



# Magnificat

A Newsletter for Married Couples

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

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## Planting a seed in America: The story of François and Annie Vilarem

by Rosemary Enthoven

I think we can safely say that François and Annie Vilarem were the couple most responsible for the spread of Teams of Our Lady in the United States. Through their courageous start of a Team in Los Angeles in 1958, they inspired, couple by couple, the chain that has led to the remarkable flourishing of American Teams. It is a wonderful story.



Annie and François, with three small children, arrived in Los Angeles from Paris in 1957. They were young, lively, attractive, and full of enthusiasm for the spiritual growth they had found through Les Equipes Notre Dame which they had joined in Paris. François had been a “frogman” with Jacques Cousteau during WWII and had come to California to develop and ultimately run a company that would make wet

suits for the newly popular scuba diving. California was definitely a foreign country for them, but one had a sense they loved the freedom and sense of adventure they found in the American west. François spoke fluent English, but Annie struggled, and had the most delightful way of expressing herself, especially in the spontaneous prayer.

After several months in Los Angeles (Brentwood to be exact), they spoke to their parish priest about the Teams and their desire to start such a group. He pointed them to some young couples, who asked a few other couples, and soon the Vilarems had their “Team.” The parish priest agreed to be their chaplain. We were lucky enough to be friends with one of these first couples.

I so remember these early team meetings! The Vilarems brought a sense of joy and spiritual adventure to the meetings, of openness and a simplicity that were quite new to us. We had never heard our own friends, even Catholic friends, speak so openly and honestly about their every day struggles to be better Christians and better spouses. The Vilarems were truly gifted in prayer▶

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# Magnificat

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## 2006 Service Team

**U.S. Super Region Responsible Couple**  
Ted & Eileen Kosnik

**Secretariat**  
Tim & Mary Ellen Fleming

## East Coast Regions

**New England**  
Joe & Amelia Almeida

**Lake Erie**  
Bob & Joyce Grinewich

**New York Metropolitan Area**  
Vacant - under Lake Erie

**Mid-Atlantic**  
John & Carolyn Lyman

**Coastal**  
Jim & Ruth Wagner

**Southeast**  
Vacant - under Super Region

## Mid-United States Regions

**Midwest**  
Edward & Anne Franco

**North Central**  
Ted & Janet Windus

**Central**  
Jake & Ruth Graves

**South Central**  
Don & Carolyn Jacques

## West Coast Region

**Western**  
Tony & Mary Salvador

and the time of spontaneous prayer became a time of great richness and depth for all of us. They kept in touch with the International Team in Europe, and the materials, poorly translated as they often were, were the source of our learning all of the dimensions of Team life. They encouraged us to come together as friends between meetings and to help each other with our children, to welcome all visitors in our homes, and to use the Team structure and principles to bring holiness into all the various aspects of our lives. I think it is the spirit that the Vilarems brought to that first team that has animated all of the Teams in America today.

Alain and I moved from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C. in 1961. Through a local priest in Washington we met Andy and Loretta Favret, Jack and Gerry Lavan, and John and Barbara Green, and Alexandria 1 began. The rest is history. The Favrets with all their spiritual depth and wonderful energy and talent began one team and then another until there are hundreds in the United States today. What François and Annie started 48 years ago has flourished.

François and Annie returned to Paris sometime in the 60's and lived in Garches, which is near Versailles. They always remained close to their original French Team and to us in America. Alain and I visited them in Paris several times, and their children as teenagers often visited the Team families in Los Angeles. A few years ago, one of the Vilarem children came to visit us here in Atherton, bringing his wife and seven-year-old son. It was a lovely time, full of his memories and ours.

Annie died several years ago, and François died last December 14, 2005 in Garches. He was 85 years old. Although Los Angeles 1 stopped meeting as a formal Team many years ago, we have all remained close friends. In fact, we are all meeting at Rancho Santa Fe near San Diego in March for a few days. We will be remembering how much François and Annie influenced all of our lives, and all the fun, support and many graces we have shared with each other over the years, all the result of the leadership of Annie and François, and our being the lucky couples in Los Angeles 1. •



# Statistics don't tell entire story of Teams sprouting across the states

by Ted & Eileen Kosnik  
Super Regional Couple

*“Come to me all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.” Mt 11:28-30*

As we leave the season of Christmas (this is being written on 2/2, the Feast of the Presentation) the words of the Christmas angel, proclaiming peace and the joy of the season are fading into the busyness with which modern mankind surrounds itself. We enjoyed the Christmas visits of our children and cherished the family life that was so present at the dinner table and the general activity in the household. The children have scattered back to Chicago and Houston: the nest is empty again and the “real” world encroaches. The challenge is to bring that peace and joy forward into the work that calls us.

