

Getting to know Fr. Henri Caffarel

By John & Elaine Cogavin, ERI

Editor's Note: John and Elaine Cogavin have recently retired as English Language Liaison Couple for ERI (International Leading Team). This is a presentation they gave to the Transatlantic Super Region in Swanwick in June 2007.

On November 2005, we had the pleasure of visiting the House of Prayer run by Fr. Caffarel in Toussoures in France from the time he left the responsibility in Teams in 1973 until his death in September 1996.

The house in this small village, north of Paris, is striking for its prayerful environment, its rural setting and its sense of peace. However, what remains strongest in our minds is the simple headstone on the grave of Fr. Caffarel which simply gives his name and dates of birth, ordination and death and the quotation "Come follow Me."

His request was to be buried in the remote graveyard looking out over the rolling hills in the quiet countryside.

Since then and in the months that followed when we were helping in the preparation of the process for the Cause for his Beatification, we grew to know and



The Cogavins visit the grave site of Fr. Henri Caffarel.

to love this quiet and prayerful man who lived through most of the last century 1903–1996.

Today we want to share with you something of our understanding of Fr. Henri Caffarel.

In this short session we will try and uncover together something of this man, as prophet and as person, while understanding the challenges he set before us and the solutions he offered through his guidance of Equipes Notre-Dame and through his suggestions to Church and to society.

THE PROPHET

What we would really like to share with you today is our absolute conviction that this man, Fr. Henri Caffarel, was truly a prophet and the reasons why we believe this to be so.

In the dictionary are two definitions for the word 'Prophet' – both seem to describe him well:

1. "A person who speaks by Divine inspiration or as the interpreter through which the Will of God is expressed."
2. "A person gifted with profound moral insight and exceptional powers of expression."

In all our study of his works we have found everything he said to be as relevant today as it was when he wrote *Continued on page 10*

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Magnificat

Magnificat is a quarterly publication of the U.S. Teams of Our Lady, circulation 3,600.
www.teamsofourlady.org

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New Study Topic Available

CHRIST, the Heart of Christian Life is the new study topic produced by the ERI for this year. It is very scripture-based, and we know that many teams have been looking for bible-based study. This is it! There are wonderful sections to deal with TOOL Life, with good reminders to those using it to get back to the basics!

Meeting 1	Jesus the Man
Meeting 2	Jesus Christ (John 1)
Meeting 3	The Message of Jesus (Luke 4)
Meeting 4	The Message of Jesus (Luke 22)
Meeting 5	The Message of Jesus (Matthew 6)
Meeting 6	The Message of Jesus (Matthew 12)
Meeting 7	Jesus and Easter
Meeting 8	Jesus Present in His Church

The topic is available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish, from the TOOL Office. Please indicate the number of copies you need in each language and the address for mailing. There is no charge for these materials. The printing is paid for with your annual contribution. Contact the TOOL Office at info@teamsofourlady.org (e-mail) or call 903-535-7864.



Susan and Ed Klein, Southeast Regional Couple, and Diane and Joe Manuel, the new Lake Erie Regional Couple, were installed by Eileen and Ted Kosnik, US Super Region Responsible Couple, at the close of the National Conference in Chaska, Minnesota.

A Summer full of Teams

By Ted & Eileen Kosnik, Super Regional Couple

So we, although there are many of us, are one single body, for we all share in the one loaf”

1 Corinthians 10:17

This summer has been full of TOOL activity and a wealth of experiences to share with you!

The work that **Ted and Janet Windus** did, as Conference Chair Couple, was evident from the moment that we arrived at the Conference site in Chaska, MN. The welcome committee registered couples and families in the lobby, gave them their bags of material and a few extras. The accommodations have never been better, from the sweeping views from the lobby, to the comfortable rooms and beds, and the private lake for evening strolls. Top notch all the way ...

But the heart of any TOOL Conference is the people who attend. We had couples from all over the country, and **Juan and Ivonne Serreno** from

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada! We listened to great speakers; shared in mini-teams; ate together and sang as the sun set.

We laughed with the first leadership couples as they shared their stories ... **Lee and Dick Smith, Loretta and Andy Favret, Marie and Bob Wallace, and Josie and Harry Gieske**. They told tales of early training sessions at camp grounds where the couples were issued flashlights so they could find the outhouse; arranging for child care for eleven children in order to go to France for training; meeting strangers at airports, and then getting into cars with them! We laughed while admiring their dedication and strength!

Most amazing of all was the way that the children and teens that came with their parents enjoyed themselves. It was not long before the “do I HAVE to go...” became “see you later.” Those who came with teens saw them from a distance as they band together through community service projects, swimming, and meals. One adult supervising said that after the first day they resembled a

school of fish – if one went left, they all did!

For twenty-five couples work began the Saturday before the Conference itself, with a training session for present and future U.S. leadership. We socialized and got to know each other Saturday evening, invaded a local church together for Mass on Sunday morning (where we outnumbered the congregation), and then settled into training mode.

