

Teams of Our Lady

# Magnificat

USA NEWSLETTER

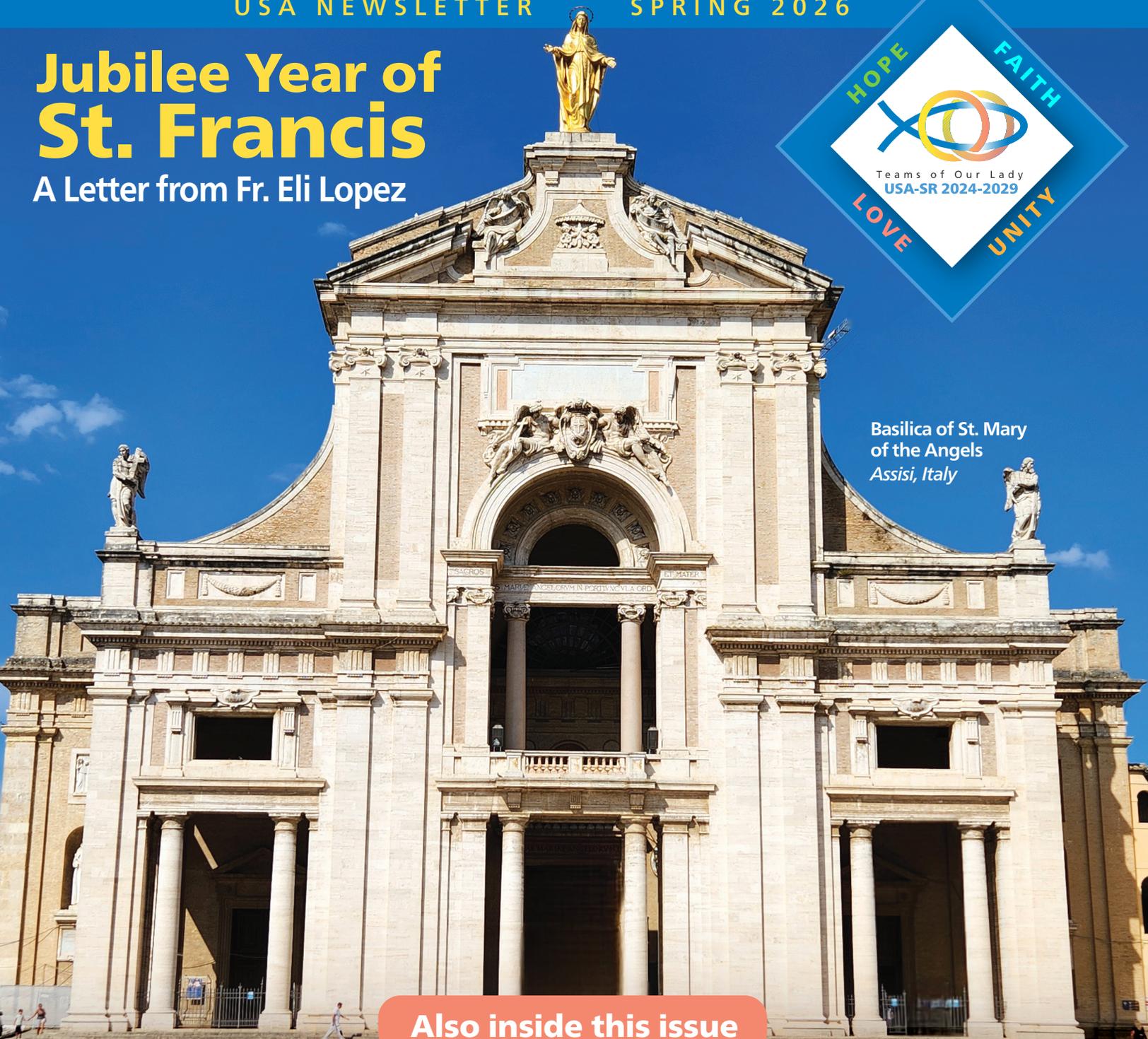
SPRING 2026

## Jubilee Year of St. Francis

A Letter from Fr. Eli Lopez



Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels  
Assisi, Italy



Also inside this issue

2025 Financial Report | Building & Re-Building Teams | Tech Talk  
Endeavors Encouragement Corner: Conjugal & Family Prayer

# Prayer for the Jubilee Year of St. Francis

Pope Leo XIV provided this prayer to be said often this year!

