



# Magnificat

A Newsletter for Married Couples

*United States Teams of Our Lady - Equipes de Nossa Senhora -  
Equipos de Nuestra Señora*

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## Teams of our Lady: What does it do for me? What do I do for it?

by Fr. Edwin Dill

### *Your Story*

Once upon a time, you fell in love. You decided to commit yourself to love that one person for the rest of your life. It was a conscious decision. At some point before or after the wedding, you realized there was a deeper element to that relationship, deeper than physical attraction, deeper than emotional or psychological compatibility. You came to understand, perhaps vaguely at first, that there was a spiritual bond that could only be ignored to the detriment of a richer life together, or it could be mined to an inexhaustible depth, because it involved realities – a reality – greater than each of you or both of you together, a reality that resided within you and promised a kind of love that was firmer and more durable than any other. It involved Love itself, God.

In some way, you were introduced to Teams of Our Lady. Maybe just one of the two of you fell for the idea

and then dragged the other in, if not with reluctance, then at least with some serious questions. Neither of you were Pollyannaish about joining this new group; there was no promised magic, just an invitation, and a hope of something different and potentially greater than what you already had.

You met and got to know a few other couples, know them in a way you didn't know any others. You may or may not have felt attracted to them as to good and compatible friends, but you came, over time, to respect their sincerity, their earnestness, and, yes, their Faith. You found you could talk with these people about family and relationship matters in a way you could not talk – perhaps never attempted to talk – with anyone else. In addition, you could share your faith, even your doubts. You came to find out that Faith was important to them and, perhaps surprisingly, even to you. Your church-going youth, the devotion of your parents, the Church with which you may have developed a love-hate relationship – all this came into clearer

focus, and you began relating it to your marriage, to the love you had for husband or wife.

In addition, all of this grew. It took twists you never envisioned. Over the years, one or another couple moved away or for other reasons left the Team, and you felt the loss. Other couples joined you, and together you learned about one another, perhaps recapturing the sense ▶

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**Volume 24, Early Summer  
2005**

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of discovery felt at the beginning of your Teams experience. You laughed and cried through others' good times and bad, and they through yours: the new babies, the joys, and tedium of young parenthood and middle-aged child rearing. You rejoiced at baptisms and First Communions and weddings and graduations, and you grieved at funerals, at serious illnesses. You shared the wonder of children growing up, the mixed feelings of the empty nest experience, the disappointment of children taking off in directions not envisioned or sanctioned by you, their parents.

Is any of that your experience as a husband or wife, as a married

couple, as members of Teams of Our Lady?

### *Teams' Story*

The experience of Teams of Our Lady has been happening for more than half a century. It started with a few couples wondering how they could make their marriage richer, their love deeper, by tapping into their Faith. Marriage, they knew, was a relationship ordained by God from the beginning and further sanctified as a sacrament by the presence of Jesus in their lives. How could they learn more about that, make it more intentional, instead of just an unconscious substratum

to their lives as Catholics? They asked a priest friend to help them, and together – couples and chaplain – they met and prayed and shared their faith and their lives. From that beginning in 1939 came Teams of Our Lady.

It is important to remember that Teams did not happen all at once; it did not spring fully formed into some one's or some group's imagination. It grew over the years and owes its shape to the day-to-day lived experience of wives and husbands, of couples and groups of couples. Their lives formed the matrix from which Teams of Our Lady grew. What worked and what didn't? Was this group experience life giving, life enriching? Was it enjoyable? Did they leave their meetings more energized, more faith-filled? Did they gain any insights from the other couples, any strength from their strength? Did they find support in their weaknesses? Did they get any greater sense of a loving God being with them in their human loving relationships?

Teams as we know it is the distilled wisdom of those three generations of married couples who have gone before. What we know as endeavors were not handed down from some mountaintop; they grew as stone upon stone, meeting by meeting. The process was full of imperfection and stumbling, of all the human foibles present in any human endeavor, but the blueprint always pointed to a greater awareness

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# Magnificat

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# Regions Continue to Grow; New Hampshire and Maine Get Teams

by Ted & Eileen Kosnik  
Super Regional Couple

*"Go out to all the world and tell the Good News."* Mark 16:15

**W**e are blessed! There are many couples in Teams who have taken these words to heart and are busy sharing their love of God in their new communities. They are couples in all phases of life, but we would like to highlight several couples that have moved and taken the good news of Teams with them.

The **New England Region**, although only four months old, has added two new states to the "have Teams" states! **Linda and Bob Seaman** are piloting our first team in Maine, and **Lori and Joe Myers** are piloting the first team in New Hampshire. Both couples are transplants from other areas, and had experienced Teams. It is addictive - can't live without it!

The Myers moved from Birmingham, AL and first emailed the Team's Office in February about starting Teams in their new parish in Concord, NH. Within three days **Joe and Amelia Almeida** had called to encourage them and request materials be sent to aid in the recruitment of couples. By March 14 they emailed to say that they had a priest interested and 6-7 couples "on board". April 2, Joe and Amy traveled to New Hampshire to do an information meeting and seven

couples signed on to begin the piloting journey in early May.