The training included presentations, mini-team breakout sessions, and feedback forum for the sharing of ideas. **Tony and Mary Borba**, from California, trained the couples for piloting.

As U.S. Super Regional Couple we left Texas on July 13 for England and the annual meeting of Super Regional Couples with the ERI. The atmosphere was just as warm and welcoming, but the accommodations were in a former seminary built in 1808 that resembled the setting of a Harry Potter film, complete with the unused, boarded buildings that connected somehow in a very rambling and picturesque structure!

Here we met with the new ERI leading couple, **Maria Carla and Carlo Volpini**, as well as couples from Syria, India, England, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Belgium, France, Italy, Poland and more. We use a format that highlights a different language each day, with simultaneous translation through earphone for the sessions, and paper translated prayer services and Mass readings.

It is always amazing to see how much communication takes place in off hours, in spite of the language barrier. One evening **Joachim Grozonka**, half of the Polish leading couple, led all of us in a song without words. We were divided into three parts and oopha-ed, tra-la-ed, etc., complete with hand motions, until we were all laughing so hard we could barely sit still. It was such a demonstration of what love can do!

Love is what it is all about. Love God and love your neighbor ... whoever that may be! Get outside your team and experience that large TOOL family. You will be glad you did! ■

Groovy!

Detroit 01 celebrates 41 years, gives secrets to longevity

By Ed & Anne Franco, Midwest Regional Couple

It's hard for us to believe, but our team, Detroit 01, is celebrating its 41st anniversary this summer. Where better to celebrate but at the Teams Conference in Minnesota!

In July, 1966 five couples with 17 children, 6 years old and under, decided to give Teams of Our Lady a try. We were piloted by telephone and mail by Jane and Bob Connolly from Washington, DC. It worked! We added another couple (five more young children) the next year; they're still with us!

Of our original team, Joan and Larry O'Donnell moved to Ridgewood, NJ and began Teams there, and Pat and Bob Verhelle took Teams to northern Michigan. Their vitality and leadership eventually resulted in their serving as Super Regional couple in the 1990's!

Of our current five couples, Fran and Ed Benz, Claudette and Jon Konzen and Anne and Ed Franco go back "forever." Cindy and Peter Warner joined us about 34 years ago; Charlotte and Jim Westbrook, about 18 years ago!



In the beginning...

The early days, taken during a retreat on a family farm. Left to right: Anne and Ed Franco, Claudette and Jon Konzen, Fran and Ed Benz, Joan and Larry O'Donnell, Pat and Bob Verhelle, Fr. Jerry Fraser.



Several years later...

A Teams Christmas meeting and celebration. Left to right: Cindy and Peter Warner, Ed and Fran Benz (seated), Ed and Anne Franco, Bob and Pat Verhelle, Fr. Jerry Fraser, Claudette and Jon Konzen.

We helped Teams grow in the Detroit area to 15 teams within about ten years, but there have subsequently been many changes; loss of old

groups, formation of new ones. The Detroit Sector now numbers 12 teams.

To what do we attribute our longevity?

■ **We never lose sight of our goals.** (We still plug away at endeavors...)

■ **We accept what each couple brings to the team.** We learned to love, accept, support and nourish each other. Most of us have now lost both parents; we suffered the loss of two Teams children, both young adults.

■ **We understand the importance of making retreats together.** For sev-

eral years we went to a family farm, planned and presented our own retreats with the wonderful guidance of our

chaplain, Fr. Jerry Fraser. We shared baby sitting duties with other Teams couples, had family help, even the help of our children's school teachers who moved in for the weekend! Dedication to Teams and love and respect for each other grew out of those retreats.

■ **The team meeting has always been a priority.** Obviously couples have to miss from time to time. We include their intentions, their news; we share the meeting with them afterwards.

■ **We have always made the effort to be present for sector meetings and special events whenever possible,** even though we live in five different parishes in three cities from northern Ohio to a distant northern suburb of Detroit.

■ **Our team has always understood the necessity of helping Teams grow.** We said "yes" whenever possible to serve as Information Couple, Pilot Couple, Liaison Couple (no longer used). We have helped Teams develop and grow in other areas in the Mid-

west Region. Some of us have served as Sector Couples, even Regional Couples.

■ **We had the support and encouragement of a wonderful chaplain for 21 years.**

However, maybe we made marriage look too good, as he subsequently left the priesthood and married!

We have great respect and deep gratitude to Father Cafarel and those original couples in Paris who recognized the need for support in building strong, prayerful marriages. We can look back through our



Into the 21st century...

