

• *Teams of Our Lady • Love to Reveal My Love* •
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Sharing
on the
Team Endeavors
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by
Alvaro & Mercedes Gomez-Ferrer
For the International Responsible Team

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FOREWORD

Team members have acknowledged over the years that sharing on the endeavors seems to be a poorly understood and difficult part of the Team meeting. This seems to be the case for both newer and older Teams. This concern prompted the Movement to take another look at the spirit behind the sharing. A deeper understanding of that spirit might enable all Teams to make their sharing easier and more fruitful.

A new look at the spirit behind the sharing demands a closer look at the spirit that enlivens the endeavors themselves. What is the goal which engenders their common orientation? What gives them their inner unity?

First, the endeavors are designed to enable a true encounter with the Lord. They call each of us along a road of conversion and formation as Gospel people.

Secondly, each endeavor calls us — individually and as a couple — to persevere in seeking God’s will, to live in truth, and to seek an ever closer communion with God and with others.

The aim and unity of the endeavors are reflected in the sharing on the endeavors at the Team meeting. Sharing calls us as a Team along a road of conversion through the practice of mutual help. Sharing calls us as a Team to persistently seek God’s will, to acknowledge the truth, and to build community.

This document will focus primarily on these fundamental concepts, but will also suggest ways to put them into practice.

Alvaro & Mercedes Gomez-Ferrer
For the International Responsible Team (ERI)

“Brothers and sisters: Whatever was written previously was written for our instruction, that by endurance and by the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus, that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God.”

Letter of St. Paul to the Romans 15:4-7

Sharing On The Team Endeavors

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I

THE SPIRIT OF THE ENDEAVORS

ATTITUDES

The endeavors are *attitudes* to awaken within us and not merely tasks to be accomplished. For this reason, they are referred to not as verbs of action (“to pray,” “to say,” “to carry out,” “to study”...), but as noun subjects (“a regular reading,” “a daily meeting,” “a monthly talk”...). This is not simply a question of semantics, but a conscious effort to present the endeavors as a means of **conversion** and **formation**.

The endeavors are not to be viewed as arbitrary choices of action or as a childish formalism. We cannot simply enumerate, label and file away a series of actions that we have accomplished in order to give ourselves a clear conscience. If that were true, we would be performing an unthinking exercise that would have little influence on our lives.

1. An Attitude to Transform Our Lives

In Teams we are invited to awaken and assimilate attitudes that will lead us to a new way of life: a deeply Christian way of life. We are invited to build this way of life not only during the Team meeting, but also with the aid of specific methods and in concrete ways throughout the month, in all we do as Christians.

The endeavors, therefore, are quite demanding. They call for an effort on the part of the individual and the couple:

- an effort of discernment, creativity, and fidelity that embraces our entire being;
- an effort we assent to inwardly, not one that is imposed on us from without;
- an effort that begins with the acceptance of some minimum requirements.

Couples come, or should come, to Teams with a sincere desire to give glory to God as they work to enrich their life as a couple. They also share the desire of every Christian in the Church: **to follow Jesus Christ**. The heart of the Movement is that it gives husbands and wives the wherewithal to follow Christ as a couple and to grow through the mutual help of other Teams couples.

“... that all the members may be concerned for one another. If one member suffers, all the members suffer with him; if one member is honored, all the members share his joy.”

I Cor. 12: 25-26

2. An Attitude to Further a True Encounter With the Lord

“(Zacchaeus) ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When He reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him: ‘Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house.’ And he came down quickly and received Him with joy.”

The beginning of the road to conversion is an encounter with the Lord. Mary Magdalene, Matthew, Zaccheus, the Samaritan woman, Paul — all experienced such an encounter and entered into a new life of grace. The Team endeavors are designed to create an openness to such an encounter with the Lord, and to enable us to recognize the Lord when He comes.

Our constant fidelity to the endeavors enables us to consistently renew our attitude towards God and to-

wards others. We should not approach the endeavors as a series of superficial actions to be performed solely to put our consciences at rest. When we grasp and enter into the spirit underlying each endeavor, our “doing” these endeavors enriches our “being” — as individuals, as members of Teams, and as Christians. We embark upon a fascinating adventure and a fervent search for knowledge of the Spirit working in us to shape us in the image of Christ.