## Prayer to Saint Francis for Peace

Saint Francis, our brother, you who eight hundred years ago went to meet Sister Death as a man at peace, intercede for us before the Lord.

You recognized true peace in the Crucifix of San Damiano, teach us to seek in Him the source of all reconciliation that breaks down every wall.

You who, unarmed, crossed the lines of war and misunderstanding, give us the courage to build bridges where the world raises up boundaries.

In this time afflicted by conflict and division, intercede for us so that we may become peacemakers: unarmed and disarming witnesses of the peace that comes from Christ. *Amen*



Leo P.P. XIV



# Greetings from the Gehrts

## Greetings and hope of peace to our fellow Teams members in the USA Super Region!

Commemorating the 800th year of the death of St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Leo XIV has declared from January 10, 2026, to January 10, 2027, the **Year of St. Francis**. This year will focus on becoming **models of holiness and witnesses of peace**. Pope Leo encourages us to imitate St. Francis' spirit of poverty, peace, and love for creation. This solemn rite was celebrated in the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels, at the Portiuncula.

In July 2024, we had the great blessing of taking a pilgrimage through parts of Italy which included Assisi. When we arrived that evening in Assisi, we were tired and weary. When we stepped off our bus, we felt an **immediate, profound peace**. The cover picture is of the Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels at the foothills of Assisi that houses the Portiuncula. Upon entering the Portiuncula, we experienced profound peace and humility that brought us to tears. **We were immersed in the spirit of poverty, peace, and love for creation.**

In Assisi, photography is not allowed inside the churches. You must use your God-given senses to immerse yourself in the lives of St. Francis, St. Clare, and now St. Carlo Acutis. These saints serve as witnesses to us in so many ways to encourage us to become models of holiness and witnesses of peace. We were especially amazed by the acts of repentance and obedience of St. Francis.

In a similar way, Team members witness to each other each time we gather together in prayer and share our life happenings and our experience with practicing the Endeavors. We challenge each other to grow in holiness through mutual aid and encouragement. We witness how we live and express what is important to us and how God is speaking to us.

We were struck by this witness when we visited Virginia this past fall. Our host couple welcomed us with open arms and definitely witnessed to us their love of creation through their own conservation efforts. If you want to hear more about this, **please use the QR code to access a video**. Thank you, Tom and Janet, for witnessing to us! Thank all of you, for witnessing to one another in your team meetings! May we together pray for the peace that St. Francis helps us to reflect upon this year and continue to witness to others.

**Greg & Melanie Gehrt**  
USA Super Region Responsible Couple  
Cypress TX 01



Scan to watch the video

# From our USA Spiritual Counselor

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Teams of Our Lady,

Grace and peace to you in this graced Jubilee Year! As your Spiritual Counselor for the United States, my heart overflows with joy as we journey together through the **Eighth Centenary of the Death of Saint Francis of Assisi** (January 10, 2026 – January 10, 2027). This holy time invites us to rediscover the Poverello's radical Gospel love—**poverty, fraternity, prayer, and peace**—and weave it into the heart of your charism: sanctifying marriage and family life through contemplative prayer and mutual support. Founded by **Fr. Henri Caffarel**, the Teams movement calls couples to holiness in their covenant, drawing strength from the Eucharist as the **"source of Christian marriage."** Let Francis, who lived in intimate union with Christ, inspire your teams to become **radiant domestic churches, infused with his spirit.**

## Renewing Your Teams Through Franciscan Poverty and Simplicity

Saint Francis's poverty of spirit frees us for deeper love, echoing the Church's wisdom that true matrimonial consent requires discretion and the capacity to embrace essential obligations. In your monthly team meetings and pilot couples' formation, embrace simplicity:

- **Review family budgets prayerfully**, detaching from consumerism to prioritize generosity in welcoming life and sharing with the needy, as Francis did in his **"perfect joy."**
- **Simplify home altars** with the **Canticle of the Creatures**, teaching children gratitude for God's gifts in creation and family.

This mirrors the **personal intimacy with Jesus Christ, sustained by prayer and the Eucharist**, vital for your witness to the Beatitudes.