Left to right: Claudette and Jon Konzen, Ed and Anne Franco, Cindy and Peter Warner, Charlotte and Jim Westbrook and, seated in front, Ed and Fran Benz.

years as part of Teams of Our Lady and see how the movement and our efforts to live its way of life have enriched our marriages, our family life, our team family and the greater Teams community. We thank Our Lord and his dear Mother every day for the gifts we have received through this commitment to Teams. ■

Leadership Training - A Newbies' perspective

By Paul & Melissa Kruschwitz, North Pinellas Sector Couple, Southeast Region

The information was in the wonderful Sector Couple handbook. We had received it ahead of time. We had read it and thought, "Okay, that was a good refresher course on Teams. I wonder what else there will be to the training in Minnesota?" Then we arrived at the conference to the smiling face of Ted Windus and training became so much more than words on a page. The true essence of Teams began to shine through. The core of what we believe, our reasons for joining, and why we do what we do in Teams, all became so beautifully real in those three days of training. It was refreshing to see that the Teams movement is fresh with young couples willing to carry forward the important message of marriage.



For us, it's all wrapped up in the fact that we have been given such an incredible gift in our marriage. We joined Teams to share in fellowship; to help each other experience Christ's love more deeply and then share that gift of love with others. The manual gives a lot of details on how to do that. But when we think about those three days of training, and the conference that followed, we don't think about the manual. It was the people: the couples who trained us by sharing of themselves. Sharing their stories and ideas, their insights, tips, techniques, etc. so freely and so joyfully. We think about how we were inspired by spending time with people who clearly loved their spouses, loved the Teams movement, and loved coming to conference because they got to spend time sharing and having fun with their friends from the larger community. It is so important to take the time out to recharge and refocus, we were glad we had taken this special time out for each other.

We left with the challenge to bring this message out to our new sector and share how the greater Teams movement can benefit the individual teams. Realizing that each team and each couple may be at a different place in their Teams involvement, we encourage that couples take another look at the renewed Teams materials and the benefit of participating in events outside of their team. Get involved, take a chance. Attend a group social or spiritual event that you haven't previously attended; better yet, help organize it. There are great benefits in building the relationships across other teams and spreading it to others. Embrace the spirit of Teams in this way, paraphrased from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 5: "You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. Your light must shine before others." ■

Not Just An Ordinary Convention

By Jake & Ruth Graves, Central Regional Couple

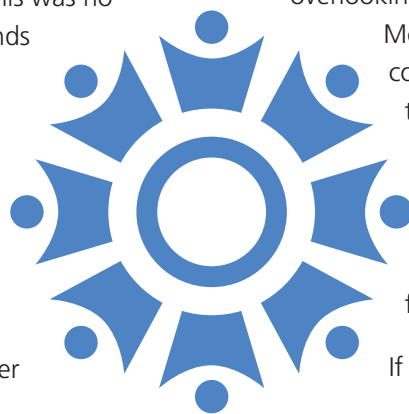
Had YOU joined Teams of Our Lady members gathered from across the U.S. for the 2007 National Conference in Minnesota, you would have known from the outset that this was no conventional meeting. For the sights and sounds of friendship and families filled the vast spaces of the splendid Oak Ridge Conference Center, gracing the facility with the delights of whimsical children, energetic teens, and chatty adults, embracing as they reunite and renew friendships from past gatherings.

You would have known that you were in the company of the people of God coming together in Christ's name, giving priority to prayer and sacramental celebration in beautiful morning liturgies, daily Mass, and also Reconciliation. And at mealtime you would have observed gestures of prayerful thanks before the partaking of delicious home-style fare.

Your sense of privilege in living the covenant of marriage as a sign of Christ's love for His Church would have gained deeper meaning and wider affirmation by the spirituality, wisdom, and insights of the keynote speakers. Marcellino D'Ambrosio presented a vision for Christian marriage as relationship, as mission, and as sacrament, illustrating thoughts with humor and anecdotes from his own experience and family life. Fr. Charles Yost reinforced the constancy of God's presence to us in all aspects of daily life, describing prayer as "...a walking with the mystery of God," and using the Psalms to illustrate how their heartfelt expressions represent universal human experiences to God, thus they provide our own entry into His presence as we walk the road of life prayerfully as couples. Msgr. Joe Strickland unfolded the harmony of marriage as a ministry of collaboration, where joint dialogue and decision-making build relationships that become sacraments—signs of God's Grace.

Nowhere would you have found more light-hearted congeniality than at the after-dinner Ice Cream Socials on the spacious patio overlooking vast lawns, fragrant gardens, and serene Lake McKnight. For here participants gathered as dusk cooled the breezes and lively sing-alongs warmed the hearts. Children vied for another helping of ice cream or romped on the grass, while adults sang, laughed, conversed with new friends and reminisced with old. The vitality of fellowship sparkled so as to far outdo the spectacular fireworks display of July 4th.

