jesus would do. He spoke to his friends and partied with them. They fished together. They cared about each other's families. Jesus cured Peter's mother-in-law. Jesus gave the care of Mary, his mother, to John while he hung from a cross, which tells us that John was present and of comfort to Jesus on the cross, and so close to him spiritually that Jesus would trust him with his mother. Do we show that empathy to our teammates?

Are we so fussy about who we include in an information meeting or a team that we do not let go and ask the Holy Spirit to be present and guide us? Have we set our standards above those of Jesus? Do we have to have the perfect time, place and date for our meetings?

As Responsible Couple for the U.S. we have the opportunity to speak to many couples about leadership in the Movement. We hear lots of reasons why couples cannot take on the job that they are being asked to fill. Often they say that do not feel qualified. Please remember that the choices of Jesus were able to do the job of spreading Christ's message around the globe. They did it without college degrees, without car and air transportation. They did not speak the languages of all the countries to which they would spread the word. They did it with LOVE. We can all step up to the plate in LOVE. We do our best and God does the rest!

As a country we are in need of dedicated leadership in all areas. We need Sector Couples, Regional Couples, Information Couples and Pilot Couples. We will train you! You simply need an openness to say "YES" when asked! Rejoice in your energy and health as gifts from God and return some of that gift in service to couples and families!



World Marriage Day Celebration

By Patrice & Fabienne Dubois, New England Region, Wilbraham 01

In the middle of a cold and stormy winter in New England, the temptation was great to stay inactive on World Marriage Day but the predecessor of Wilbraham knew they just had to celebrate this important matrimonial milestone in the liturgical year.

It all started in the fall when Team 1 tried to map out the year and identified very early on this important date. Unanimously we all agreed that, in the state of Massachusetts, which claims so many liberal headlines, the time had come to celebrate this sacramental, traditional and liberating Catholic marriage of ours. The date was reserved at our parish hall and a team that comprised members of all three teams was put in place. The team secured the participation quickly of our parish priests and two VIPs: Joe and Amy Almeida, our Regional Couple and Tim and Mary-Ellen Fleming, who piloted Team 02. After much prayer and brainstorming, the format of the evening was finalized.

The day of celebration started at 5:00 with Saturday evening mass, with all teams and their families sitting in the reserved front pews.

Our two parish priests, Fr. Joe Soranno and Fr. Jeff Minkler,

both spiritual directors for teams in Wilbraham, concelebrated the mass and emphasized the importance of marriage in our church and our society. They also asked the team members to stand up to recognize officially the movement and also all the couples present to renew their vows. At the end of the mass a special benediction was given, and all

names to start-up a new team. Around 7:00, attendance began to decrease and part of the teams drove the children home and the other part helped finalize the set-up for the banquet.

It is difficult to describe what happened next because it was much better to live it. The decoration was simple yet lovely with a Valentine's theme. One high-



Teams in Massachusetts gather for a group photo as part of their World Marriage Day festivities.

parishioners were invited to join teams in the parish center for refreshments and fellowship.

Many people from the mass did join the gathering. Poster boards with pictures of each team family were presented, inviting guests to inquire about Teams in a very warm and non-threatening way. Children were running around with their parish friends and were enjoying the Valentine's cake. A sign-up sheet was available for people who were interested in Teams and we ended up with enough

light of the evening was one of the couples singing and playing two songs on marriage they had composed. There was also delicious catered food and good wine, prizes, prayers and laughs, speeches and recognition, praise and service, joy and peace, love and photo souvenirs. Two team members were asked to be the photographers that night; every couple could have their picture taken as a souvenir of the renewal of their vows. We now also have wonderful pictures of all the teams.

Father Jeff talked about Veritatis Splendor and broke down the message of John Paul II in simple role-plays of grace, reconciliation and forgiveness. It was hilarious and deep at the same time. Joe and Amy evoked their beginnings in teams and the role of the greater movement and finally, Tim and Mary-Ellen, in their own beautiful way, shared with us the meaning of love, of their love to one another rooted in Christ.

Yet, words come short to capture the essence and the ambiance of the gathering. The Holy Spirit, who brought us together as teams, lifted up our spirit and we all celebrated our initial and on-going vows of love to one another with God's graces.

It was like that for that day we did not conform to the world and we had stolen our pagan society one moment of sheer happiness because we had been opened to the Holy Spirit and followed Jesus Christ.