## Fostering Fraternity in Marriage and Community

Your teams already embody **community life at the heart of consecrated life**—vowed commitment shared in spiritual, liturgical, and social experiences. Francis's brotherhood calls you to:

- **Deepen spousal and team bonds** through forgiveness and dialogue, **seeing Christ in one another**, especially amid trials like secularization or family struggles.
- **Form "Franciscan family circles"** in parishes: Invite divorced or struggling couples for prayer evenings, building **exemplary communities** within the Church.

## Prayer and Eucharist: Franciscan Wellsprings for Couples

Francis's life was **unceasing prayer**, uniting him to **Christ's Paschal Mystery**—perfect for your **Eucharistic spirituality**.

"The different phases of the Eucharistic liturgy invite married couples to live their marital and family life after the example of that of Christ, who gives himself to human beings out of love." -St. John Paul II

- **Integrate Francis's prayers** (e.g., Prayer Before the Crucifix) into team liturgies and Sunday Mass preparation.
- **Organize Jubilee retreats**, contemplating Mary, who introduces us to Christ's Offering. (Adapted to Franciscan spirit.)

## Service to the Poor: Families as Mercy in Action

**Pope Leo XIV's *Dilexi te*** urges loving the poor as the **hallmark of holiness**. Francis's closeness to lepers challenges your families to:

- **Adopt mercy projects**: Visit shelters or migrants as teams, blending almsgiving with justice, teaching children **Christ's love**.
- **Host "poor suppers"** at home, sharing meals and stories, fostering peacemaking amid division.

## A Personal Invitation from Your Spiritual Counselor

My dear teams, this Jubilee is your kairos moment! After Lent's call to conversion, let Francis's joy renew your covenants. I commit to supporting you through prayer and guidance. Together, proclaim marriage as **Good News**: total, unique, indissoluble love mirroring God's covenant. I entrust you to Our Lady of the Magnificat and St. Francis. May the Lord grant you peace in homes, teams, and hearts.



In Christ,

**Fr. Elias Lopez**

*USA Super Region Spiritual Counselor*

*fr.eli.lopez@allsaintscatholic.us*

# 2025 Annual Report for TEAMS

**“Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do.”**

— 1 Thessalonians 5:11



**Jeff and Denise Standley,**  
*Secretariat Couple*



**Rick and Carol Fishbune**  
*Treasurer/Finance Couple*

## BUILDING...

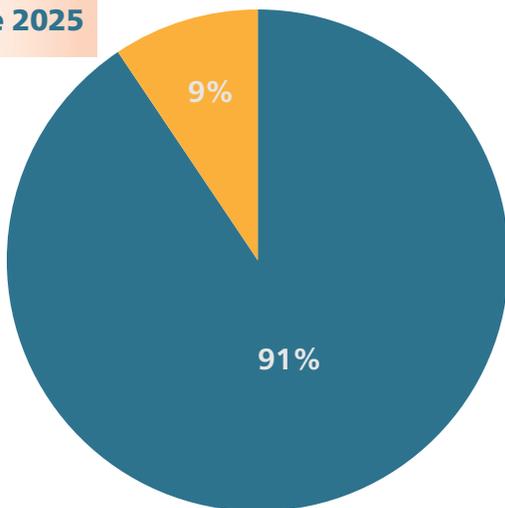
This is what we do and who we are as Teams of Our Lady. In Teams, we are builders of one another’s faith life with mutual aid, encouragement and witness. As we have received from the Movement this encouragement to BUILD our sacramental marriage the fullest, we must also give. As one of our membership responsibilities, we are asked to contribute annually to the Movement. The suggestion is one day’s wage. We, as a Movement, must think about

## ...BUILDING

**Thank you for your generous support of the USA-SR this past year. We were able to build in wonderful ways. Examples include:**

- Trained over 60 Sector and Region Responsible Couples in June 2025 at Sector Couple Experience at Three Rivers, CA
- Began piloting in French in the USA-SR
- Welcomed 23 Teams from Laredo, Texas into the USA Super Region from the Hispano America-North Super Region
- Launched the new website and membership database for the USA-SR with expanded resources available in the member portal. (Make sure you have signed in to have access.)
- National training opportunities for Team Responsible Couples, Pilot Couples, Information Couples, and Liaison Couples