If you were present for these fine opportunities, you are no doubt still savoring lovely memories. If it happened that you missed this conference, we most heartily encourage you to begin making plans and settling your priorities around attending the next TOOL National Conference in 2009, where another renewing, revitalizing, and refreshing opportunity awaits you! ■



Minnesota 2007

Teams of Our Lady National Conference



The Erdman Family (Williamsville NY 02) gathers for a snapshot in Minnesota. Bill and Nancy with their children from left to right, Billy, Caroline, Victoria, and Andy.



Bob and Carol Stovenour, Silver Spring MD 06, participate in the evening sing-along.



Eileen and Ted Kosnik (Whitehouse TX 01 and Super Regional Couple, second and fourth from left) join Super Regional Chaplain, Father Joe Strickland (also Whitehouse TX 01) and their daughter, Caroline Kosnik, to lend their voices to the sing-along.



Bob Grinewich (Williamsville NY 01) and Anna Klosterman, daughter of George and Mary Klosterman (Omaha NE 01) sing a duet.

“ We loved every minute of the training session! To be surrounded by people who have such love and faith in our Lord, and who patiently and lovingly supported each and every one of the training attendees, was an experience that we will always hold within our hearts and minds. Not only did we learn more than we ever thought we could about TOOL, but during the training our children were well-cared for and happy! From our teen-aged son down to our pre-schooler, every one of our four children made new friends. And we overheard our children hoping to see these new friends again at the next Conference! For kids who had only known each other a few days, this really impressed us. Thank you for an outstanding experience, and for giving so freely of yourselves. We will endeavor to share much of what we learned from this experience with other couples, and pray that it honors this movement as it so richly deserves.”

– Ed & Cheryl Duncan
Fort Meyers FL 04



Pete and Cindy Warner, Detroit MI 01, enjoy ice cream on the patio.

“(The morning prayer was) inspiring, beautiful, AWESOME!”

“I could feel Christ with us.”

“Fabulous!”

“We truly received more than what we gave.”

Wish you were there yet! Those that attended the 2007 National Teams Conference in Chaska know what the rest of you missed – a fantastic conference! As these survey comments show, this was again a wonderful time to reconnect with old friends and meet new ones.

We kicked off the conference on Tuesday, July 3 with Mass which included a procession of the Regional Couples carrying in flags for their respective regions. Following was an ice cream social on the patio overlooking the beautifully landscaped grounds of the Oak Ridge Conference Center. The Center provided a serene backdrop to the conference, with 130 scenic acres on Lake McKnight.

Wednesday began with a spirit-lifting morning prayer led by the Central Region and included two talks by our keynote speaker, Dr. Marcellino D’Ambrosio. His first talk on “Why Marriage is a Sacrament” helped us all to see the Catholic perspective of

the nature and goals of marriage as both a natural and supernatural vocation. The teens joined the adults for his afternoon talk on “The Family as Domestic Church.” This inspirational speech laid out the vision of what the Catholic family is called to be in a way that was both challenging and inspiring. The day concluded with a bonfire, s’mores, a sing-a-long on the patio and the grand finale – a spectacular fireworks display.

Thursday started with an uplifting morning prayer hosted by the Southeast Region. Fr. Charles Yost spoke on “Simple Prayer for Married Couples,” inviting us to ponder how we pray, question-



Mary Ellen Fleming (Centerport NY 02 and Super Regional Secretariat), Mary Pat Arostegui (Charlotte NC 01), and Eileen Kosnik enjoy the evening.



Bridget and Kevin Hughes, Sector Couple, Strafford PA 01, toasting marshmallows on the patio Wednesday evening.





Ana and Luie Nunes, Western Regional Couple, prepare for the opening of the International Mass on July 4th.



Jean and David Vasconcellos of Turlock, CA 19.



Team teens receive their certificates of appreciation from the organization Feed My Starving Children. During the conference, the teens packed over 7,000 meals to be shipped to the world's poorest countries.

ing if we are conscious of the presence of God when we pray, and investigating the difficulties we often encounter in our prayer life. Thursday afternoon's talk was presented by Msgr. Joseph Strickland, our Super Regional Chaplain. He invited us to ask ourselves "What have you done for your marriage today?" We ended the day with a teaching Mass with Fr. Michael Schmitz of the Diocese of Duluth. His enthusiasm and love of the Mass was both inspiring and educational.

The conference concluded Friday with prayer prepared by the Midwest Region, followed by a live edition of Kosniks Corner. The closing Mass included installation of new leadership couples and the processing out of the Regional Couples and their region's flags.

The children also enjoyed their time at the conference. The elementary aged kids participated in a vacation bible school program entitled "Great Bible Reef." The middle- and high-school aged kids participated in a service project by partnering with an organization called "Feed My Starving Children." They packed nutritious meals that were shipped to some of the poorest countries in the world. During their time at Feed My Starving Children, our kids packed over 7,000 meals, enough to feed 21 children for a year! As you can see, if you missed the conference, you missed a lot!

"Our children had a great time meeting and uniting with other Team kids - memory making."