“The Lord grant that you may observe all these precepts in a spirit of charity, as lovers of spiritual beauty, and may spread abroad the sweet odor of Christ by a good life, not as slaves living under the law, but as men and women living in freedom under grace.”

St. Augustine, Rule, para. 48

INNER UNITY

The inner unity of the endeavors is based on the Gospel spirit that animates the whole methodology of Teams. The call to live a Christian life as married couples provides the logic that links the endeavors and the aims that integrate them into each other. Clearly, they are neither disparate nor arbitrary rules.

In the booklet, “What Is a Team of Our Lady?,” we read:

“Experience shows that unless one undertakes a certain number of specific practices, general directives for one’s life will remain unattainable. The Teams of Our Lady propose the following to their members:

- *to undertake a number of “obligatory” practices (these are six in number, and constitute what are called “the endeavors”);*
- *to request an accounting and assistance from the Team with regard to these practices (the so-called “sharing on the endeavors” at the monthly meetings).*

The six endeavors are the following:

1. *A regular reading (or hearing) of the Word of God.*
2. *A daily period set aside for true “conversation with the Lord” (prayer).*

3. *A daily meeting of husband and wife for conjugal and, if possible, family prayer.*
4. *A monthly in-depth talk between husband and wife in the Lord's presence (the duty of sitting-down).*
5. *A drawing-up (and monthly revision) of one's rule of life.*
6. *A yearly retreat (at least two days) made together as husband and wife, if possible, in order to withdraw into the Presence of the Lord and effect a spiritual accounting of the past year."*

In the six endeavors, we encounter some specific words: "regular," "daily," "monthly," "yearly," "true," "in-depth," "in the Lord's presence," "meeting" and "conversation." These words remind us of the three-fold way of life to which the Teams are constantly calling us to:

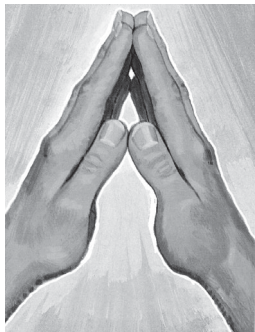
1. Foster attentiveness and perseverance so that we may be open to the will of God and to His love
2. Broaden our capacity for truth
3. Broaden our capacity for encounter and communion with one another and with God

1. Attentiveness and Perseverance

We must constantly seek to know God's will for us and for our lives. In order to do so, we must imitate Mary in her attentiveness to God's presence in her life. To do this, two things are necessary:

Knowing how to listen - A good listener is not preoccupied with himself; otherwise, he cannot listen. To know how to listen is to know how to keep silence, inwardly and outwardly, and to "***meditate in our hearts***" on the call of God, which comes to us through His Word, through nature, through events, through others, and in silence.

Taking time regularly to seek God's will - This is a long-term apprenticeship in perseverance. It is also a call for generosity. We must allow the One who has priority in our life to be given recognition, especially during those precious moments of free time that are ours alone. Let us make room for Him, not just when we want to or when we are feeling badly, but ***every day***.



These two things constitute the goal of **listening to the Word of God**. The same perseverance and the desire to know God's will are necessary for **personal prayer** — *a daily period set aside* — and for **conjugal prayer**, which is asked of us *each day*. The emphasis here is on regularity, not on the amount of time we spend praying.

The search for God's will is also the key to the **sit-down**, in which we seek to better understand God's plan for us as a couple, and to the **yearly retreat**, in which we seek to encounter God and evaluate our lives before Him.

2. Broadening Our Capacity for Truth

The second aspect of our life, toward which the endeavors are directed, is that of becoming increasingly aware of who we are, of fully accepting the truth about ourselves in order to start building upon that truth rather than upon unfounded dreams, half-truths, or lies. That is the goal of the **rule of life**, which we must *draw up* and *revise* regularly.

To draw up a rule of life, we must first come to know ourselves, our weaknesses and hurts, the points we need to work on. Our spouse or our Team can help us choose this rule. What better way to avoid deluding ourselves? Of course, a spiritual journey does not advance smoothly or regularly. Rather, we often have to stop and "take our bearings" in order to set out again in the right direction. That is why we must *revise* our rule of life periodically.

To help us live in truth, Teams ask that our personal prayer be a **true conversation** with the Lord and not a one-way attempt to justify ourselves or to "set God straight." We are also asked to make our conjugal prayer a **meeting of husband and wife**, each bringing his or her own truth. We are asked to make our sit-down an **in-depth talk**, a true dialogue, and not an exchange based on masks, defenses, or manipulation.