One of the first TOOL tasks that we faced was our annual report to the ERI about the number of teams in the USA, the number of teams piloted in 2005 and a general overview of Team life in the USA. What struck us was that the numbers do not tell the tale. The health of the Movement in our country is told in the work of your hearts and hands far better than the numbers in a report. Many of you have taken the yoke of Christ, and found the burden light in 2005.

During the beginning of the year **Carolyn and Don Jacques** drove from

Houston to Fayetteville, Arkansas to pilot teams. It is a new state for the Teams of Our Lady Movement.

During the fading months of 2005 **Janet and Ted Windus** started piloting teams in Fargo, ND, another new state for teams. The Windus family is a young one, so to do this work they had to have the co-operation of family and friends for childcare. They both work, so they had to adjust their schedules to “free” the time. They look on their five plus hour drive each way as positive, because they can have uninterrupted discussions. They are piloting two teams, one Friday evening and one Saturday evening. They drive home after the Saturday meeting so they can celebrate Mass with their children on Sunday morning. That is a spirit that cannot be told in numbers!

**Bob and Linda Seaman** spread the Movement to Maine with their move to Effingham, NH. **Joe and Lori Myers** brought teams to Concord, NH when they moved to nearby Bow.

Transplants **Jim and Moogie Roeder** had team formation on their minds shortly after the moving truck left their doorstep. They began piloting the first team in Frankfort, Kansas on December 28th! It too is a new state for the Movement.

**Delia and Maurice Finsterwald** are laboring hard to begin teams in Albuquerque, NM. Please pray for the success of this former Texas Team couple that long to have Teams back in their lives.

This activity of love and service is not reflected in numbers. It is reflected in

the joy that the introduction of married spirituality brings to the couples that spread it – and catch it!

We are blessed with a wonderful gift that has enriched our love of God, spouse and family. Talk about it

## Kosniks Corner

with those you meet. Spread that joy through word and deed: you do not have to move to a new state, or even a new house. We have been given a gift to share, please do not be shy!

We talk about spreading the word of teams not because we are obsessed with growth, but because the world needs to hear good things about God and marriage. It needs to be reminded that our union is one of three persons –the couple and God. We are in a sacramental relationship, not the relationship presented in the media.

As we begin 2006, please examine how you can be an example of God's love. Also, look at the gifts you have been given and determine how they can be used to spread the message of TOOL. •

# And the winner is... Janet Windus!

## *Scholarship Quilt Raffle raises funds for Lourdes Gathering*

On December 8, 2005, following the evening Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Tyler, Texas, local TOOL couples gathered to watch Msgr. Joseph Strickland draw the winning ticket for the Lourdes Scholarship Quilt.



*Msgr. Joseph Strickland reads the winning ticket.*

It was ticket #7590, Janet Windus of Proctor, Minnesota. Janet and Ted are the North Central Regional Couple, and when contacted she said that they had bought \$50 worth of tickets. Janet also embroidered one of the squares.

We are thrilled to report that the quilt raised \$4,995 for the Lourdes Scholarship Fund. If you are interested in applying for funds please contact the Teams Office (903-535-7864) or ([info@teamsofourlady.org](mailto:info@teamsofourlady.org)) or your Regional Couple. The funds are available for couples or spiritual counselors. Preference will be given to those who have served the Movement in some way, but please apply if you would like to attend the gathering in Lourdes.



*Eileen Kosnik, right, presents the quilt to Ted and Janet Windus.*

# How to Order Study Materials from the National Office

by Ted & Eileen Kosnik

## **When ordering study material from the TOOL Office please include the following information:**

- Your name and address.
- The number of items needed.
- The date by which you need them.

It is best to allow at least two weeks for mail to reach you, as materials are sent via media mail. If it is an emergency, they will be sent priority mail, but it costs about three times the price. Our budget works best if you plan ahead!

## **Materials are sent within 24 hours as long as we are home!**

The Regional Couples are told when we are away. Remember this is a volunteer organization and there is no paid help.

## **It is best to email your requests to [info@teamsofourlady.org](mailto:info@teamsofourlady.org).**

We will acknowledge that the order was received and tell you when it will be shipped. Phone orders are taken, but the possibility for mishearing addresses is higher. If you call and we are not home, please speak your number slowly and clearly.

## **When pilot materials are ordered, the order MUST come from the Regional Couple.**

The system has been in effect for several years as teams were starting that were surprises for leadership. *Material may not be copied.* We have worked hard to see that only the latest, revised mate-

rials are used. Each couple deserves to have a fresh copy of materials that they may keep, mark with their personal comments and use for reference. Materials are not to be held in Regions for the same reasons. Materials are updated and reviewed before each printing. (If you see typos or other edit problems please let us know so that they can be corrected.)