Meanwhile, in neighboring Maine, Linda and Bob were busy gathering their new team, Limerick, Maine 1. What blessing these couples are! Let us all keep these new teams in our prayers.

The **Central Region** is piloting another team in Omaha, Nebraska. **Ronald and Regina Rasmussen** will be traveling from their home in Ames to pilot this team.

**South Central Region** continues to grow under the direction of their Regional Couple, **Carolyn and Don Jacques**. They have been holding information meetings at many parishes in the Houston area, and as a result are beginning teams at St. Laurence, Sugar Land, TX; St. Christopher and Sacred Heart Co-Cathedral parishes in Houston.

**Sandra and Leon Hrabovsky** will be piloting one of the Sugar Land teams. They moved to the Houston area from Slidell, LA with twenty+ years of Teams experience and have been spreading Teams in the southwest Houston suburbs ever since!

Houston, TX 1 includes **Pat and Cindi Bowman**, who began Teams in Tyler, TX and mid piloting moved. Often couples will ask if it is worth joining a team when there is a possibility that they will move. We always answer that it is up to them, but why not? The Bowmans and **Cynthia and Marty Curry**, of a military team in Germany, are

proof that it is worth it!

We ask that you pray for the recovery of **Florentino and Beatriz Rodriguez** and **Jesus and Gloria Caceres** who recently were injured in an auto accident in South Carolina. Both couples are involved in piloting teams.

## Kosniks Corner

New teams are happening all over the country. Three hundred Piloting-I books were printed on December 9, 2004. We have just printed another five hundred as we were out!

**W**hile this is wonderful news, we would like to ask that you seriously look at your annual contribution to the Movement. We understand that those on fixed incomes, have large families or job changes may not be able to help financially, but we earnestly request that you send a note saying you are praying for the Movement. Prayers are a powerful tool in spreading TOOL.

The vast majority of our couples have been blessed materially, and ▶

we ask that you share in the growth of the Movement without having to leave your home (although we urge you to do that too!). Please contribute so that we may print materials, publish the *Magnificat* and aid couples who do leave their easy chairs to pilot (we pay the princely sum of \$.15 per mile toward gas) here in the states, and we can pay our tithe to the International Leading Team (ERI -Equipe Responsable Internationale) and spread the Movement to couples in third world countries.

Help to have a spiritually enriching marriage should not depend on

the Gross National Product of your country of residence! The ratio of dollar to euro has seriously affected the portion of our budget that is shared. Remember, not long ago other countries were supporting the United States teams! It is our turn to be missionaries.

As you select new study material we would like to have you consider the fine material produced by the ERI to prepare us for the Lourdes Gathering. The topic is "Who do they say that I am?" It is laid out as the piloting books are, with study material, scripture, and sit-down topics.

We will print the material in July, and are looking for an estimate of the number to print. Please email the Team Office (info@teamsofourlady.org) if your team would like to use this material. The translation was done in Australia, and is good. This is another example of your donation dollars at work!

We will see many of you in Turlock, and will hold in our hearts and prayers those who cannot attend. •

## Marital Relationship Study

By

Father Andre Estephan

What makes marriages succeed or fail?

This question is particularly important given the fact that 50% of marriages in the United States end up in divorce. Such a complex question requires extensive amount of studies to find research-based answers and therefore develop strategies designed to enhance the quality of the marital relationship. Participating in such studies is a very effective way through which you can contribute to the advancement of research.

I am currently conducting a study on marital relationships. Your participation to the study as a couple is needed. Husbands and wives will be required to fill out separately a questionnaire in the comfort of their home. All information collected will be confidential, and your answers will remain entirely anonymous. A summary of the research findings will be available upon request. Your participation is crucial for the success of the study.

If you are interested to participate to this study, please contact me and give me your mailing address and I will send you the questionnaire along with the necessary instructions.

Contact me at:

- 11935 Bellfort Village Dr., Houston, Texas 77031
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# The Team Meeting, Part II

by Ted & Eileen Kosnik  
Super Regional Couple

In the fall issue of the *Magnificat* we began a series of articles about the Team Meeting. The winter *Magnificat* focused on our June meeting in Turlock and we dedicated space to hearing from couples who encouraged your attendance. We now return to the Team Meeting and the Endeavors.

If there is a single element that makes Teams unique it is the Endeavors. There are bible study groups that lead you to study and mediate; dinner groups that develop social bonding, but Teams provide steps to sainthood. Not only does it provide the steps, but also it gives you companions and cheerleaders to help focus on them!

***“If one part is hurt, all the parts share its pain. And if one of the parts is honored, all the parts share its joy”*** 1 Cor 12:26

The Endeavors are an invitation to deepen our spiritual life as an individual, as a couple, and as a family. They are an invitation to awaken in us Mary’s attitude of appreciation and love so that we are led to a deeper life in Christ.