3. Broadening Our Capacity for Encounter and Communion

Living a life of communion means living a life that is not centered around oneself but one that is turned towards others, and in particular, towards the Other. This “other” lifestyle requires effort and can only be attained little by little. We must begin by *letting others be themselves* and then build a relationship based on giving, always aware that we must give not what *we* want to give but *what the other needs*.

The aim of the endeavors is to make possible an encounter with the Lord both in prayer and in His Word, and also to encounter Him in others and in the events of our life.

When we let Christ be Himself in us, then we let Him speak to us, love us, and transform us.

Team couples meet daily in prayer, as husband and wife. This prayer takes effort on the part of both: an effort to meet together, and an effort to pray together. However, if we do this as *husband and wife* — not as two strangers, but as a man and a woman who welcome Christ as a couple, each according to his or her own personality — we may be sure that, through conjugal prayer, our communion with each other and with the Lord will grow stronger and deeper.

We also meet in the sit-down, which is neither a monologue nor a fragmented conversation, but a conjugal, *in-depth talk*. We must set aside the length of time necessary — not just the few moments we have left over in our busy schedule, but the time it takes to create a climate in which true communion and communication become possible.

All these moments devoted to encounters and exchanges with others prepare us to live in an atmosphere of communion, as people of communion in the Church and in the world.

In summary, the spirit of the endeavors is based on the fact that there are certain attitudes which we must assimilate in order to let ourselves — individually and as a couple — be transformed by Christ. The

endeavors were developed with the aim of offering us the best objective means for attaining an encounter with the Lord.

There are three main themes which unify the endeavors and which led to the choice of these particular practices. These themes are:

1. Seeking God's will regularly and with perseverance;
2. Seeking to become more truthful; and
3. Acquiring a spirit of communion in the Church and in the world.

These are basic Christian attitudes to which Teams give a new twist — that of *conjuality*.

The endeavors are not arbitrary duties to be added to those already incumbent upon us in life. On the contrary, they are the starting point of a *profound path of Christian conversion* in perseverance, in truth, and in communion. Such a path can truly transform our lives.

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

Fr. Henri Caffarel





II

THE SPIRIT OF SHARING

WHAT SHARING IS NOT

The spirit of the sharing on the endeavors derives naturally from the spirit that enlivens the endeavors themselves. If the sharing at the Team meeting has become one of the weak points of the meeting, perhaps it is due to our having slipped into one of these common misunderstandings:

1. There are Teams who still see the endeavors as duties to be fulfilled, either out of servile obedience to a rule whose deeper meaning they fail to grasp, or simply because one must fulfill them in order to belong to Teams.

2. Some members feel uncomfortable with what seems to them to be a childish reporting on superficial tasks. They do not see the underlying aim and coherence of the endeavors.

3. Other Teams accept this part of the meeting but limit it to a mere formality and answer simply “yes” or “no” as they rapidly run through the list of endeavors — without discovering the enrichment of **integrating the endeavors into their life** as a couple, nor the great spiritual help they can afford the Team, if each brings his or her deepest inner self to the sharing.

4. Sometimes an emphasis on the Team’s failures predominates during the sharing. This creates an atmosphere of embarrassment and guilt. As a result, the sharing is done quickly and superficially, or otherwise, it is treated as a joke in order to make it seem less important.

5. It is especially devastating if the Responsible Couple — or any member — passes harsh or hasty judgment on the others or treats another’s sharing with irony or sarcasm.

WHAT SHARING IS ALL ABOUT

The sharing on the endeavors at the Team meeting flows from our *faithfulness* to who we are. We must acknowledge who we are, and become aware of our own identity and uniqueness. The loss of a sense of identity as unique creations of God is one of the great risks of our time, in which people are massed together in order to make them easier to manipulate. But Teams groups us into small communities which all together form the Movement. From its own particular implementation of the Gospel spirit, the Team Movement offers us means and methods to remain faithful to our identity and to our uniqueness as children of God, redeemed by the blood of His Son, and united by the sacrament of Matrimony. When we put these means and methods into practice, we join not only with the other members of our own Team but with all Teams worldwide in a common spiritual journey.