## **When ordering tapes for retreat, please include:**

- Your name, address and phone number.
- The date of your retreat.

Videos are in high demand, so we need the actual date. You will be notified if the materials are not available at the time you have requested and you will be told what other choices are available.

If you would like to call and see if new materials have arrived that are not yet listed, or if you need suggestions, please do (903-535-7864)!

## **PLEASE return the materials the day after your retreat.**

We are flattered that your group would like to share them with a friend, see them again etc., but *the supply is limited.* Check with the TOOL office if you are tempted to hold them beyond immediate return.

We love to hear from you. Please make the job easier by following the above! •

Tips for  
Teams

IN MEMORY

## Fr. Mark Heath, O.P. 1918 - 2005

Priest, Teacher, Pastor, Administrator, Team Chaplain

**F**ather Mark Heath, a dearly beloved TOOL Chaplain for over 25 years, died on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005, after an illness of about five years. Father Mark was introduced to Teams through his sister Leslie and his brother Father Tom Heath. Leslie and her husband are in a Team in Massachusetts and Father Tom was chaplain to Silver Spring 1, in Maryland East. When Father Tom was transferred to teach seminarians in Boston, he recruited Father Mark to take his place as spiritual counselor for Silver Spring I. Father Mark's overt enthusiasm for the Team Movement led him to recruit many of his fellow Dominican priests as Team chaplains.

In recruiting priests, he used to tell the story (one of many delightful stories) of a Protestant minister who left his rectory every Saturday evening to just sit at the train station and watch the trains come in and out. When the minister was confronted by his congregation about his peculiar behavior, he explained that he liked to go to the station because the trains came and went without his having to push or pull to get things moving. So it was in Teams for Father Mark. He fully appreciated that Teams did not call upon him to push or pull. It was up to the couples themselves to do all of that. He could simply come and be priest and friend.

Father Mark will be fondly remembered by many couples from around the United States and the world. During his years with TOOL USA, he served as a Team, Sector, Regional and Super-regional chaplain, always ready to contribute his time, talent, and spiritual gifts to the couples he met and the Movement he loved. He often remarked in private that he had two families (besides his natural family) – his brother Dominicans and Teams. Newer couples to Teams, who never had the chance to meet Fr. Mark in person, continue to have the benefit of his work for he graciously assisted in the preparation and review of many Team documents, such as, the piloting books, "Meeting Together in Christ's Name."



Father Mark joined the Silver Spring I Team early in 1974, at a time in his life when he was very busy as a teacher and administrator. He had served as a professor at St. Joseph Priory in Ohio, at the College of Notre Dame in Maryland, at LaSalle College in Philadelphia, and Providence College in Rhode Island, before he undertook the task of being the Director of the Washington Theological Consortium, a cooperative endeavor of Catholic and Protestant seminaries. It was during this time that he joined Teams. Following his work at the Consortium, he served as Regent of Studies for

the Dominican Province of St. Joseph, and theology professor for the deaconate program in Washington. Despite his heavy workload, he always had time for Team meetings and events. Father Mark regularly contributed to and participated in Team events at the sector, regional, super regional, and international level. He accompanied Teams at the international gatherings in Rome, Lourdes, and Fatima. He particularly enjoyed participating in the skits and games that were part of Team gatherings.

Father Mark was born and grew up in Boston. After a year at Boston College, he was accepted at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD, from which he graduated in 1940. He thoroughly enjoyed his Academy experience and stayed in touch with his Navy classmates, often being their chaplain at class functions and reunions, which he made a point to regularly attend.

**D**uring the years of 1988 to 1991, Father Mark had to suspend his role as Team chaplain in order to serve as pastor of St Louis Bertrand Church in Louisville, KY. But he did not forget Teams. Shortly after his return to Washington, DC, he volunteered to be chaplain for two Teams – Silver Spring I and Clinton 2. He was serving these Teams when illness overtook him and forced him into retirement.

Father Mark died on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at the Mohun Health Care Center of the Dominican Sisters in Colum-

bus, Ohio. He succeeded in death his brother, Father Tom Heath, who died as a result of a beating he received during a robbery of the seminary in Kenya, Africa, where he served as a missionary and teacher.