We must guard against an attitude of “getting them done” and racing through the list with an imaginary pencil checking off each in turn so that our well-developed Catholic guilt is satisfied! Let us look at the six endeavors:

- regular reading or hearing the Word of God

- a daily period set aside for conversation with God
- a daily period of conjugal prayer, and for those with family home a period of family prayer
- a monthly sit-down between husband and wife in the presence of God
- a rule of life
- a yearly retreat

***“Sharing on the Endeavors”*** page 4 (copies are in the RC handbooks), notes that we must constantly seek to know God’s will for us.

As team members we enlist the help of our spouse and teammates to demand of us, in a respectful way, that we move forward in our search for God’s will in our lives. Our patroness, Mary the Mother of Jesus, is an example for us of how to live our lives as disciples. She was fully human, yet she was brave enough to say, “yes” to the Lord. Her love carried her into motherhood, and to stand at the foot of the cross.

## ***The Regular Reading, or Hearing the Word of God***

Daily Mass is one way of satisfying this endeavor and has the added benefit of the reception of the Eucharist. If work schedule or parenthood, or the availability of a priest makes this impossible, find time to read God’s word. The length of time is less important than the daily “doing”. If you have time to read a phrase, start there! Just start.

Perhaps this could be a part of your couple prayer and you could alternate listening and proclaiming The Word.

## ***A Daily Period of Conversation with God***

The same comments as above apply here. If you do not have a regular time to talk with the God who holds you in being, who provides your every breath, rearrange your priorities! Develop an attitude of gratitude for your daily breath as well as your daily bread. Take the time to converse with your Lord, even if the time is

## Tips for Teams

less than you would like. A journey begins with the first step.

## ***A Daily Period of Conjugal and Family Prayer***

We are called to be counter-cultural and spend time with our family. We unite as a domestic church to worship God in our marriage and our home. We hear couples complain that they “hit the floor” in the morning and run all day. Well before you get out of bed, reach for your spouse’s hand and pray together! If evenings are rushed, start the day with prayer before the children head to the school bus or car pool. The time spent in prayer will lighten the burdens of the day! ▶

***“Your love without demands diminishes me. Your demands without love discourage me. Your demanding love makes me grow.”***

- Father Caffarel

***A Monthly Sit-Down***

This endeavor is firmly grounded in the gospel of Luke. You make appointments for everything else in life; make a date with your spouse. Light a candle to remind yourselves

cally look at where we fall short. It is the search for the root of our problems and the grace to open ourselves to change. Identifying our weaknesses gives ample room to form a rule of life!

We again are invited to be counter-cultural and seek not to please ourselves, but to increase our ability to reach out to others in love and service. We seek to be like Christ in loving our spouse, teammates, and

Essential to this endeavor, as with the others, is just do it. Take time to be with each other in prayer, silence, recreation and study. The Team Office has many videos that can be used to make going on retreat a growth experience. During your Sector Service team meetings share locations, topics and games used during successful retreats. Help each other if baby-sitting is needed. Be community and form community.

Doing each of these endeavors we look to Mother Mary as model, ever respectful of the needs of others (Christ’s first miracle), and her unflinching faithfulness to God,

and try to follow her Son.

***“Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*** Matthew 5:48

Matthew reminds us of our endeavor to do just that - seek perfection - with the help of spouse and teammates!

We will continue with the balance of the meeting in the next issue... •

*Yearly Retreat*   *Rule of Life*  
*Word of God*   *Personal Prayer*  
**Endeavors**   *Conjugal Prayer*  
*Monthly Sit-Down*

of Christ’s presence, and open your heart and mind. Pray together and then open yourself in honesty to share yourself with your spouse.

This is an in depth talk and should be without the distractions of children or telephone. If you have an answering machine, turn down the volume. If your children are small wait until they are in bed, or leave them with a sitter and leave the house.

We know some teams where couples regularly baby-sit with each other’s children so their teammates can enjoy their monthly sit-down. What a heart-warming example of helping each other on the road to sainthood!

***A Rule of Life***

Each person will handle this endeavor differently. It is designed to help us understand ourselves, accept the truth of who we are, and realisti-

community without counting the cost. We do this not when we want to, but always.

***The Yearly Retreat***

In the US most teams do this as a weekend event, from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon, and as a Team. The benefit to this method includes getting to know your teammates in an entirely different way!

On rare occasions couples are unable to get away with their team, but will make a couples retreat at a local retreat house, or make a Marriage Encounter. Some Sectors hold retreats. Retreats as a team help us to know one another, an indispensable need if we are to help one another! It also allows us to include Team methods in the retreat, perhaps allowing “sit-down” time, or special time for couple prayer.

**Also in our next issue:**  
Highlights and photos from the National Meeting in Turlock

# Invitation to Lourdes

*To the couples, widows and widowers, Spiritual Counsellors of the Teams of our Lady.*



Dear friends,

An international gathering is a privileged and important time for the Teams of Our Lady's movement. It occurs only once every six years, and the one that will take place in LOURDES from the 16 to the 21 of September 2006, will be the 10th.

During this gathering what are we coming to live?