In the case of the endeavors and the sharing, the uniqueness of Teams is that *the development of our personal and conjugal spirituality is not limited to just the Team meeting, but is realized day by day through our fidelity to the means the Teams offer us*. These means, or methods, awaken in us the attitudes required if we, as a couple, are to experience in our life a true encounter with the Lord; they orient us toward a path of continual learning and conversion. We bring to the sharing our personal experience of the three attitudes underlying the endeavors, as well as our failures, our discoveries, our encounters, and the gifts of God within us. All this we must *share* with the other couples, while at the same time *benefiting* from the gifts God has given them. It is a joint effort of spiritual help on a communal path of conversion.

We need the sharing in order to create and build a sense of community. The simple fact that a group of people meets together does not mean that they form a community. A true community comes into being when people share their lives and the gifts they have received from God; when they seek something together; when they help each other. This

sharing of ourselves takes place throughout the meeting, such as in the **pooling**, but in the sharing on the endeavors it means going even farther.

First, let us clarify the difference between pooling and sharing on the endeavors. In **pooling**, we share more deeply our concerns about family, profession, civic or Church commitments, our successes and failures, our joys and sorrows. Real pooling is indispensable to true and deep sharing because in order to help one another, we must first come to know each other.

Sharing on the endeavors, on the other hand, is the moment when “*I become responsible for you and you become responsible for me,*” when each becomes responsible for the other (responsible in the fullest and deepest sense of the word). Each member becomes for the others *a reflection of the Christ-like life*, a sign of the Team’s unity in Christ. A Team is meant to be a living and holy community in which each couple has *a certain responsibility for this holiness*, a responsibility they cannot avoid without damaging the whole.

Through the sharing on the endeavors, we are trying to assimilate into our lives the three attitudes which form the basis for the endeavors:

1. The unceasing search for God’s will;
2. The search for truth;
3. A life of encounter and communion.

Whereas our personal assimilation of these attitudes is an ongoing task, the sharing on the endeavors at the Team meeting is a brief but intense effort by the whole community to assess its growth in relationship to these attitudes.

1. The Unceasing Search for God’s Will

The habit of seeking God’s will, which each member and couple have had a chance to develop by striving to fulfill the endeavors, is reinforced during the sharing at the Team meeting through the mutual seeking, exchange, discernment and brotherly demands of the *whole Team*.

The Team's search for God's will and any constructive criticism that ensues needs to flow out of love and be fully expressed with love. Love is not just a sentimental tenderness that readily excuses everything. An authentic love makes us desire the other's good, as well as, our own.

*"It is better to love and be hard,
than to be gentle and cause harm."*

St. Augustine, Letter 93, Par. 4

This kind of love is not vague. It is concerned with real, physical persons. It takes into account a person's particular gifts and faults, and tries to be infinitely *respectful* of his or her *identity*. What is good for one may not be good for another. No couple should pass judgment on another's failures, since the demanding attitude towards others that love inspires in us must always be tempered by patience and selflessness. If we are demanding in a Christian way, we will be moved to bear with those things which we might be tempted to reject; we will say nothing irreparable; we will facilitate a return to sharing; and we will accept insecurity. However, we will also be moved to keep a situation from deteriorating or festering; we will answer truthfully; we will want to help others find their way through discernment; we will accept impatience and try to understand it.

What we must **not** do is keep silent (an attitude we adopt all too frequently), or simply cease to react at all. As one member remarked, "*The couples on our Team have known each other for a long time. We've come to believe that each one's problems will go with him or her to the grave. I guess we're just used to these problems.*" "**Used to**", in this case, means "**resigned to**" and that means we have **lost hope**. A Christian must never adopt this attitude, nor should a Team. A courageous love that is founded in Christ enables us to press on in hope.

How can we not passionately desire that the person whose growth seems to have come to a standstill not begin to press forward again? This desire is an act of faith that in itself makes us grow, because it puts us at

the heart of God's desire for each person: "*Be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.*" (Mt. 5: 48). God's love called us into being, sustains our being, and draws us into being more Christian. God loves in us the person we can become as we say "yes" to Him, "yes" to life, "yes" to our life. We are asked to make our whole life a love story. When someone enters a legalistic relationship, it may be possible later for that person to say, "*I've done enough. I've fulfilled all my obligations.*" In a loving relationship, however, it is impossible to say such a thing. Love never stops. And our love story can still be a success even if our conjugal, family, or professional life is not. When we are young, we find it difficult to admit that love goes beyond effectiveness and is more important than success. Later, through persistently seeking God's will, we learn to discover the path of hope in life. "*What makes a life important is neither places nor situations, but the courage to accept the challenges God proposes, whatever they may be or wherever they may lead.*"

2. The Search for Truth

Love requires knowledge, yet at the same time knowledge is a fruit of love. We love others more as we get to know them better. This knowledge must therefore continue to grow. The knowledge we are speaking of is not intellectual, but intimate, *an encounter of heart and reason* in which we ourselves are fully involved in the other's best interest.