In summary, our liturgical year abounds of marvels like World Marriage Day. With little preparation early on, treasures of fellowship, evangelization and spiritual renewal can be easily created and shared with the greater community. Please go ahead and schedule away your joy to be part of this gift that is the Teams Of Our Lady! ■



TOOL PRAYER: U.S. NATIONAL PRAYER

Prayer is an important part in the life of TOOL couples, and there are times when we feel the need to reach out and ask others to join us in our needs. The National Prayer Couple can do just that! Bob and Carol Stovenour are our link to each other and they can be reached at prayer@teamsfourlady.org.

When you request prayers we ask that you follow some guidelines. Because our requests are shared with hundreds of TOOL couples all over the U.S. we want to make sure that you are sensitive to the privacy of the people being prayed for. God knows all the details, but we do not need them! Please include:

- your name,
- team name and state,
- a short description of the request.

The Prayer Couple does the rest! The requests are sent out as needed and include a scripture verse at the bottom.

INTERNATIONAL PRAYER INTERCESSORS

If you would like to be an intercessor on an international level, please contact info@teamsfourlady.org as we have a need to pray for international intentions too! These requests come in writing from France about four times a year along with a spiritual message. We would send the emails to you if you are interested.



Vatican, 20th November 2007



Dear friends,
I did not fail to let the Holy Father know about the gatherings that will take place in more than 70 countries around the world to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Charter. It was given by Father Caffarel to Equipes Notre-Dame to give structure to the movement that had started informally around him at the request of a few couples. They wanted to give each other support in living out the sacrament of marriage in faithfulness to the Gospel. It is with joy that the Pope joins you in your thanksgiving.

The Charter provides your Movement with its own formative way that aims entirely at an effective pursuit of holiness. Indeed, for the founder of Teams, it was a matter of helping husbands and wives to live out their love in “praise of God.” It follows from this that a demanding rule in pursuit of an eminent objective, is still fully relevant today. It is an invitation to put at the heart of a couple’s spiritual and apostolic life: a desire for an authentic prayer life practiced in all its dimensions: individually, as a family, as a team and as a Church, and the practice of conjugal dialogue or “Sit-down”.

May team members as well as Spiritual Counsellors remain faithful to the Charter and help others beyond the Movement to discover its treasures.

On this 60th anniversary, the Pope asks the Lord, through the intercession of Our Lady, to pour out his gifts on all couples who endeavour with courage and generosity to strengthen their married and family life guided by the Charter, as well as upon their children and older team members. He grants his affectionate apostolic Blessing to all.

Remembering with joy the twenty or so years I spent as Spiritual Counsellor of a team in Rome, I associate myself in prayer to all members of the Movement and assure them of my cordial devotion in Christ.

Tarcisio Card. Bertone
Secretary of State of His Holiness

Words of Wisdom from Our Founder

This communication, by Father Caffarel on May 4, 1959 to one thousand TOOL members gathered in Rome, was used during the celebration of the Charter in France on December 2007. It has been made available in translation, and we share it with you.

The war is over, the prisoners return; groups of households are the order of the day and are increasing. Formidable success, but do the households come through concern about deepening their Christian life? There is no evidence of this. Sometimes it seems it is curiosity, seeking human friendships, snobbery. Add to that, the oldest households, those of the heroic period, are tempted to relaxation in the euphoria of regained peace and old comfortable friendships. Had the fine spirit which had animated the first groups been already used up? So much hope had been placed in the birth of these groups of households— must it be abandoned? There had been crises, but every crisis does not lead to failure. How often in our meetings of households, on reflecting on the growth of conjugal love, in studying the development of children, have we noticed the phenomenon of crises in the growth of all living things, and that they bring progress or regression accordingly, as they are taken

well or badly. What must be done that our groups should favor success, the reaching of maturity? What might be God's will?

I shall not hide from you that it is the history of the Church and the study of religious life that inspired the solution for me. I looked for whatever might explain why sanctity has never ceased to flourish and reflower in the religious orders in the course of the ages in spite of exterior and interior crises, and I have understood that one of the essential factors for strength and vitality of these orders was their rule. Why, I ask myself, not propose a rule for married Christians desirous of spiritual progress? Not a rule for monks but a rule for married lay-folk.