- A time of prayer and thanksgiving for what we receive and what we give as a couple to the Teams of Our Lady, in the Church, in the World,
- A time of sharing between team members from all over the world, coming from 68 countries and from all continents,
- A time of celebration in a place full of grace, visited by Mary when she meet at Lourdes a humble and poor shepherdess, and that she asked her to believe,
- A time of learning and sharing ideas on the theme of the gathering,
- A time to receive and welcome the responsables for the Church and for the other movements,
- A time to pray and celebrate the 10th anniversary of Father Caffarel's death,
- A time to receive the new orientations of the movement that will lead us from 2006 to 2012,
- A time to be evangelized and guided by the Holly Spirit, in a process of revival of our faith and of our wedding sacrament,
- An opportunity for all to come back full of happiness to share, for a more dynamic and vitalized Team's life.

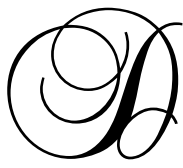
*Letters from the*  
**International**  
**Leading**  
**Team**

We invite you to the sharing and the mutual help that are recommended in the Charter. May every Team send at least one couple to Lourdes to carry your prayers' intentions and your preoccupations and to bring you back a bunch of flowers of all the joy and the happiness shared with the others Teams' members.

We invite you to come in large numbers, brothers and sisters of the Teams, because our movement, the Church and the World need the testimony of your Faith, your Hope and your Love.

We are waiting for you in the prayer and with friendship,

*Gérard and Marie Christine de Roberty*



ear friends,

Is it really necessary to ask ourselves again the reasons for a large international gathering of Teams? For team members who have taken part in a previous gathering, the answer is obvious. Let us therefore consult them. Some may be close to us, in our own team or in our Sector. Let us question them.

“I don’t like big groups; I hate crowds; in fact, I am agoraphobic! But also, why such an expense?” And we insist: “You must go. We need you to take on the spiritual animation of team members in the train that will bring them to Lourdes, because we must, with a heavy heart, abandon the idea of taking part in the gathering ourselves since I must rest during my pregnancy”. And they set out reluctantly; they told us. Since then, they have not missed a single one and they themselves organise pilgrimages and retreats!

### *A tradition*

It has become a tradition. Every six years, an international gathering for all team members throughout the world takes place in Rome, Lourdes, Fatima, Santiago of Compostela...

Each time there is the same enthusiasm of so many couples who, coming from all continents, have left their cosy homes, some their children, some their job, others some commitments, perhaps a sick relative. Many left with a heavy heart, our friends told us. They return full of joy, thanking God for the team members they met, these brothers and sisters who did not even speak their language, but with whom they felt so close, exchanging as best they could from heart to heart, with signs or with a few hesitating words in the others’ language. We who have a deaf and dumb son-in-law, we can say from our own experience that when we really want to communicate, there is always a way to do it!



### *A great international family*

Don’t we all belong to a single great family? From Santiago in Chile to Sidney via Sao Paulo, Warsaw or Beirut or Yaounde, couples are experiencing the same charisms of Teams, with the same intensity, the same joys, the same difficulties, the same hardships. And yet each individual reacts to these according to their particular culture, their particular characteristics, their particular inventiveness... What a gift when an African breeze brings us the testimony of a Togolese couple telling us that a husband and wife who wear matching clothes do so as a sign of their oneness, of their married faithfulness! There was also the case of a spiritual counsellor who told us, as we walked along, how his team and the witness of the mutual faithfulness of its couples, helped him to rediscover his faithfulness to his priesthood following a lapse.

***A family that shares a common spiritual heritage***

That is what a great gathering of Teams is; but it is also much more: It is sharing a strong feeling of belonging to a large family whose members (around 100,000 throughout the world) share the same spiritual heritage handed down from the few couples that met around Father Caffarel more than 50 years ago; a heritage further enriched over the years.

- It is a family in which different ages mix and complement each other,
- a Christian family in which the members help and support one another,
- a family which, like all families, is liable to wilt, to break up if it does not meet together from time to time to celebrate together, to give thanks together and just to be together!

***A time of fellowship and solidarity***

A great gathering is also a great moment of fellowship and solidarity. Thus a portion of the participation cost goes to a solidarity fund to help those for whom financial support within their own country is difficult, if not impossible.

***A lay movement at the service of the People of God***

A great gathering is also a way of making Teams visible as a Christian lay movement, part of the great family of the People of God on a journey that is the Church. It openly proclaims its mission within the Church, Good News for Christian couples wishing to live out fully their sacrament of marriage and to help one another to do so.

***Spiritual food and renewal***

A great international gathering seeks also to provide spiritual food through conferences of quality as well as a renewal of our enthusiasm for team life through sharing the life of a 'mixed team'.

***A personal call...***

A great international gathering is even more than that; but to discover it, one must take part in it, since each one of us will draw his or her particular graces from it, as the Lord dispenses them to each one individually and personally. He calls us; we only have to say 'yes', to break the moorings of our certainties, to open our hearts to God's unpredictability and to let him deal with us as he wills. Everything else is extra...

So let us here and now begin our journey.

We greet you all warmly and are already looking forward to meeting you in Lourdes in a little more than a year's time.