In the sharing of the endeavors, we speak of "helping," but how can we help those we do not know well? We say that we form a Team in order to help one another in our weakness, but what if we do not reveal what that weakness is? Sharing on endeavors requires that those who meet together in Christ's name reveal the truth, in simplicity — without resorting repeatedly to defense mechanisms for protection, nor to hiding deeper truths behind a screen of superficial conversation.

To participate in the sharing without a real desire to let others come to know us is a bit like going to the doctor and not telling him what ails us. Love only flourishes in truth. It cannot stand lies. People cannot truly meet if they are wearing masks. They do meet in the humility and

simplicity of the defenseless. We must be able to admit to the Team our mistakes, our inconstancy, our cowardice.

This sharing, however, is not a confession. We must not tell all, but simply comment on our failures as they relate to the attitudes the endeavors call us to assimilate. Sometimes it can be painful and difficult. It takes courage and humility. The understanding and solidarity of each Team member in this journey of conversion can only produce renewed hope. We bear with one another's weaknesses, and we are strengthened by one another's strengths.

Love impels us to a deeper knowledge of the beloved, seeking what is good and seeking to transform by love what is not good. This is true, both in relationship to ourselves and to others. It means knowing ourselves better and better, accepting ourselves with simplicity and good humor, letting others get to know us — which is the best way to give ourselves — and making a loving effort to come to know and understand the others. In order to understand the others and enable them to give themselves to us as they speak, each Team member must acquire the *ability to listen*. An atmosphere of listening and acceptance can transform the sharing into a dynamic source for growth.

In establishing intimate relationships, we cannot be mysterious sphinxes to others. A “true” presence is needed. Truth is not mutual admiration or automatic excuses. *Truth begins with self-knowledge*, evaluating one's own capabilities, assuming responsibility for one's own life. Truth is not evading one's problems or always finding excuses to justify one's omissions: “If I weren't in this situation...,” or “If my husband, my wife, my children were more...”

Others can help us learn the truth about ourselves, even though, at times, they may do so less tactfully than we would wish. Nevertheless, we must learn not to overreact emotionally to others' remarks, nor to take them literally, but to ponder them in our heart as we try to discover the truth they may contain. True sharing does not make us feel psychologically guilty. Spiritually, true sharing increases our trust in the Lord.

It is like a trampoline from which initiatives in discernment and hope spring.

3. A Life of Encounter and Communion

We have already said that the sharing on the endeavors is not an occasion for joking or irony. It should not leave us feeling guilty or condemned, nor should we feel that the others are indifferent when we speak.

The first encounter we make in sharing is to savor the love of God. Since much of our human experience is centered on conditional love, it is difficult for us to know God's unconditional love for us. Yet, this is the love with which we are graced and which we, in turn, must strive to show our fellow Team members. Throughout the Gospel, Jesus insists that we must reform our lives if we are to enter into a loving relationship with God and with our neighbor.

To experience communion when sharing on the endeavors means to open ourselves to others, to listen with both our heart and mind, to try to understand and respect the one who is sharing, to answer truthfully, and to confide in others.

A living, lasting encounter requires *dynamic* partners. To live is to grow, go through crises, mature, overcome obstacles, and grow closer to others by listening, loving, encouraging, accepting and suffering. To live is not to stagnate but to act, to move forward, to dialogue, to open ourselves to others and not be merely spectators.