In closing, we would like to thank all those who came to experience the hospitality of Minnesota – your presence greatly enhanced the spirit of the conference. Even though an event of this magnitude seemed to be overwhelming at times, we found that it was not. It was a wonderful feeling when we could see the Holy Spirit at work bringing all the elements of the conference together. So once again, thank you to those who helped and to those who attended. Together, we in Teams, made this conference a success. "Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established" (Proverbs 16:3).

When the 2009 conference comes around remember these words from one conference attendee – "We would love to attend another conference in two years and bring the rest of our Team! We know they would really enjoy this event."

– Ted & Janet Windus, Conference Organizers

them. The prophetic nature of Fr. Caffarel's work started with that first encounter with those four young couples in Paris in 1938 when they told him: "This human love which is our joy and treasure, God must surely see it as something very beautiful and very great. We want to know about it – you must reveal it to us" (Rome 1959). This was the start of a journey developing an understanding of married spirituality and evangelizing the sacrament of marriage with this group of couples.

As their early meetings progressed he wrote: "Little by little, the eminent place of marriage in God's great design unfolded. It seemed to us to be totally ordained to the glory of the Lord. Its ends are the multiplication of sons and daughters of God and the mutual help of the spouses in the pursuit of holiness. There is no need to look elsewhere in order to progress towards the Lord: marriage is a sacred way and the Christian family is a living cell of the Church" (Rome 1959).

Pope John Paul II spoke of Fr. Caffarel at a Meeting of Leaders of Teams of Our Lady in 2003: "Fr. Caffarel taught the greatness and beauty of the vocation of marriage, and, anticipating the fruitful orientations of the Second Vatican Council, he highlighted the call to holiness linked to married and family life. He knew how to bring out the major aspects

of a specific married spirituality that flows from baptism and that underlines the dignity of human love in the plan of God" (John Paul II, Rome 2003).

This term "married spirituality" was used by Fr. Caffarel and those early Team couples from the very beginning, even though it was almost 20 years



Fr. Henri Caffarel

later during Vatican II that the Church began to use such a term – a term which is common terminology today.

For thirty-five years he served Teams of Our Lady, overseeing the growth and development of the Movement across all continents, and through this growth guided the spiritual development of the Movement whose aim he described as: "Equipes Notre-Dame has as its essential aim, to help couples, to strive after holiness – no more, no less."

In 1965 Pope Paul VI described Equipes Notre-Dame as "the smiling face of the Church" and in 1976 he gave a reminder to all of us of our responsibilities when he said: "Innumerable couples will be grateful to you for the help you bring to them; in fact most couples are in need of help." He was described by the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris in 1996 as: "One of the great figures given by God to his Church in the course of this century" (September 1996).

THE PERSON

To understand any prophet and to make sense of the challenges he set before us, it is good to have some appreciation of the person. In our research, certain prominent characteristics of Father Caffarel became apparent. He strikes us as a visionary, a listener with great inclusiveness, somebody who is competent, honest and outspoken in his search for the truth – somebody who is persistent in his determination to see his vision fulfilled. Above all we see a prayerful priest answering God's call.

As Visionary

With this new phrase "married spirituality" he shows an understanding of the importance and need for development of married love as a path to holiness. After the war, much growth of new groups had occurred throughout all of

France. However, at this same time, he observed some who were missing the true charism, some others who were becoming just social groups, who were losing the purpose which had brought them together. "Had the wonderful enthusiasm which had animated the first groups been already exhausted?"

He thought then of how holiness in religious orders never ceases to blossom and re-blossom. He saw that the essential factor for the long lasting quality and vitality of these orders was their rule. He asked himself: "Why, then, should we not offer a rule to married Christians who want to progress spiritually? Not a rule for monks, but a rule for married lay men and women."

This rule became the Charter of the Teams of Our Lady presented to the Movement on December 8, 1947 and changed the name from "Caffarel Groups" to "Equipes Notre-Dame" - 'Teams of Our Lady.' The Charter sets out in the first part the objectives we must strive after and in its second part the means of working towards these objectives – the methods and the endeavors.

Listener

Throughout his 35 years of service, he always worked with groups of couples in the search for the truth of married spirituality:

■ With the Leading Team he developed the Charter in 1947.

■ In 1970 with the then Leading Team, they prepared and presented additional endeavors:

- to spend time each day in quiet contemplative prayer;
- the daily study of Holy Scripture.

In presenting these he said: “Everything withers when prayer is missing, everything is reborn, ripens, when prayer is present” (Rome 1970).

His openness to the Holy Spirit in guiding Teams had its roots in his response to those first young couples in 1938. “Let us seek together; let us join together and set off on a journey of discovery.”

Competent and honest

His whole ministry, his service to the Teams Movement, to the Troussures House of Prayer, and now the process for his beatification, which was accepted in April 2006, are real testimonies to his competence, to his honesty and to his outspokenness. His many documents, editorials and conferences are further testimonies.