***Priscilla and Jean-Louis Simonis***

# Lourdes Gathering 2006 - Optional Trip Extensions

The International Teams Gathering will be held in Lourdes, France from a Sun September 17-21, 2006...put those dates on your calendar!

These “every-six-year” gatherings of worldwide Teams couples, chaplains, wid and widowers offer us an exciting additional dimension of the international part of our movement. During that week, among many dynamic liturgies and talks, you form a “Team” with other couples from your language group and a chaplain. That group meets three or four times and shares deeply as couples united in the ways of our movement and long lasting relationships spring from this exceptional experience offered to you.



If you haven't attended an International Gathering, what better place or time than Lourdes next year! Let the Holy Spirit guide you in your pondering of the choice to come!

We are offering two extensions front and back of the September 17-21 dates to our traveling pilgrims “over the pond.” These are separate from the costs of our Lourdes stay we will contract through our national Teams movement which will be offered to you soon at a very reasonable cost.

## **SHRINES OF FRANCE**

### **September 16 to September 28**

We have an all inclusion package of \$1,999.00 for round trip airfare from New York to Lourdes with a return from Paris to New York. We will be picked up in Lourdes on the 22nd by motor coach and have a seven day guided tour through the other shrines of France. Our route includes: the walled city of Carcassonne; Avignon and the summer home of the Papal Palace; Lyon and on to the location where St. Margaret had a vision of the Sacred Heart, Paray-Le-Monial; Nevers and the tomb of St. Bernadette; Chartres and on to the Normandy beach; Caen and Lisieux where the Basilica of St. Theresa is; Rouen and its majestic cathedral; and a concluding morning tour in Paris viewing the Madeleine Church, the Eiffel Tower, and Notre Dame with the afternoon in Versailles. First class hotels with daily breakfast and dinner is included each day except for meals in Paris. We are going to break out this land tour also and offer it without airfare so those with frequent flyer miles can secure their airfare separately. We also have reasonably priced add-on fares from your home city to this all inclusion package of \$1,999.00 per person.

## **WINE COUNTRY BARGE CRUISE**

### **September 8 to September 14**

We offer a 5-day delightful casual cruise for \$1,331 to \$1,621, in two categories, starting in Lyon cruising through the southern “French Beaujolais” countryside and ending in Avignon. All meals are included, food is fabulous, and the sightseeing starts in the heart of the towns along the river route. We are talking to two different cruise companies who have been in business for decades, one being Peter Deilman, a first class company in travel. We would connect the dots between September 14 and the start of our Lourdes gathering, September 17, with a three-day tour through Provence and then over to Lourdes and keep this cost around \$400.00 a person with lodging and two meals a day. Those that want to rent a car for those days would have an easy three-day drive through the southern countryside because Lourdes is located in this area. Both cruise companies provide transportation from Paris to the boarding dock in Lyon with a morning arrival in Paris ideal for boarding by 1:00 p.m. in Lyon.

The availability will depend on the numbers interested, so please let us know what appeals to you soon! Please direct questions to Pat Verhelle (tel. (231) 347-4100 ext. 15, or [patriciaverhelle@remax.com](mailto:patriciaverhelle@remax.com)).

# Getting to Know Christ Ever Better in the Church

*Letter from ERI Spiritual Counsellor  
Msgr. François Fleischmann*

In my previous notes, I suggested some ways of getting to know Christ, starting especially from the New Testament. We must also follow the development of people's understanding of who Jesus was over time through their cultures up to our own cultures.

During the early centuries, debates were often passionate. These debates made it possible for the Church's Tradition to be defined, especially through the Councils that were called upon to settle difficulties the Greeks experienced in accepting a heritage based on Hebrew tradition. It seemed difficult for the Greeks to accept that the Son of God, who is transcending all aspects of our human condition, could be incarnated within the limits of a humanity like ours. Arius' temptation was to consider Christ as a "secondary god", a lesser being. This was an error. The Council of Nicea (in 325) reacted and affirmed that Jesus of Nazareth is identical to the eternal Word of the Father, the Son consubstantial with the Father.

Later, the Council of Ephesus (in 431) declared that the Word of God personally willed to be born of a woman. This, the Fathers confirmed by honouring the Virgin Mary with the title of 'Mother of God'. However, our forbears went on arguing. The Council of Chalcedon (in 451)

marked a major stage forward. Summing up its findings considerably, let us note the following: the Council declared that Christ is one and the same person in two natures. It went on to specify that the divine nature is not to be fused with the human nature; but in the person of Christ, there is no division between his authentic humanity and the divinity

## Letters from the International Leading Team

of Son of God. The full presence of God in the humanity of Jesus makes him truly our Saviour and the one who makes it possible for us to share in the divine life.

What I have mentioned in only a few lines constitutes the constantly reaffirmed basis of our faith in the living Christ, present in our lives. But, as we skip over the centuries, we realise that new difficulties have arisen. Today, with the sense of sin weakening, many no longer see the necessity to be saved. To be saved would be

inconsistent with the autonomy of the individual who claims to be sole judge of his/her actions. Others have great difficulty in accepting that Christ is the only mediator of salvation for a humanity that experiences so many diverse spiritual experiences between one continent and another.