The Team must also ensure that the necessary balance exists between *acceptance* and *constructive criticism*. We cannot be harder on others than we are on ourselves. Nevertheless, we must invite each Team member to press on, not through harassment but through suggestions and encouragement. The notion of constructive criticism is absolutely fundamental if there is to be growth — of individuals or of couples — within the Team, but it must be linked to the idea of individual integrity. The individuals and couples who make up the Team are different. To avoid holding anyone back, the Team must agree that each person will “*walk at his or her own pace.*”

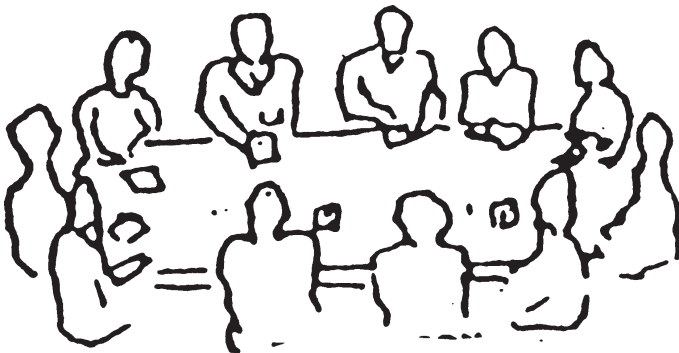
We need to respect the calls others may hear and their freedom to act upon them. Remember that human nature does not leap forward. Great conversions are rare. Our growth is generally slow; we experience springs and winters, pauses, prunings, and blossomings. At times, we may even be planted on hard ground, but then, when we least expect it, the seeds that needed water and warmth begin to germinate.

To live in communion is to live in love: to learn to look on others lovingly and discover in them countless reasons for praise. When we experience communion in the sharing of the endeavors, we live the present moment intensely. We lovingly accept those present. We take joy in the encounter, and we respond to whatever it awakens in us.

“The whole Church is obliged to a deep reflection and commitment ... What is needed is a continuous, permanent conversion which, while requiring an interior detachment from every evil and an adherence to good in its fullness, is brought about concretely in steps which lead us ever forward.”

Pope John Paul II

Familiaris Consortio, par. 8 and 9



III

THE PRACTICE OF SHARING

WHAT TO SHARE?

Simply sharing on whether we fulfill our commitments or not may be acceptable when a Team is new and its members are still mere acquaintances. However, later on, such sharing will seem shallow, and may actually impoverish the Team. Moreover, as we change in life, so also will the commitments we adopt. When a Team has coalesced and mutual knowledge has deepened, the sharing must also be done in a deeper way. We must and can share with the others on the “spirit” behind the endeavors. This sharing can be formulated in many ways.

- What was the quality of our relationship with God during the month?
- How did we live that relationship?
- What helped us the most?
- Did a passage we read or a comment we heard especially strike us?
- What was the subject of our sit-down, and how did we help each other?
- What criteria did we take into account in revising our rule of life?
- How did we determine which personality trait we needed to work on, and around which our rule of life must be centered?
- Has our rule of life been useful?
- Have we kept—or forgotten—the resolutions we made at our last retreat?
- What constitutes an obstacle to our resolutions? Do we have difficulty in accomplishing one or another of the endeavors?
- How can the other Team members help us?
- Have we taken any steps forward that we can share?

- What is keeping us from progressing?
- What can we change in ourselves?
- What seems insurmountable?

During the sharing each couple explains whether or not they have carried out the efforts suggested by the endeavors with a view towards changing their attitudes. Special emphasis may be placed on particular endeavors that the Team may have decided to work on at the previous meeting, but these are always approached from the broader perspective of:

- perseverance in seeking the will of God,
- a constant search for truth, and
- the desire for encounter and community.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

The type of questions we ask ourselves when approaching the sharing on the endeavors will play a very important role in helping us to share more deeply and avoid pat answers.

- How did I live my search for the will of God during the past month? What did I discover?

- As I read or heard the Word of God this month, what phrase or passage particularly struck me and why? Was it because of my present situation, or because it called or questioned me, or because it gave me peace?

- Hearing God’s Word is not simply reading it; there is more to it than that. How have I “savored” or meditated on His word? What kind of response did it awaken in me?

- What kind of conjugal or family prayer did we have this month? Which do we find easier to do together? Did we persevere in praying, no matter how short the prayer? What aspect of our life was transformed by it?

- What was my greatest difficulty concerning personal prayer? Was it setting aside the time, or putting aside distractions so that I encountered the Lord and not myself? Am I able to silence my inner self?

- Have I (or have we) tried to live all our encounters in truth (the sit-down, personal prayer, conjugal prayer)?

- What was the subject of our sit-down (if it is not something too personal to share)? Was I able to express myself truthfully and truthfully encounter my spouse? Did I feel accepted? Am I able to recognize my share of responsibility for our conflicts? What steps forward did we take? What sign (object, gesture) did we use to show God's presence?