He was always held in high regard by Cardinals, and Bishops throughout the world and was listened to and acted upon by Popes John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II, and strong echoes of his vision are paralleled in Pope Benedict XVI’s first encyclical “Deus Caritas Est.”

Persistent and determined

His most outspoken comments were in pursuit of the ideals of married spirituality. He persistently challenged the Institutional Church of which we will speak more of later. However, his most determined comments were directed at ourselves, the members of Teams, exhorting us to move forward in our own area of expertise and in the fulfilment of the essential aims of the Movement.

Responding to the risk of us becoming lukewarm or having a lack of time or other objections, Father Caffarel retorted: “You haven’t got a guide? We will give you one, you can find some. You haven’t got time? You have time to eat and sleep, do not let your soul die of hunger!” (Notes on Love and Grace 1955).

Five years later, he challenged the members: “If Teams do not succeed in giving you the taste and hunger to know God, if, after a few months or years, working at the study topic has not led you to acquire the habit of religious study, there can be little reason for the existence of our Teams. We were created to know, love and serve God. If we do not know Him in a living and constantly sustained way, let us have no illusion: we will not love and serve Him truly” (February 1960 editorial).

He was always very clear about the phases that Teams

go through and he identified two very different stages: “I am convinced that our Teams should be both a Movement of initiation and a Movement of perfection. If Teams were only a Movement of perfection, couples would hesitate to enter. On the other hand, if Teams were merely a Movement of Christian initiation, they would soon disappoint the very couples in whom they had instilled a desire for more growth” (Rome May 1959).

For priests who came and asked about their role in Teams he told them that: “the Movement with its organization and various methods – is essentially an instrument placed in the hands of a priest to help them to fulfil better their mission of spiritual educators of couples” (Conference 1959).

The man of prayer

In 1970 with the Leading Team, he introduced the endeavor of personal contemplative prayer with these words: “From now on it will be asked of each member of the Movement to consecrate a modest minimum of ten minutes per day to reflective prayer, beginning with commitment.”

A few years later when he was stepping down and in his last editorial in 1973, he spoke of the importance of prayer and the dedication of the rest of his life in these words: “I believe now more than ever, in the irreplaceable importance

“Marriage is a sacred way, and the Christian family is a living cell of the Church.”

of prayer, and it is in this way that I want to help you and remain present with you. All my time during the years that I am still to live will, to the extent that it depends upon me, be devoted to prayer and helping others to pray” (A Dieu 1973).

THE CHALLENGES

To understand the challenges which Fr. Caffarel encountered in those early days, we need to, as he would say, “return to the source,” which finds a Europe at the brink of war. The challenges they tried to respond to were similar to those that face us today or that we have experienced in our lives. This was a period

of uncertainty, of fear and of concern for the future caused mainly by:

■ **Materialism**, which had started to dominate society and its philosophy being anti-Christian, anti-marriage, anti-family. Already this

His most outspoken comments were in pursuit of the ideals of married spirituality.

was being challenged by the young. Reflecting in 1970 on the changes of the 60's, he said: "It is also true that the revolution of young people which has sprung up in the past few years and in numerous countries, indicates the pressing need of young people to escape from materialism which is suffocating them."

■ **Atheism** was then thought to be the philosophic thinking of more than one third of the population of the world. Today it continues to grow in parallel with agnosticism. He prophesied that "Future historians when speaking of the 20th century will no doubt call it 'the century of the death of God'.

He also warned that "formerly, atheism was the possession of the elite, now it has become an every day commodity."

■ **Lethargy of Christians** who seemed to find little happiness in their faith, who showed no enthusiasm to talk about God. The image of God shown by Christians in their way of living and subsequently in their speech was hardly attractive. He quotes from *Gaudem et Spes* this harsh sentence: "In the origin and growth of Atheism, Christianity may have played a part which is far from unimportant."

This false image of God was so distant from the personal relationship with Jesus which Fr. Caffarel presented in his own life and which he hoped for, for every Christian in particular for every Christian couple.

■ **Separation**. The Church saw spirituality as the speciality of the priests and religious – the celibate. Opportunities for involvement by the laity were offered to either men or women. There was often separation at Mass and other religious practices, such as retreats and confraternities. Speaking to Leaders of the Movement in Chantilly, France in 1987, he humorously spoke of orga-

nizing the first Teams retreat. When he asked for facilities from a Jesuit House, they said 'fine' but no women were allowed in a Jesuit House. He then made the same request to the Cenacle Sisters, who replied 'Yes' but no men would be allowed.

■ **Marriage Practice**. As with religious and social practice, the role of husband and wife were different and separate. Family and marriage were being degraded in almost every country. Sexual relations were confined to pro-creation and still carried the stigma of 'soul-good' – 'body bad' thinking from many centuries. Father Caffarel writing to the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council said: "The errors and influences which are creeping into Christian couples and undermining them should be investigated and also the failure in the pastoral ministry which explains their vulnerability."