Let us not get lost. We must meditate on the faith that our fathers have expressed every Sunday in the Credo – common to all Christians – so as to understand its meaning better. Let us constantly return to Jesus' question: "Who do you say I am?"

We answer this question,

- on the basis of the faith that was passed on to us and
- within the dialogue between Scripture and people of the various languages of our time
- and, especially, within the experience of the communion of the Church, the Body of Christ (the spiritual sharing or 'sharing on the endeavours' is a favourable setting for this communion),
- in contemplating the living Person of the Risen Lord,
- in a heart to heart encounter with the Eucharist.

I leave it to Saint Paul to conclude these brief suggestions on how to know Jesus Christ: "...God who has saved us and called us to be holy – not because of anything we our- ▶

selves had done – but for his own purpose and by his own grace. This grace had already been granted to us, in Christ Jesus, before the begin-

ning of time, but it has been revealed only by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus. He has abolished death, and he has brought to light immor-

tality and life through the Gospel, in whose service I have been made herald, apostle and teacher.” (2 Tm 1: 9-11). •

## Jesus, Son of God

*Letter from ERI Spiritual Counsellor  
Msgr. François Fleischmann*

**R**ight from our childhood, we learned that Jesus is the Son of God. Some around us question the divine nature of Christ; but it is a central fact of our faith and deserves to be looked at afresh.

In matters of faith, we do not look to rational and logical proof. But, like the disciples of Jesus, we are led, since the beginning, to affirm with the whole Church that Jesus is the Son of God. As we read the Gospel, we see that, although Jesus acts as the perfect and poor “servant”, he speaks nevertheless with greater authority than the prophets of old. His words make a strong impression on the crowds listening to him: “His



*Msgr. Fleischmann.*

teaching made a deep impression on the people because he taught them with authority” (Mt 7: 28-29). Furthermore, he did not hesitate to forgive the paralytic his sins - a divine prerogative even more than healing, as his witnesses were aware (Mt 9: 1-8). He claimed to be Master of the Sabbath (Lk 6: 5) - that is to say that his words are equal or greater than the Law. He affirmed who he was in barely veiled terms when he attributed to himself the divine name, as he said: “Before Abraham ever was, I am” (Jn 8: 58).

Jesus derived this incomparable authority from his unique filial relationship to God whom he called “my Father”. He was aware of being the only Son of God and, in that sense, of being himself God. St. John’s Gospel, in particular, shows Jesus’ constant intimacy with his Father whom he called “my Father and your Father” when he spoke to the holy women after his resurrection (cf. Jn 20: 17) – an expression that suggests that Jesus’ relationship with the Father is of a different order to that of the disciples. The very person of Jesus, the Son, reveals God the Father. Who else would dare to say: “Anyone who has seen me, has seen the Father” (Jn 14: 9)?

Jesus has revealed the “Father” in an extraordinary way: God is Creator

## Letters from the International Leading Team

and, especially, eternally Father in a relationship totally dedicated to his only Son who is eternally Son only in relationship to the Father. We must constantly meditate these words of Jesus: “No one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Mt 11: 27).

**B**ut it is the whole Gospel, the entire account of the presence of the Incarnate Son among us that bears witness to the divinity of Christ. The whole meaning of what Christ says and does flows from who he is in himself. It is precisely because he is Son of God that he can make us sons in our turn: “To those who did accept him, he gave power to become children of God” (Jn 1: 12).▶

This brief reminder of our belief in the divine condition of Jesus must not lead us to forget that Christ has fully assumed the human condition. Furthermore, we must also say that the Son of God made man has truly experienced and suffered everything, except sin, that characterises our human condition: separations, sufferings and death. He even went so far as to experience "separation" from the Father, as his agony in Gethsemane and his cry on the Cross testify. Some spiritual writers and theologians say that it is allowable for us to say that it is God the Trinity who, in Jesus Christ, shows compassion and that this is the most perfect expression of love in action. Some have spoken of the "suffering of God", that is to say this loving compassion that heals separations and reconciles us so that we can enter into the joy of reconciliation and union with God. It is the joy of the perfect relationship that exists between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is the joy of the coming of the Kingdom opened to us by the Son who has come among us. •

## Dates to Remember



Teams of Our Lady  
International  
Gathering

September 16-21, 2006

Lourdes

# The Satellite Teams

by Carlo and Maria Carla Volpini

**A**t the suggestion of the International Leading Team, the 'Satellite Teams' were created at the meeting of the International College in Dickinson in July 2001 for the purpose of reflecting in depth on the specific charisms of our Movement. The College approved the creation of these teams.

The development of the Movement in many countries in the world makes it necessary to compare the different ways of life and, in particular, the different ways the methods of Teams are practised in different places. This comparison, which can no longer be exclusively the province of the International Leading Team and of leading couples in the countries represented at the meeting of the College, has as its aim to promote the way of Teams and to guarantee unity without becoming uniform and sterile.

The Satellite Teams are intended to meet this need and, at the same time, to be a sign of our will to bring about a full communion between us and to maintain a true spirit of collegiality worldwide.