### Income 2025



### INCOME

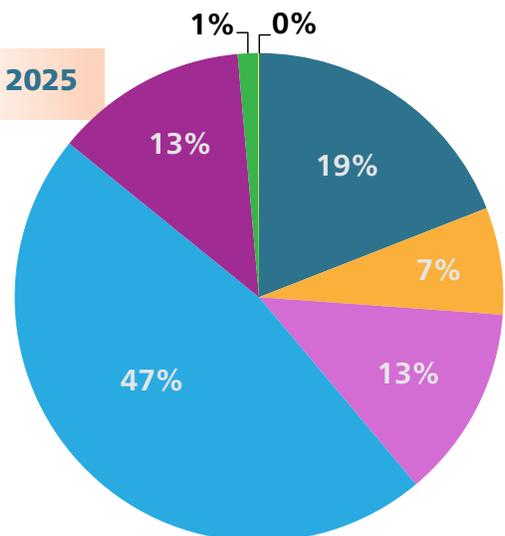
|                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Contributions Received  | \$ 283,916        |
| Interest & Non-Donation | \$ 29,483         |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>     | <b>\$ 313,399</b> |

### EXPENSES

|                                     |                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| USA Contributions to Int’l Movement | \$ 71,570         |
| Website & Computer                  | \$ 26,621         |
| Printing of Teams Materials         | \$ 47,899         |
| Meetings & Training*                | \$ 176,331        |
| Postage of Teams Materials          | \$ 47,899         |
| Donation Processing & Bank Fees     | \$ 5,009          |
| Other                               | \$ 245            |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>               | <b>\$ 375,574</b> |

\* In 2025, the Meetings & Training expenses increased due to a Sector Couple Experience meeting held to gather and train all new Sector Couples in the US. This type of training is provided by the USA-Super Region every other year.

### Expenses 2025



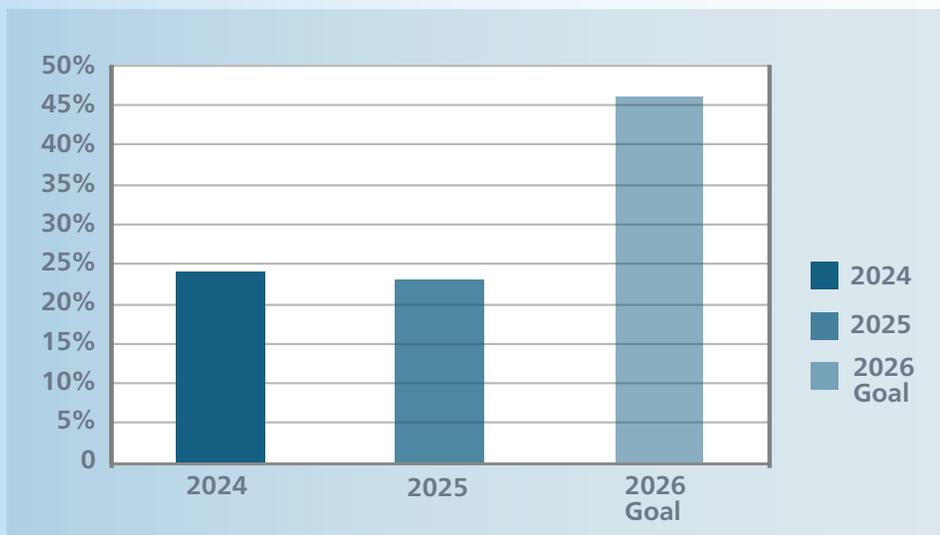
## Together we can BUILD. We all must work together! Let us begin today!