SOME SOLUTIONS Teams of Our Lady

Through his encounter with those first young couples in 1938, he embraced these challenges. He worked tirelessly for the next 35 years with so many couples in defining, experiencing, documenting, evangelizing, refining and correcting the charism of our Movement and its framework and methods. This pedagogy has benefited each of us, as person and as couple in our journey to God

– helping to awaken in one another the sacred.

The charism of Teams of Our Lady is as a Movement of married spirituality. It is considered as a gift from God to the Church and to the world. The pedagogy then, as today throughout the world remains the same. It is based on two pillars:

■ **The team meeting** where we meet together, share, pray and support one another, discuss what we have studied and deepen our relationship with one another and with God; and

■ **The set of endeavors** we take on during the month which, when we truly try to incorporate them into our lives, will strengthen our prayer life, deepen our couple relationship and increase our knowledge on the topic we choose to study as a team.

These two pillars have created for us a learning environment to support "Married Spirituality."

We should look at our Movement and see how it benefits us and how it can benefit other couples to develop their Christian married spirituality:

■ Our Team meetings create a learning environment of awareness, of dialogue, of meeting with Jesus through our encounter with other team couples and spiritual counselors.

■ Our pooling and our study topic educate us on the worldly challenges and the art of relationship as couple.

■ Jesus is present throughout our meal and time together but in a very special way as we pray His Holy Scripture.

■ When we share on our Endeavors we are helping each other in a truly Christian way, to find new ways to deepen and develop as person, as couple and in our relationship with God.

■ The sit-down gives us an opportunity, as couple in the presence of the Holy Spirit:

- to affirm each other as persons and as couple;
- to review our progress in the light of Gospel values;
- to map out our future plans as couple, and as family.

We believe that our practice of personal prayer is our encounter with Jesus.

We believe that through the Endeavors, combined with our study of Scripture, family and couple prayer, we are stepping together ever so gently to a closer relationship with our Living God. Father Caffarel's great wish for all of us was that: "Your home will bear witness to God in a still more explicit fashion if it is the union of two searchers, where the intellect and the heart are thirsting to know and to meet God, to become united with Him, because they have understood that God is the great reality, because God interests them more than anything else" (May 1970).

The Church

In the early 1960's Fr. Caffarel presented to the future Fathers of Vatican II his thoughts, experience and suggestions from his 25 years of ministry with couples. (He himself was appointed consultant to the Apostolate of the Laity.) He spoke of marriage as: "the only community founded on a sacrament."

He spoke of the need for pastoral understanding and the ability to communicate and preach on: "God's thinking on all the realities of marriage: its sacramental character, its greatness, its laws: about love, fatherhood, motherhood, sexuality, procreation, education."

He asked that the Council give guidance on moral theology: "moral theology taught to the faithful is often no more than a thesis on sexual relations. There will never be a renewal of Christian marriage until married Christians are offered a morality based on spiritual progress in and through that 'state in life,' sanctified and sanctifying, which is marriage."

He asked that the Church develop a theology of marriage: "It is necessary to have a clearer idea of the sacramentality of marriage, not to confine one's thinking to the moral conception of the union of the spouses, but to focus on its mystical aspect, that is to say, its connection with the mystery of Christ, so as to have a clearer idea also of the nature,

the aims, the properties, 'the permanence' of the sacrament, the place of the Christian couple in the Church."

On preparation for marriage he said: "The lack of preparation is the cause of innumerable matrimonial tragedies." On the other hand he highlighted the value of marriage preparation in its fullness which could: "enable that an adult religion be discovered by Catholics who, for the most part have learnt nothing since the catechism before their first Communion."

To protect marriage and particularly the young: "It is necessary that the young should be capable of discerning their particular vocation and responding to it, fully aware of what is involved; that they be helped in procuring sound ideas about marriage, its nature, its purpose, its characteristics..."

If these challenges are responded to he proposed that: "There is an altogether positive and uplifting aspect of marriage which one would like to see being made known to our world. Given that in our time, just as in every other era, the human

heart remains inhabited by the irrepressible hope of achieving perfect love in marriage, the content of this doctrine, in all its richness and beauty, would have a good chance of finding an echo with our contemporaries."

Finally, we believe that to respond to the challenges of today's society and to communicate clearly to diverse cultures and particularly to the young, we need a clearer, simpler language of love; a language which can communicate the beauty of married love and a deep understanding of married spirituality.

“There is there,
in the midst of
these couples
gathered together
...the intense
presence of the
Risen Lord...”

Pope Benedict in his first encyclical 'Deus Caritas Est' – 'God is Love' – presents a new vision for our sacrament of love. He contradicts the old thinking which separated the two loves of 'eros' and 'agape' often suppressing 'eros' in fa-

vor of 'agape.' On the contrary, he asserts that eros is ever reaching out towards its fulfillment in agape, stating: "Eros is thus supremely ennobled, yet at the same time it is so purified as to become one with agape" (Benedict XVI ' Deus Caritas Est').