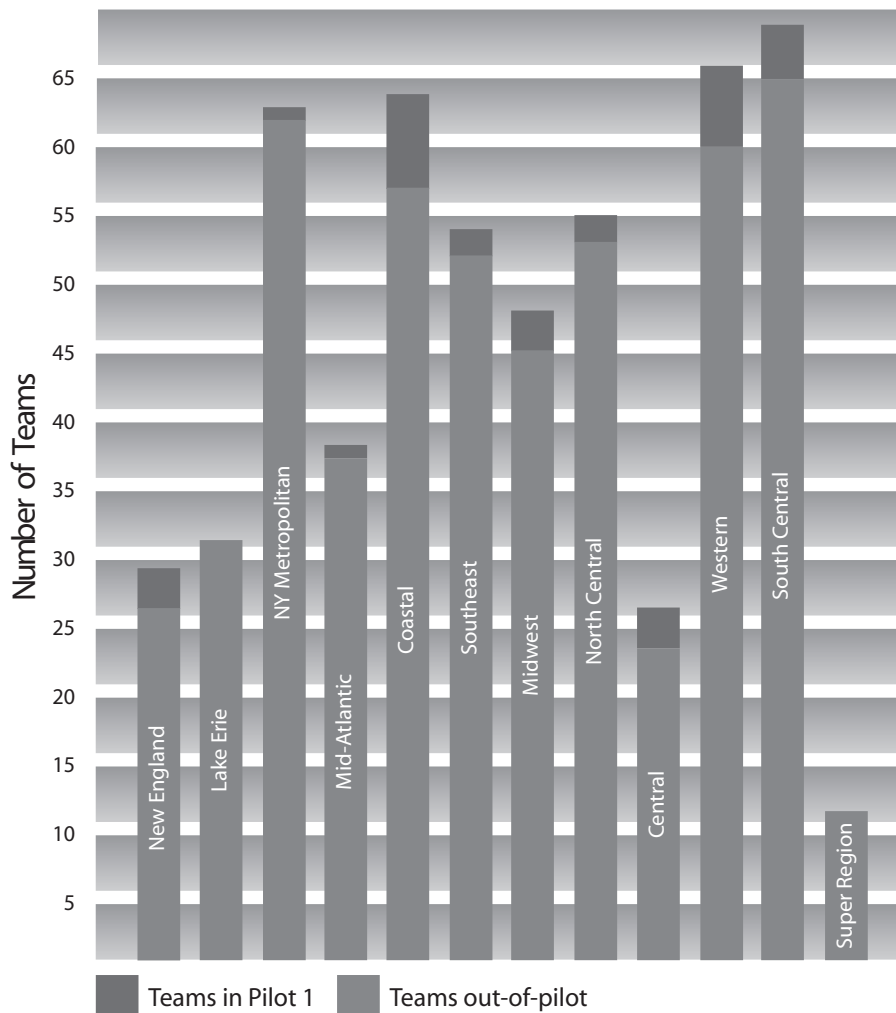
Thank you Fathers Mark and Tom for your love and dedication to God and Teams. May God welcome His good and faithful servants home. And may they, in turn, watch over and guide the Teams of Our Lady. •



*Bob & Marie Wallace (former U.S. Regional couple), Harry & Josie Gieske (former U.S. Super-Regional Couple) and Ralph & Jackie Tygielski (U.S. Super-Regional Couple until 2003) attend Fr. Mark's funeral.*

## US Super Region Statistics

as of December 31, 2005



Total number of *Teams* (in- and out-of-pilot): **555**  
 Total number of *Couples* (in- and out-of-pilot): **2796**

# Lake Erie Region: We are an Easter People!

*by Bob & Joyce Grinewich*

We are an Easter People! Life lived to its fullest, ever growing, renewing, refreshing. As couples living our sacrament daily, we experience this gift of life in a unique way through our dedication as a couple to the endeavors. This life giving focus of the Teams movement is renewing, refreshing and helping married couples all over the world to live their married life to it's fullest, deepest life giving potential. What a precious gift!

As Team members aware of this gift, it is our responsibility to the movement to help share this life giving experience through the growth of Teams. The Buffalo Sector has come up with some alternative ideas to the 'information meeting'. These Teams are preparing a Spring Sector Event to be held on a Saturday in March. This day-long event

will feature speakers, discussion groups, a dramatic presentation of the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary, an informal lunch and breakout into mixed 'mini teams'. The day will end with a mass.



The Sector will be inviting couples inquiring about the Teams movement to share in the day. During the 'mini team' segment the inquiring couples will go off for their own information meeting. They will have experienced

the spirit of Teams in an informal setting, getting to know many Teams couples over lunch and in discussion groups. They will have the opportunity to have their questions about Teams answered during their information segment. What a wonderful way to share what Teams is all about. Another effort the Buffalo Teams are using to aid in the growth of Teams is by hosting a 'movie and desert night'. The Five Love Languages video, followed by deserts and coffee, is another opportunity to share the good news of Teams in a fun and informal setting.