There are five Satellite Teams dealing with Communication, Training, Mission, Formative Way, Research and Reflection. They are composed of four to five couples and of a Spiritual Counsellor. Their members are drawn overall from 15 different countries.

With the exception of the Communication Team which is liaised by the

International Secretariat, liaison between these teams has been entrusted to us, Carlo and Maria Carla Volpini.

Each team has its programme of work and its specific objectives. Its member-couples meet once a year



Maria Carla and Carlo Volpini

and, for the rest of the time, work with their computers and through e-mails. They draft documents that are then offered to the International Leading Team for consideration. The latter are the guarantors of the unity of the Movement. Four years after their creation, the following have been their principal work.

### *Communication Team*

This team has worked on the identity of the Movement; in the first place, on the design of a new logo which will be common to all countries. The symbolism of this logo was approved by the Regional Couples of the whole world in Rome in January 2003. The official launch will take place in Lourdes in 2006.

It then worked on the Movement's Website that has been completely transformed ([www.equipes-notre-dame.com](http://www.equipes-notre-dame.com)) and on the link between the various websites. ▶

The team is also working on the communication supports to be set up internationally: presentation brochure, liaison bulletin etc. The team aims at making use of new techniques to make the Movement more visible and to offer all members of the Movement a form of presentation available to all.

### ***Training Team***

This team has produced a guide for Sector Couples. This document has been given to all leading couples at the meeting of the College in Rio in July 2004. It should be welcomed by all as a fundamental reference document for the use of Sector Couples.

The team is currently working similarly on a folder for Regional Couples based on existing documents in the various countries. Their most recent objective is to prepare a programme of formation for young couples.

### ***Mission Team***

This team has been reflecting on the subject: "The couple on a mission". They have considered a variety of aspects: the mission of the couple, missionary couples and the family, mission in Teams, mission in the Church, mission in the world.

They still have to deal with the method of expansion and diffusion of the Movement. They must also consider the difficult subject of "sacramental and non-sacramental marriage", using the contributions on this subject arising from the discussion at the next meeting of the College in July 2005.

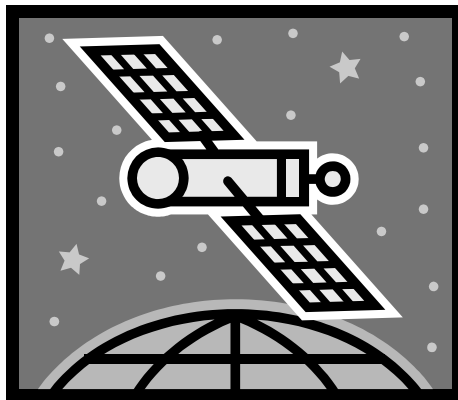
The final folder on "The couple on a mission" will be very useful for the future since we, team members, are called to live out our faith and our in-

volvement in the world and in history.

### ***Formative Way Team***

This team has worked on "Piloting", after having carried out a survey among the Super-Regions and Regions of the world on four subjects: The Pilot Couple, Information, Language and Insertion in the Movement.

The team has designed some data sheets intended to be used in all



countries of the world. They will contain an "obligatory" part which will explain the significance and value of each aspect of the Teams' method, and a second "optional" part that can be adapted to the various local experience.

This team is currently working on a framework for Training Sessions for "New Teams", intended to review all the fundamental points of Teams' method and to introduce the new team to the life of the Movement.

### ***Research and Reflection Team***

For almost a year, this team has worked on preparing a survey, suggested by ERI, among team members of the whole world so as to reveal the situation of the Movement at various levels. The cost of such a project proved to be too onerous and, at its meeting in Rome in 2003, the College did not think it opportune to pursue it.

The team then pursued another objective: the drafting of a study topic "Christ, centre of the Christian's life." This project is finished but has not been completely reviewed and translated.

This team has also started a work of reflection on the sacraments of Reconciliation and of the Eucharist. The understanding and place of these sacraments in the life of some team members in the world appear to need renewing.

The idea of creating these Satellite Teams was undoubtedly a wonderful intuition for various reasons:

- to strengthen the feeling of belonging to the Movement by developing the practice of collegial working,
- to encourage the participation of the couples of the Movement by calling on them to contribute their ideas and their work,
- to help the International Leading Team to be constantly listening to all couples in Teams,
- to permit the spreading of ideas and thoughts that give dynamism to the whole Movement,
- to help couples who are serving the Movement to learn a method of working.

It is therefore important to keep this practice going. It truly reflects a way of working in a spirit of international collegiality which, nevertheless, calls for a lot of effort at all levels.

The idea is not for team members to be content with looking on and following from afar the work of Satellite Teams, but rather to get involved in this work and to express to these teams our wish that this prophetic activity of our Movement will not come to an end. •

*Fr. Dill, from page 2*

of God, of the presence of the Spirit of God. It was always directed to the committed, loving relationship of a man and a woman in marriage.

We don't know the exact sequence of their development, but we can imagine a scenario for each one of the elements that we think of now as the obligations or endeavors.