Perhaps in this Encyclical we have something of a response to another Caffarel challenge to the Second Vatican Council: "Married Christians are, for the most part, convinced that Christian perfection is not for them. This, once again, is the view of too many priests. That error is fatal: the person who is not aiming at perfection soon slides into mediocrity, into sin. One has here one of the explanations for the current decline of Christian marriage. As against this, what an impetus would one not create if one brought to the notice of couples Christ's call to perfection, if one taught them that the essence of this perfection is to be found in Love, and not in the vows of the religious life, and that in itself marriage not only is not an obstacle but is a means of arriving at the perfecting of that Love."

The Second Vatican Council may not have included all of Father Caffarel's suggestions. However, one of the great expressions of the Council was the invitation to us the laity is to take responsibility for our own faith development and for the development of the Church.

A DIEU

Vatican II speaks of the "Domestic Church." We have so much to thank those early couples and Fr. Caffarel and the Holy Spirit for bringing our first Team together and allowing this same model to flourish all over the world today.

It is probably not surprising but definitely worth reflecting on what Fr. Caffarel spoke of as he stepped away as Spiritual Counsellor to the Movement in 1973. When asked for his opinion on what was the most important aspect of Team Life, after reflecting on the many gifts, he identified the most important: "There is there, in the midst of these couples gathered together in a room in an apartment, the intense presence of the Risen Lord, alive, attentive to all, loving all of them, with their mixture of good and bad, and anxious to help them to become the kind of people they want to be. He is there, as on the evening of the Resurrection, in the upper room in Jerusalem, when He appeared suddenly to those other team members, the apostles. He breathed on them, saying: 'Receive – the Holy Spirit.' And they became new men. Jesus Christ, in the midst of couples, does not fail to impart His Spirit to them; and those who open themselves to His Spirit – this is something

that people learn gradually – become people of the Spirit. And the whole meeting is animated by the Spirit. To these men and women who, in the evening, after a hard day, often arrive exhausted and weighed down with worries, this Spirit communicates Christ's twofold passion: His impatience for the glory of His Father, and His burning and gentle pity for the

crowds 'who are like sheep without a shepherd.'

"What I have just described is not what it always is, but how it ought to be. For a meeting of a team which is not first and foremost a joint effort to meet Jesus is something completely different from a meeting of a Team of Our Lady." ■

Rest In Peace

Bill Degrenia
Clearwater FL 01

David Gamble
Cullman AL 01

Ken Vail
Rochester MN 03

*Please pray for the
deceased members
of Teams*

Father Caffarel and the Spirit of TOOL

By Eileen & Ted Kosnik, Super Regional Couple

In the Piloting books, each chapter begins with a quote from one of Father Caffarel's writing with a message to challenge us to perfection in our relationship with God in union with our spouse. Father Caffarel was a man who worked hard and inspired many, not only in Teams of Our Lady, but in his work with widows and orphans after World War II, and at his house of prayer in his "retirement" years, 1973 until his death in 1996.

The TOOL Movement has petitioned for elevation to the status of sainthood, and is actively pursuing this goal. If you would like to help, there are several ways that you can do so.

- First, as in all things, pray! Pray for the process, and to the man. If you feel that some miracle occurs in your prayers, please make that known!
- Second, if you wish to contribute financially to support the effort, you made do so through the TOOL Office. We suggest this, rather than a direct contribution, as it is costly to transfer funds and it is not possible to write a check and send it to France. We will gather the contributions and send them to "The Friends of Father Caffarel" shortly after December 8.

During the International College Meeting in Durham, England, a report was given by Father Paul-Dominique Marcovitis, O.P., the postulator for the cause of beatification. Today the workers have met with 42 people who knew Father Caffarel, and 23 have submitted written testimonies.

The reviewing of Father Caffarel's work will result in the publication of some of his works in English translation. As soon as it is available we will print the material and make it available to you. We hope that this will be finished in time for the 60th Anniversary of the Charter, December 8, 2007. ■

December 8, 2007 is the 60th Anniversary of the writing of the TOOL Charter.

Please take this special time as a means of spreading the word about TOOL.

We would like to suggest that TOOL couples, with their children, attend the Saturday evening Mass in their parish and sit together.

Ask that a space be "roped off" so that you can make a statement by sheer numbers at your regular parish liturgy. Perhaps you could invite the other Mass-goers to the parish hall for cake and punch after Mass to help celebrate. Have some fliers available and talk with them about the gift of Teams! Plan an Information Meeting in January as a follow up activity if you are so inclined.

Please put this on your calendar NOW! Reserve the time... Share your ideas for celebration with the TOOL Office. We can feature (digital only) pictures of your celebrations in the Winter Magnificat!



Teams of Our Lady

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