What orientation should be given to this rule? More mystical, putting the emphasis on the gospel ideal? More juridical, setting out obligations? Doubtless it would be necessary to join both points of view. That is why your rule, the Charter of Teams of Our Lady, in the first part specifies the end to which

you must tend and in the second part the means – methods and obligations – to get there.

To me it seems necessary at this important stage in our history, namely our pilgrimage to Rome, to present to you the Charter of Teams of Our Lady in its deep significance. I could have begun there and dispensed myself from retracing the history of our Teams for you. But it is the observations and the experiences noted in the course of the first two phases of the Movement which explain and justify what I would call the pedagogy of our Charter.

The first object of this Charter: to present the Christian ideal of marriage and to determine the means which will allow households to acquire a better understanding of it. During the course of years past I have discovered, as you remember, that to inspire a generous spiritual life among married Christians, it was first necessary to get them to discover the greatness of their vocation.

How does the Charter favor this discovery? By the month-

ly study topic on conjugal and family spirituality. The obligation laid upon you to study this topic during the course of the month, husband and wife together, then to commit your reflections to writing so as to

The first object of this Charter: to present the Christian ideal of marriage

send them to the one who will lead the proceedings at the monthly meetings of the team offers several great advantages. First, it obliges you to study the subject in depth, to clarify your thoughts and make you get into the habit of mutual help between *Continued on page 14*

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husband and wife in the study of your faith, and then in the course of the monthly meeting it will permit an exchange of views which is so much more fruitful through being better prepared by the group leader thanks to your replies.

An enclosed retreat is another privileged means of entering



Fr. Caffarel

more deeply into your understanding of Christian life. I realised this as early as 1939, the date of the

first enclosed retreat I preached to a gathering. It is true that certain preachers believe the retreat is not designed for this deepening of the riches of Christian dogma, but solely for prayer, the review of life and resolutions. For my part I believe that it should propose both objectives for itself, at least when it is addressed to families whose religious education has much need of enrichment.

But the Charter has not only as its aim to reveal the greatness of Christian life. It should also offer the means so that the household can live by it. "Alas for the knowledge that does not lead to love." Hence a number of obligations which have as their aim to make families

progress in Christian life by urging them to have recourse to God, to the priest, to brotherly mutual help and to the support of an organization.

In the first place I present the numerous obligations which lead households to seek help from God:

- **Conjugal family prayer:** Christ, present in the household by reason of the sacrament of marriage, expects those with whom He lives to unite themselves with Him in the praise of the Father.
- **Prayer at the monthly meeting:** situated immediately after the meal and before the discussions, this prolonged prayer is the high point of the meeting, the one I know that you most appreciate.
- **The Magnificat:** which each member of the Teams recites each evening, invariably brings together all the households of the Movement, in Europe, Africa and America, to ask her under whose patronage they are gathered to help them to serve God ever more perfectly.

It goes without saying that the retreats, mentioned above as a means of deepening religious knowledge, are above all to be considered as a privileged time of prayer.

By inviting households to have recourse first of all to God, the Teams also offer them the help of the one who is God's greatest gift to humankind to lead them to Him, viz. the priest. The role of a Teams spiritual counselor is of supreme importance in our Movement – its organization and its different methods – is essentially an instrument put at the disposal of priests to allow them to fulfil in the best way their role as spiritual educators of families.

Another great help offered by the Teams: mutual help; the mystique and obligations of mutual help: help between spouses, between families, between Teams. Mutual help is one of the means of true charity. "Carry one another's burdens," wrote St. Paul to the Galatians, "and thus you will carry out the law of Christ."

Con nubii – one of the essential purposes of marriage – it should be daily.

The obligation of a monthly conversation between partners, which we call the duty of the sit-down, is to be considered in this perspective of spiritual mutual help: husband and wife together, under the eyes of God, seek His thought and will concerning their household so as the better to accomplish it. Who could tell the number of households which owe their human and spiritual balance

to the practice of the "duty of the sit-down"? Conjugal family prayer, the study in common of the theme: these obligations already noted, are so many means of mutual help between spouses.