- What personality trait did I work on in my rule of life? How did I choose it? What helped me determine the area that needed attention? Do I plan to continue working on it? Could the Team members help me come to a better understanding of what my rule of life should be?

- What did the last retreat reveal to us about the will of God? What made the greatest impression on us? What were our feelings at the end of the retreat?

These questions—and many others like them—can help us make the endeavors our own. It is the job of the **Responsible Couple**, with the help of the priest, when present, to guide and develop the sharing through pertinent questioning. This must be done with sensitivity, careful listening, understanding, and constancy. The sharing on the endeavors is a unique occasion where perseverance, discernment, and truth are found.

Through sharing we come to realize that *spirituality becomes incarnate in the concrete circumstances of life*, but we also discover that different dimensions of our life are in opposition to each other. We must assume responsibility for this opposition, convinced that, in spite of everything, the Holy Spirit is at work within us for our own good.

During the sharing, with the help of the Team couples and the priest, each member tries to achieve a *reconciliation*, a *unification* for which he or she is striving but which only God can fully accomplish: a unity between body and spirit, self and the world, design and desire, creature and Creator.



IV

WHEN AND HOW TO DO THE SHARING

Sharing on the endeavors resembles both the pooling and the prayer part of the meeting. It possesses the dynamics of the pooling and it needs to take place in a prayerful atmosphere.

Each Team decides when and how the sharing on the endeavors will take place during the meeting. This decision is not made once and for all but will be modified as conditions within the Team change over time.

Nevertheless, what follows is some advice that may be useful:

- It is possible each month to share in depth on just one of the endeavors and in a broader way on the others; or the sharing may cover all the endeavors each time. It can also be good for one couple each month to share more deeply while the others share in a more general way.

- It is extremely important that each person gets a turn to speak and that the others listen attentively. However, there is no dialogue if the one who is sharing is the only one to speak. The members, who really have something to contribute, should do so, even though not all need to feel obliged to respond. The Responsible Couple's role as moderator of this dialogue is very important, as is that of the spiritual counselor in bringing up essential points, in providing help and encouragement, and in guiding the Team's discernment. During the sharing on the endeavors, these responses are to be made in an atmosphere of prayer and never lightly or frivolously.

- The appropriate time for sharing on the endeavors is after the prayer and deep pooling parts of the meeting because the sharing will benefit from and extend the prevailing atmosphere of meditation. We are in the presence of God. He alone can make our efforts bear fruit, give

meaning to our failures, and forgive our weaknesses. He gave us our Team companions, who desire to help us, as well as, desire to receive our help. Together, we are striving to incarnate His Spirit in our actions and behavior.

Again, the sharing on the endeavors is neither a “brotherly admonition” nor a “communal examination of conscience.” It should be a time of forgiveness and reconciliation, discernment and support, when we accept without bitterness the fact that each of us is different and that each moves forward at a different pace in response to the Spirit’s call. It is a time for each person to acquire a clearer self-knowledge, and a time to demonstrate a Christian affection for one another. It should also be a time that encourages each one of us to avail ourselves of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



V

WAYS TO REVITALIZE THE SHARING

Below are some ideas that have already been put into practice and may help to revitalize the sharing, but the list is not exhaustive. The creativity of each Team will give rise to many other helps.

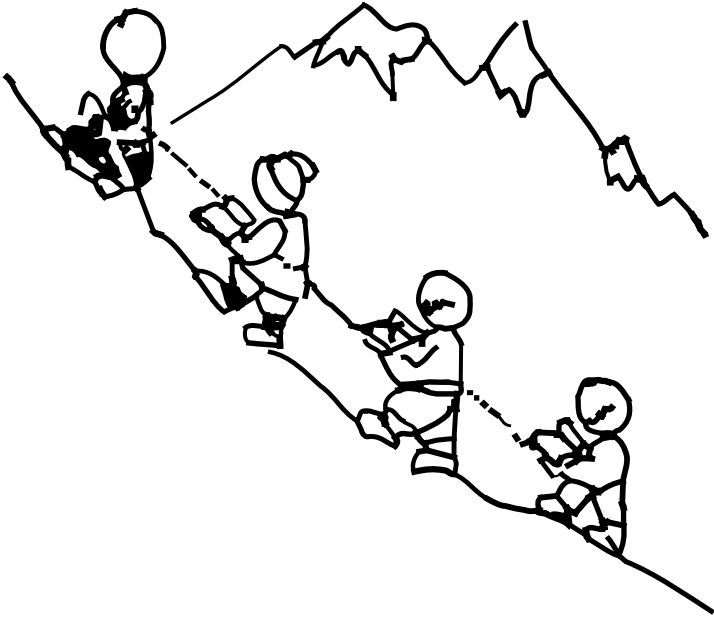
- Before the meeting, prepare for the sharing on the endeavors as a couple, as if it were the study topic. The Responsible Couple certainly needs to prepare ahead of time by deciding when the sharing will take place, which endeavors will be discussed in depth, what kind of questions ought to be asked, etc. In this way, the meeting will gain in truth, sensitivity, and time.