The ideas and possibilities are endless. Let's share our creative ideas and make 2006 a year of tremendous growth for Teams here in the US. We have a precious gift to share, let's shout it from the rooftops! What will YOUR team be doing? •

# Coastal Region: We pray together

*by Jim & Ruth Wagner*

I have a confession – I have a favorite part of the Teams meeting. I know, I probably shouldn't play favorites, but I can't help it. No, it isn't the meal (though if dessert is ice cream, the meal runs a close second). I love the prayers of intention that the Teams members share during the meeting.

If you look at some of the Teams literature that is used for information meetings, the description of the time in the

meeting for prayer and reflection says quite simply "we pray together." That, for me, is the heart of being a member of Teams family. It is during the time where we ask each other for support in lifting up our concerns or joining in thanksgiving before the Lord that we share some of our innermost hurts or most heartfelt joys. We become through prayer a living example of the "little church" that we are called to in the readings of the New Testament. In my Team, we record the intentions and the Responsible Couple sends out the

list to all after our monthly meeting. Then, with the intentions in hand, I unite with my Team members throughout the month as I recall their concerns in my daily prayers.

We have all felt the power of prayer intentions, knowing that God will hear the prayers of his faithful people. We each have experienced the love that surges through prayer intentions and yet I still get chills when I think of one particular example in my own life. I was living in South America and found

myself part of large group that had been taken hostage by an armed band of terrorists hoping to exchange us for their jailed comrades. On the first Sunday morning of our captivity, the terror-

We become  
through prayer  
a living example  
of the “little  
church”

ists allowed a Catholic priest who was among the hostages to say Mass for us. It was during the consecration that I realized that at that very moment, around the world, there were people praying for my safety – people in my home parish, people in my Team, friends, and family – and I was filled with an indescribable sense of release and calm. As Mass concluded, the terrorists announced that a number of the hostages would be released that evening – I was among that group. God does answer prayers!

As dramatic as that story might seem, I find the same joy and the same sense of calm as I did on that Sunday in South America as I do every month at our Teams meeting when we share our prayer intentions. It is in that moment that we are truly united as we seek God’s aid or give Him thanks. I anticipate that time in the monthly Teams meeting and am so honored when a fellow Teams member says the words: “please pray for me.” It is a responsibility that I gladly accept and a request that I in turn make of them in asking for their prayers. After all, it’s Teams – “We pray together!” •

## TJ and Ellen Holt Assume New Responsibilities

by Ted & Eileen Kosnik

It is hard to thank a couple that has daily served the TOOL Movement for almost five years. TJ and Ellen Holt served first as Prayer Couple for the seven states that comprised the original Southwest Region. They answered the call in 2003 to become the first National Prayer Couple when it was decided that in a country as large as ours the one thing that could keep us close was praying for each other.

TJ and Ellen are the parents of three daughters, Samantha 11, Ashley 8 and Hannah 6. Ellen has a catering business and TJ is employed full time. They have very full lives, but created a spot to not only be TOOL Prayer Couple, but also pilot teams in the Kingwood and Houston areas.

They leave their position as National Prayer Couple to assume responsibility of one of the Kingwood Sectors as Sector Couple.

While teams in the area will be enriched by the

prayerful service they will render, we will all miss them. They will continue to serve until a new couple has been found,

We wish that God will bless them as they have blessed each of us. •



*Ellen and TJ Holt became the first National Prayer Couple in 2003.*

# Teams Turning Towards Our Lady of Lourdes

*Letter from ERI Spiritual Counsellor  
Msgr. François Fleischmann*

**W**e are going to gather in Lourdes; Father Cafarel placed the Teams under the patronage of Our Lady; both good reasons to pause for a moment and meditate on the presence of Mary in the Church and in our Christian life. Let us just keep one or two points in mind today.

Mary's role in the history of salvation could almost be summed up in one simple word: "yes." At the angel's annunciation, this daughter of Sion, in whom all her people's expectation is concentrated, accepted the mission of being the Mother of the Messiah. In her, humanity in its purest and beauti-



ful form, accepted the presence of God. In her, the Word of God took on the human condition.

Mary's "yes" expressed her free, humble, unconditional faith. In Mary, hope nourished by listening and welcom-

ing the Word of God, resulted in the central act of the whole of our history. All through her life, she pondered in her heart the Word spoken to her. Throughout her Son's life, she showed total compliance even to joining her self-offering to that of Jesus on the Cross. Beyond Easter morning, she witnessed the birth of the Church through the action of the Spirit, just as the action of the Spirit had caused the Son of God to be born in her. Present in the early church community, she lived out the Eucharist "as though she was welcoming again in her womb the heart that had beaten in unison with hers" (John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, No 56).