Mutual help between households. In one sense this is the main purpose of the Teams. Remember this passage from the Charter: "Because they knew their weaknesses and the limits of their strength, if not of their own good will, because each day they experience how difficult it is to live as a Christian in a pagan world, and because they have an indestructible belief in fraternal help, our households have decided to form a team." Every moment and every activity of the monthly meeting is oriented towards this fraternal mutual aid: the meal and the "whip around (sharing of highs and lows)" in which one becomes part of the news, joys, pains, failures and successes, in which one asks advice and help; the sharing, that cruel but beneficial moment in which one gives an account of the way he/she has carried out the obligations of the Charter. Prayer and the exchange of views are to be seen also in the perspective of mutual aid between households. But, as you know quite well, this mutual help could not be limited to the means which we have just examined. It remains

in attention to the needs of the members. We are acquainted with all the households it has saved materially and morally. A letter I have just received provides me with an example – which is also symbolic – a woman who was between life and death after a difficult childbirth : she had lost a lot of blood, a transfusion was essential; every member of her Team spontaneously offered their blood to save her.

Finally, *mutual help between Teams*. Our Movement is a team of Teams. So the older Teams help those in formation on the other side of the world, allowing these to profit from their experience. In return, the whole Movement profits from the example of each Team, from the dynamics of those in Brazil, the brotherly friendship which in Mauritius has allowed the Teams to triumph over racial prejudices, etc. The witness of the Belgian family offering to God the little child taken back by death, spoken of during the course of a retreat, has brought peace to a Swiss couple which had not yet come to accept a similar trial.

Our contemporaries, willing individualists and free-lances see in an organization nothing but bother, hindrance prison. The Teams, far from making excuses for it, put forward their

strict organization and rigorous discipline as a help of great worth: The rule first and the promise to respect it which you are asked to take after a delay of two years after affiliation; control with respect to the obligations of the Charter – control, I have no fear of the word – but control inspired by charity and exercised with the aim of an increase in charity; finally those responsible persons who from top to bottom are the guardians of the rule and its correct interpretation and application.

I need to mention here at the end of the long enumeration of the helps that the Charter offers you, a means of progress which holds a place of honor among us: you are asked to stop periodically, to place your life under the luminous beams of God's will, so as to verify, in loyalty and generosity, to what extent you have been faithful to it, and to clarify the resolutions which will permit you to reply better.

At the level of the individual, this method finds its application in the obligation to a rule of life. The Charter, in legislating for households very different in age, culture and spiritual formation, can only propose a minimum program. So it specifies that each member should give himself a rule of life setting out the obligations which he thinks he should impose

on himself so as to correspond better with the expectations of the Lord.

At the level of the couple it is the famous "duty of the sit-down." I shall not go back to that.

At the level of the Team, it is the meeting at the end of the year, often called the review meeting, at which, in frankness and good will, one is asked what reforms should be adopted, what steps forward must be envisaged so that the team's life may make progress in plans for prayer, study and fraternal friendship.

There, at great length but presented all too briefly, is the Charter of Teams of Our Lady, its purpose, its object, its teaching. When twelve years ago, I proposed it to the groups then in existence, I was not without some apprehension: would it be understood and accepted, would it bring the solution required by the crisis of which I have told you? In fact, some groups left us, rejecting the adoption of a rule, yet not without sadness since they were very much attached to the spirit of the Movement. The majority accepted it with trust rather than enthusiasm.

The years have brought an unexpected confirmation of the solid foundation of the Charter. One has seen and still sees very many

households coming to the Teams precisely because they offer a rule in which they find a sense of strength and security. Does this mean that in its progress our Movement does not contain a number of stragglers and grumblers? Moses included some in his following, and I am not Moses, and I am not leading you to a land flowing with milk and honey.

Need I point out once more that the Charter is not an end in itself or an absolute? If anyone demonstrates to us that one of our obligations or one of the methods is not a means of leading the sum total of households to make progress in charity – which is of sole importance – it will be immediately withdrawn or corrected.

The Charter specified three years, from 1947 to 1950, for its adoption. So for nine years the Movement has been living by it. It has been found to be good. ■

New Study Materials Available in Late Spring 2008

Encyclical on Love and *Encyclical on Hope* by Pope Benedict XVI

There has been such a positive response to the development of *Letters to Families* by Pope John Paul II as a study material—with team meeting format and questions—that additional works are being developed. At the January meeting of the Super Regional Team we decided to develop the two encyclicals by Pope Benedict XVI into similar formats as study materials. In late spring the *Encyclical on Love*, and the *Encyclical on Hope* will both be available from the TOOL Office.

E-mail info@teamsofourlady.org to order copies. *Please include your mailing address and the number of copies that you are ordering so we can ship them without bothering you for further information.* We will ship them when they are available from the printer.



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