- Once every two years, let the sharing on the endeavors be the main topic of reflection at a Team meeting.

- At all Team training and enrichment sessions and Sector or Regional events, emphasize the importance of the sharing on the endeavors.

- Encourage Team spiritual counselors to deepen their understanding of the sharing on the endeavors and then promote it within the Team.

All those who have a responsibility in the Movement should work together to assimilate the spirit of the sharing on the endeavors and should be able to give good reasons for its fundamental importance. In addition, the sharing should be a mandatory subject at any training session open to all Teams couples, until the effects of a revitalization can be felt throughout the Movement. In essence what makes Teams unique as a Movement of spirituality is our sharing on the endeavors.



*Working together we can
achieve our goal.*

VI

CONCLUSION

Two vital elements of our Movement are **prayer** and a search for deeper **communion with God and with one another**. Both elements are present in all parts of the meeting and in all the endeavors. They bring us out of ourselves and bring about inner changes motivated by love.

These two elements of the Team Movement first of all serve to reveal us to ourselves. At some point in life, each of us comes to a cross-road. We can choose the road of non-responsibility that leads us to blame others and attribute to them the responsibility for our attitudes and reactions; that is, we lay the blame for our actions or non actions on the people we meet along the way, on our nature, on our present situation, on the weather, or even on our horoscope. This road comes to a dead end, and leads us to the vain longing for “*what might have been.*”

On the other hand, we can choose instead the road of conversion and of accepting *the truth about ourselves*. We cannot change others or the world, but we can change ourselves, through reflection, communication, effort, and prayer. We can search out the root of our problems, not to condemn ourselves, but to strive for dynamic growth.

This type of conversion is, above all, a faith experience, that is, grace working within us. The methods offered by Teams—the endeavors, as well as, the various parts of the meeting—are designed to open us up to the working of grace, through prayer and communion with one another and with God.

The methods adopted by Teams did not come about accidentally or arbitrarily. The selection of one method over another implies an underlying philosophy: that the choice of appropriate tools makes every

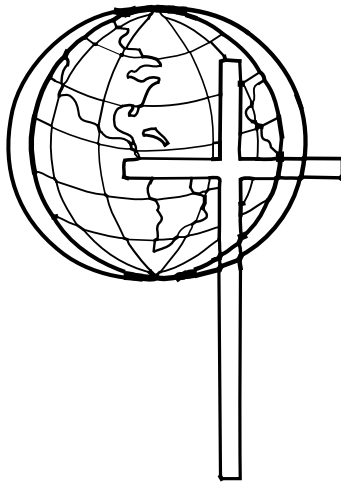
task easier. One does not dig a tunnel with a spoon, nor plant a rosebush with a bulldozer.

The road of conversion that facilitates our encounter with the Lord must lead us gradually yet firmly, provoke inner reflection, and build community.

We can change, as individuals and as couples, with the help of prayer — as we listen to and meditate on the Word of God; as we devote ourselves to personal, conjugal and family prayer; as we gather to pray as a Team, and as we go on our annual retreats. We can become paradigms of communion for each other, in Teams and in the world, with the help of encounters such as the sit-down, the pooling, the sharing on the endeavors, and the discussion of the study topic.

Developing a spirit of prayer and an ability to communicate, expanding our self-knowledge, learning to respect others and to affirm their worth, increasing our desire for communion with those around us, all these—thanks to the methods offered by Teams—will lead us to be Christ-like and a steadfast and hope-filled presence in the world.

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to
the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is
now, and ever shall be world without end.
Amen*



love to reveal “My Love”

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