- Two (2) *Magnificat* issues printed and mailed each year **\$5.32 / year / couple**
- Other printing and mailing of Miscellaneous Pamphlets, Materials, etc. **\$4.92 / year / couple**
- Printing and mailing of Pilot Materials **\$4.67 / year / couple**
- Printing and mailing of yearly study topic (based on pre-order requests) **\$4.43 / year / couple**
- Website subscriptions **\$4.31 / year / couple**
- Avg cost of travel for Super Region Team to meet twice a year in person **\$1.74 / year / couple**
- Avg cost of travel to send one (1) Sector Responsible Couple to training **\$1,600**
- Avg cost of food for a Regional College **\$750**
- Avg cost of printing and mailing an Endeavor booklet set to one (1) couple **\$30**

**“A movement declines toward death when its members stop thinking like builders and start thinking like tenants.”**

*–Fr. Henri Caffarel, Founder, Teams of Our Lady*

## Percent of Membership Contributing



**In 2024**, only 24% of the Couples in the Movement in the USA-SR contributed to the BUILDING of the Movement.

**In 2025**, that number dropped to 23% of the Couples in the Movement contributed to the BUILDING of the Movement.

### **Contributions GOAL for 2026:**

Let's increase this participation in the Movement from 23% of couples contributing financially to 46%. We need more builders to continue to grow the Movement in the USA-SR.

# North Province

Central | Lake Michigan  
Midwest | North Central

**Mark & Patty Conway**  
*Responsible Couple  
for the North Province*



Scan the QR code  
to read their special  
testimony

## Central Region



### Cedar Falls, IA

The Cedar Falls Iowa sector held their annual sector picnic at Pfeiffer Park on August 25 with nearly 100 people including children attending. The event was coordinated by the new sector couple Dan & Clara Nehmer.



### Des Moines, IA

Des Moines IA 06 and Frankfurt KS 01 both attended the St. Benedict Center in Schuyler, Nebraska for their annual team retreat. Father Mauritius Wilde, Director of the Retreat Center in Rome, Italy, presented a program on "To Love and To be Loved". Both teams were able to build community after the day's programs and enjoy a great time together.



### Marshalltown, IA

Rashidi & Salima (far left) are pictured with their new team, Marshalltown IA 03. Rashidi & Salima were members of Teams in Africa and are now thrilled to find this new team in Iowa after more than 10 years without Teams in a refugee camp. Rashidi and Salima also translated the USA-SR Piloting Book into French for future French speaking teams in the USA.



### Omaha, NE

The Sector family picnic was held October 12 at Cottonwood Park. The event included a potluck lunch, games, and raffle prizes along with socializing.

# Lake Michigan Region

## Detroit, MI

Both sectors Detroit MI A and Detroit MI B gathered for a combined Sector Day on October 11, 2025.



## Indianapolis, IN

Deacon Rick & Andy Rader, Lake Michigan Region RC, installed Jeff & Tami Scott as the new Indianapolis IN Sector Responsible Couple. Jeff & Tami have been members of Teams of Our Lady for 10 years and will bring an exciting dynamic to the Indianapolis IN Sector. Pictured are Deacon Rick & Andy, Deacon Rick Renzi from St. Malachy, and Tami & Jeff.



# North Central Region

## Rochester, MN

Miguel & Cindy Paz, Rochester MN 08, were installed as the new Rochester MN Sector Responsible Couple in August 2025. Fr. John Sauer, Spiritual Counselor for Teams, provided a blessing for Miguel & Cindy during the installation.



## Rochester, MN

The Rochester MN Sector held its annual Chaplain Appreciation Dinner on October 22, 2025, at St. Pius X Catholic Church. This event recognized the gift that Spiritual Counselors and Spiritual Advisors are to base teams. A catered dinner was enjoyed, a letter from Fr. Eli Lopez, USA-SR Spiritual Counselor, was given to each Chaplain along with a small gift, a few rounds of reverse Bingo were played, and a good time for socialization was had by all. Thanks to Rochester MN 27 for coordinating the event and to Miguel & Cindy Paz for their Sector RC leadership.

Please email your prayer requests to [prayer@teamsfourlady.org](mailto:prayer@teamsfourlady.org). When submitting a prayer request, please include your name and first initial of last name. These petitions will be distributed to our subscribed prayer warriors across the USA Super Region.

If you would like to sign-up to join our prayer warriors from across our USA Super Region who are offering up prayer for the intentions and petitions received, please email us at and we will add you to the distribution list. We send out prayer petitions on a weekly or as needed basis. We would love to add more prayer warriors!

## Prayer Petitions & Intentions

Art and Cathy Beccard, *Prayer Couple for USA Super Region*

Are you in need of additional prayer warriors?

Do you have intentions or petitions that you would like to share?