Through faith, Mary goes before us and inspires us. We pray to her with love, for we know how to find in her the perfect realisation of the Beatitude: "Blessed are the pure of heart, they will see God." Where better than in the immaculate Heart of Mary can human beings combine an intelligent understanding of the Christian message with the wholehearted contemplation of the love of God?

The grace which filled Mary and her total and humble "yes" to her vocation mean that she is an outstanding figure in the Church. Tradition has rightly seen in her, as Saint Ambrose taught, "a type of the Church in the order of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ" (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, No 63). Continuing its reflection on the link between Mary and the Church, the Council went on to say: "By her faith and obedience, ... she brought forth on earth the very Son of the Fa-

ther... whom God placed as the first-born among many brethren (Rm 8:29) namely the faithful, in whose birth and education she cooperates with a maternal love" (L.G. 63).

## Letters from the International Leading Team

We can – especially in Lourdes – entrust to Mary, our helpful mother, the couples of Teams and their children as did our predecessors in 1954: "All the couples in Teams open themselves to you, Mary. Dwell in our home. Teach us about your Son. Teach us to love and imitate him."

In Lourdes, as in every mass, we will give thanks to God with the Holy Virgin. Is not the Magnificat the prayer of Teams? John Paul II invited us to read it again in a Eucharistic perspective: "When Mary exclaimed: 'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit exults in God my Saviour', Jesus was present in her womb. She praised the Father 'for' Jesus, but also praised him 'in' Jesus and 'with' Jesus... The Eucharist is given to us in order that our life, like that of Mary, be entirely a Magnificat" (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, No 58). •

# Gathering in Lourdes from all corners of the world

by John & Elaine Cogavin

**T**eams of Our Lady has had substantial growth in numbers and in geographic spread in its short life. A contributing factor to this growth and unity has been the early pilgrimages which later became International Gatherings.

This September, Teams couples and Spiritual Counsellors will come from all corners of the earth to gather together in Lourdes. We will come to share

When we meet,  
we will be  
representing  
more than 50,000  
couples from  
10,000 Teams  
in over 70  
countries.

together and support one another in our common goal of developing and living out more fully our married spirituality.

The early pilgrims were mainly French couples and priests and the pilgrimages

took place in France. In 1959 the first big change happened with a pilgrimage to Rome. While mainly European, this Gathering was reflecting our International dimension. Father Caffarel spoke then of: *"The Magnificat, which each member of Teams recites daily, invisibly gathers together all the couples of the Movement from Europe, America and Africa."*

By 1970, again in Rome, reflecting on Pope Paul VI address to the Gathering, he spoke of: "the Movement of more than 20,000 couples grouped in 3,500 Teams established in 36 countries in all five continents."

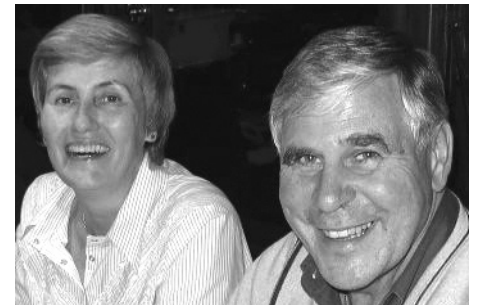
When we meet in Lourdes this September, we will be representing more than 50,000 couples from 10,000 Teams in over 70 countries. These couples will represent so many cultures joined together in the one faith. The joy we will experience together will be an expression of the words of Pope Paul VI to that group in Rome in May 1970 when he said:

*"Dear Sons and Daughters, the Church, whose living and active cells you are, gives through your homes a sort of experimental proof of the power of saving love, and brings forth its fruits of holiness....You are preparing for the Church and for the world a new springtime whose first buds already makes us thrill with joy."*

Why is it that the numbers of people attending Gatherings keep increasing, given that for many it is at enormous cost in time and money?

From our own experience, we would feel that attendance at such an event is a life changing experience. Setting out from

home, to come to meet our fellow Team brothers and sisters is an adventure. We meet and share together, we pray together, we attend conferences together. The themes of the conferences are a result of much collegial thought, listening to the responsible couples from every Region in the world, most especially at the meeting in Rome in January 2003.



Living in today's world, we must always be aware of the signs of the times and the new demands they make on us, bringing forth new realities and new challenges. The orientation of our Movement always tries to help us to discern our responses so as to follow the Christian way of life, while meeting the needs that are arising in our lives as couple.