They decided, after trying different things, that it was important to plan a sit-down and to make this deepest communication between husband and wife a prayerful monthly practice, because *not* to talk regularly let important things slip by and become buried under the activity of daily living.

They found from practice that there was nothing as spiritually nourishing as the Word of God because it is a core Christian belief, their belief, that when Scripture is read it is truly God talking to the reader and the listener, God speaking to them as a couple.

They came together with the conviction that prayer is essential for keeping conscious of God's presence, but they became more convinced as a Team that prayer *as a couple* mirrored the sacramentality of their marriage, the presence of Jesus in their love for one another.

**I**t must have been only from trying – and undoubtedly failing – that they discovered how important it was to work on one small element of their lives at a time.

In trying to do something practical and achievable that would enhance their lives in some way, they found out that self-improvement was marriage-improvement and family improvement. They called this practice a rule of life.

They learned that to get away for a weekend a year for a quiet and extended time together and to open themselves up to some more-than-usual input and discussion was not pampering themselves and that it was worth the expense and the babysitters entailed. They came to know that what they did for themselves as a couple, as husband and wife, they did for their children.

It had to be a priority, they discovered, to get together once a month with their Team for refreshment, renewal, enrichment, and joy. Those few hours spent in getting to know the other Teams couples on a level that they knew no other couples, in sharing honestly and deeply their joys and difficulties – and to do this in a context of Faith – this was an essential use of their time. They came to see this as the backbone of their Team life, one night a month not to be missed.

Over time and as a movement, they came to understand how this pattern that was developing could embrace young couples, middle aged couples and senior couples, couples of all nationalities and of different social strata. These married couples may have been different in many ways, but they were bound together by their common Faith and their common desire to reach into the mystery of the Sacrament that they, wife and husband, administered to one another by their lifelong commitment in God.

Something they might not have been aware of or foreseen (though it came ultimately from their foresight) was the adaptability of the Teams to different generations. In being passed down from generation to generation, from the founding pre-World

War II generation to the post-war generation, from to the baby-boomers, to Generation-X, Teams of Our lady has taken and continues to take the experience of every couple that commits to it and fold it into an ever-changing spirit, into an ever-fresh approach to the spirituality of marriage.

### *Your response*

**H**ow are you to respond to the gift of Teams? How do you express your thanks to the generations that have passed on their experience and enthusiasm in the formation of a movement from which you benefit? More to the point, how do you express your gratitude to God who is behind every grace that comes your way, whether you trace it to human endeavor (itself graced at every step) or to a momentary inspiration that enters your consciousness?

In the 10th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, we are told of Jesus calling together his disciples and sending them out to spread the Good News of the Kingdom of God. He gave detailed travel plans: what they were to wear, where they were to go, what kind of people they were to visit, what they are to do if they were well received, what to do if they were rejected. He told them to cure the sick, just as he did. He warns them about obstacles that will slow them down or even defeat their purpose. But sandwiched in between these instructions is a short phrase that holds the core motivation of evangelism, the reason why they should go in the first place and the reason they should start out with enthusiasm. He said, ▶

*Fr. Dill, from page 15*

almost as an aside: “Freely you have received; freely you are to give.” (Matthew 10:8).

That reminder and command is the core of Gospel economy. Jesus repeated it in several different forms: As I have forgiven, so you must forgive. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. As I have washed your feet, so you must wash the feet of one another. As I have taken bread and wine – my body and blood – and given it to you, so you must continue to do this in remembrance of me. Always there is in the message of Jesus this divine / human reciprocity.

The corollary for member of Teams of Our Lady is obvious: As you have been graced with Teams, so you must grace others. You are the recipients of a lived tradition that was formed by the lives of thousands of married couples. They passed on to you a plan for enriching your love and your life,

and in the Christian organizational plan, you have to pass it on.

Part of this “passing on” is an integral part of your Team life. As members of a Team you pass on your Faith, for how does faith grow and grow strong unless from the experience of others? This, too, is Gospel strategy: “where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” (Matthew 18:20) Put simply, Faith is not born nor does it grow in isolation. Considered in this way, Teams of Our Lady is a program for married couples to share their Faith as married couples, sharing especially the married lived experience of their life in God.

But to give freely because you have received freely goes beyond the life of your individual Team. Every member of the movement is responsible for the movement itself. It lives, it grows, it is a channel of grace only because men and women have

stepped up and assumed responsibility for supporting other Teams and helped the Good News of Teams spread to others who may be searching for what you have already found.

Leadership in Teams of Our Lady begins with the acknowledgment of your gifts as individuals and as couples. It shows itself not just in special service roles on a Sector and Regional level (though it certainly includes those) but also in being a witness by your words and lifestyles to what Teams has done for you. To evangelize, to spread the good news about what Teams of our Lady has to offer couples who are looking for ways to enrich their marriage spiritually – and thereby enrich it humanly – is the only proper response to the gift you have received. “Freely you have received; freely you are to give.”

*Talk at Teams of Our Lady Shuffle, St. Camillus Church, Silver Spring, MD, April 24, 2005 by Fr. Edwin Dill.*

# Magnificat

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