The Team meetings during the Gathering with other couples and spiritual counsellors from many cultures, sitting with us, pooling, sharing, praying together, is a very rich and deep experience. The relationships built with your Team over the few short days makes for a link which is never really forgotten.

Such Gatherings of so many members are a wonderful expression of solidarity and unity! It reminds us of the 'Feeding by Jesus of the 5,000 with the loaves and the fishes.' We will come to ►

Lourdes hungry to be fed spiritually, with an appetite for the messages which we shall receive. We shall not go away hungry and we will all try to bring home plenty of spiritual food to the members of our Teams who may not have been able to attend. Those at home will accompany us with their prayers and in spirit. We shall remember them daily as we pray and thank God for the opportunity given to us.

In Rome in 2003, while preparing for this next Gathering and while developing the Orientation of the Movement

## Letters *from the* International Leading Team

for the years ahead, we were addressed by Pope John Paul II. He reminded us of our responsibility in these words:

“Dear Friends, I thank God for the faithfulness of your Movement throughout the world, encouraging you to witness untiringly and explicitly to the beauty of human love, marriage and the family.”

Perhaps we are still in that springtime that Pope Paul VI spoke of and at our Gathering, we will see many new buds emerge and experience the joy!

Love and God Bless you all. •

# Teams spread in history-rich Syria, where Christians are a minority

Syria, which has been densely and continually populated by human beings for centuries, is at a crossroad that has enriched the numerous civilisations that have shaped our contemporary world: their progress, their beliefs and their vagaries.

Numerous Syrians have given their name to history such as Apollodore, the architect of Trojan’s Forum in Rome and Publius Syrius the writer. The throne of the Roman Empire was occupied by four outstanding women: the famous Syrian Julias and later by Heliogabale, Severa, Alexandra and Philippa the Arab.

Syria was the first country to be evangelised. Setting out from Jerusalem, the Apostles came to Syria. It was in Damascus, the present capital, that Saul was converted and took the name of Paul; and it was at Antioch, the then capital city, that the name “Christian” was first given to the disciples. Further more, eight Syrian Popes have occupied the see of Saint Peter. Finally, one should call to mind a few Syrian saints such as Saint Ephrem, Saint John Chrysostome and Saint Ignasius of Antioch.

There is a multitude of both Christian and Muslim communities in Syria that live in perfect harmony and mutual tolerance. The Christians who make up only 8% of the population (1.5 millions out of 18 millions) are divided among:

- several Catholic Churches in union with Rome (of the Melkites, Syrian,

Armenians, Chaldeans, Maronite and Latin Rites),

- Orthodox Churches (of the Greek, Syrian and Armenian Rites) and
- Evangelical Protestant Churches.

This diversity only enriches Syria’s religious and liturgical life.

Pope John Paul II’s visit to Syria in 2001, as a pilgrim in the steps of Saint Paul, was a turning point in the history of Oriental Churches. Indeed, the eyes of the whole world were turned towards Syria and the exceptional ecumenical situation that binds the various communities together, must no doubt have born fruits elsewhere. Furthermore, this visit highlighted the treasures of Christian architecture and encouraged tourism and Pauline pilgrimages. This gave Christian Syrians a new confidence in their country and, as a consequence, put a break on the trend to emigration.

The Teams of Our Lady were introduced in Syria, at Lattaquia, in 1970. A Lebanese couple piloted the first Syrian team which is still in existence. Teams then developed in other towns simultaneously: Damascus, Aleppo and Homs. There are currently 44 teams divided into five Sectors.

The movement in Syria has three characteristics:

### **1. Mission**

The couples appreciate the value of what they have received and are keen to invite young couples to join them

to share in their spiritual venture. As a result, the movement has expanded as much in Catholic as in Orthodox circles. Indeed eight Orthodox teams were formed in Lattaquia; they use the same documentation and practise the same spirituality without however being members of the movement.

Recently, after several contacts with couples in Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and other Arab Emirates, two teams have started in Dubai composed of a mixture of Syrian and Lebanese couples. A Lebanese couple provided the information and is piloting the teams by travelling to Debai for one week in each month.

## 2. Publications

Given that everything is done in Arabic during meetings and sessions, all documents are translated from French into Arabic and then printed in limited numbers. This requires special efforts and finances. Only one local study topic was written by a priest Spiritual Counsellor on the occasion of the Pope's visit to Syria. It is based on themes that the Holy Father spoke on during his visit and which are of interest to Syrian Christians. Recently, a degree of cooperation on translations has begun with Lebanese teams.

## 3. Spiritual Retreats

Since there are not enough retreat centres in Syria, this endeavour is made possible by the Syrian Leading Team by means of three three-day retreats in summer and one only in winter. All team members look forward eagerly to these retreats so as to live out together these special times in the year when they can draw spiritual nourishment. •

# National Prayer Couple Needed

by TJ & Ellen Holt

(excerpted from training talk given in San Antonio in 2003)

The purpose of a National Prayer Couple is to communicate the prayerful needs of all TOOL members. The prayer requests are written and distributed in a timely and concise fashion via email. Email must be checked daily.

The duties of the Prayer Couple include:

- **Receive written permission** from all TOOL members and assemble a computer list with all email addresses. Having written permission is vital in this day and age of spamming emails.
- **Keep a hard copy** of all permission forms in a separate folder as well as requests to be removed from the prayer requests list. The prayer couple should have a binder to keep a hard copy of all the requests sent throughout the year. A folder for prayer petitions is also suggested.
- At the end of the request, **add a Bible verse**. It is amazing the number of times that we have been told a Bible verse that was used has touched someone's life or even made them want to pick up the Bible and read it. A special quote or prayer could also be used.
- **To distribute the request, know your internet provider**. Check with your provider to see if there is a daily limit to the number of emails that you can send. (For example: Juno daily limit is 50. Earthlink, on the other hand, does not have a daily limit, but allows you to send only 50 or fewer emails at one time.

Being the National Prayer Couple has enriched our lives. Being a witness to God's daily miracles -- a blessing. Although it can be difficult to read the pain and suffering that many of our fellow TOOL members and their family and friends endure, seeing the power of prayer at work on a daily basis and how God answers our prayers makes the service to our TOOL members a part of the day that we look forward to. We are thankful to have had this opportunity to serve Our Lord and our TOOL members.

*If you are interested in becoming the National Prayer Couple, please contact the US Teams of Our Lady Super Regional Couple, Ted and Eileen Kosnik, at (903) 535-7864 or via email at [info@teamsofourlady.org](mailto:info@teamsofourlady.org)*

# *Faces from across the Super Region...*



*Tom and Linda Dickerson (standing) and Stephanie and Mark Demyan, of Aurora 01 were presenters at the Northern Ohio Sector Day.*



*Installation of Marcella and Richard Sevigny as the first Sector Couple of our new Sector, Northern Ohio. The installation took place at the first Sector Day, in Cleveland. From left, Ed Franco, Marcella Sevigny, Richard Sevigny, Anne Franco.*



*Kristin and Clayton Hynfield and Dennis and Kristin Schwind of Hamilton 11, Ed Franco, Midwest Regional Couple from Detroit 01.*



*Installation of Mick and Barb Stoddard (left) as new Sector Couple for Petoskey, Michigan, replacing Cathy and Erwin Doublestein (right).*



*Granville, OH (team 01) taken when they were on retreat. Front row: Mike Murphy Others, left to right: Jeff and Susie Kalinoski, Mike and Lisa Maurer, Dave and Sharon Shallenberger, Mary Murphy, Bob and Barb Doran, Scott and Barb Scholten, Sr. Margaret Mary.*



*Carlos and Heleana Yopez, Franklin 01, taken at a mini-Sector Day for the Hamilton-Franklin teams in southern Ohio.*



*Julia and Bob Angst - Hamilton 01.*



*Sandy Munyon and Rachel Rutledge - Hamilton 11.*

# Application deadline for Lourdes Gathering extended to June 1

We have been given an extension on the Lourdes applications by the International Movement. On a first-come, first-served basis, space will be available until June 1, or when all the spaces are filled. The cost is 380 euros, which translates to \$475 per person at the current exchange rate for meeting registration, room and board. Applications are available on the web site and in the Fall issue of *Magnificat*, and should be sent to TOOL, PO Box 4638, Tyler TX 75712 with a check for at least \$75. The balance must be paid by April 15, 2006. The capacity for the Gathering is 14,000 people worldwide.

We understand that this is a very difficult time of year in the US, but it is not a problem in other countries, and we are only about 7% of the worldwide

Movement. If you can attend, you will have an experience to last a lifetime!

Financial aid will be available using the Quilt Raffle Funds. Please contact your Regional Couple or the TOOL office ([info@teamsofourlady.org](mailto:info@teamsofourlady.org)) or (903-535-7864).

We are currently working with two agents about airfare, but encourage you to also look for web specials. The Gathering will begin its transportation duties from Lourdes airport.



Pat Verhelle had been planning some post-Lourdes trips. Due to illness, Pat will no longer be handling those plans, but please contact the TOOL office if you are interested in the Barge trip or the Shrine trip discussed in the Summer *Magnificat*. Please see the *Magnificat* issue posted on web site for details.

## Teams of Our Lady

PO Box 4638  
Tyler, TX 75712

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