Email us! [prayer@teamsfourlady.org](mailto:prayer@teamsfourlady.org)

**Luie & Ana Nunes**  
*Responsible Couple  
for the West Province*



Scan the QR code  
to read their special  
testimony

## Western Region

The Western Region gathered on November 8, 2025 for a day of reflection and community. The theme for the day was "Marriage: Love & Life in God's Divine Plan" with over one hundred people in attendance. Couples could attend either the English or Portuguese talks. Fr. Bill Lucido led the English talks and Fr. Dan Avila led the Portuguese. Couples had the opportunity to share in small groups, build community during lunch, participate in a sit down, and end the day with Mass. Thanks to the Fresno CA Sector for hosting the event this year.



Group that attended Regional Day with Fr. Bill Lucido (left) and Fr. Dan Avila (right).



Thank you to all the outgoing couples who have served for the past three years and have done an amazing job.

We pray for the newly installed Sector RCs.

Pictured from left to right: Luie & Ana Nunes (West Province RC), Mike & Camille Popp (Western Region RC), Sara & Frank Madruga (new Turlock CA 2 Sector RC), Fr. Dan Avila (Teams Spiritual Counselor), Paul & Iria Nunes (outgoing Turlock CA 3 Sector RC), Fatima & Justin Gioletti (new Turlock CA 3 Sector RC), Bernadete & Manuel Azevedo (new Hanford CA Portuguese Sector RC), and Osvalda & Adao Fernandes (outgoing Hanford CA Sector RC). (Not pictured are the Turlock CA 2 Sector RC, Adrian & Lynette Silva).



Sector Responsible Couples that attended along with the Western Region RC, Mike and Camille Popp (left) and the West Province RC, Luie and Ana Nunes (right).



The Portuguese speaking group.

## Boise, ID

Boise ID couples were invited to join together and attend the Idaho Catholic Marriage Conference held in October 2025. Attended by couples from the Boise Sector as well as Luie and Ana Nunes, West Province Responsible Couple. Speakers at the event included Scott & Kimberly Hahn, Christopher & Wendy West, and Johnny & Lorissa Horn. The Theme for the Conference was "Anchored In Hope." The attendees thoroughly enjoyed the entire conference.



L to R: Marcie Brooks, Nicki Carlson, Dave Brooks, (all Boise ID 04) and Ana & Luie Nunes (West Province Responsible Couple)



Nicole Sanchez (along with her husband Victor), Boise ID 04, venerating a relic of the "True Cross." Nicole & Victor are past Boise Sector Responsible Couple.



Rob & Sharla Walsh, Boise ID 04, with Christopher West



Scott & Maghan Fleischman (Spokane WA 01) with Sr. Mary Of The Humble Heart Of Jesus presenting in the background.

## Spokane WA Pre-Sector

A retreat was held at St. Mary's Parish in Spokane Valley on November 8, 2025. Speakers included Father David Gaines (Spiritual Counselor for Spokane WA 01) and Sister Mary of the Humble Heart of Jesus, ER. DIO. The retreat theme was "The Rule Of Life". The day began with Holy Mass, followed by an introduction of the Teams of Our Lady Booklet on "The Rule of Life", then a talk by Sister Mary titled, "Simplicity and Clarity, As A Way of Holiness". Afterwards a time for reflection between spouses was available. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Confession brought the group back together and Father Gaines provided a second talk with questions for the couples to share on. The day ended with a social in the Parish Hall.

## Become An Intercessor

Arnold and Annette Canales, *Intercessor Liaison Couple*

Over 60 years ago, Fr. Caffarel called Teams of Our Lady couples to become intercessors. Intercessors are people of prayer. We are poor, but Jesus and Mary answer our prayers and come to the aid of those we entrust to them. We commit to giving some of our time and ourselves to pray for the Teams Movement to be authentic, and to continue its mission of spreading the good news of Catholic Marriage throughout the world.

Consider signing up to become an intercessor. We would love nothing more than to have more couples from our Super Region sign-up to become intercessors. The time commitment is just one hour each month. Can you and your spouse spend one hour each month devoted to prayer for the Teams of Our Lady Movement? Please sign-up!



Scan the QR code to sign-up on the website

# South Province

West TX/New Mexico  
North TX/Oklahoma | East TX  
Louisiana/Arkansas | Southeast



**Fabio & Camila Cristino**  
*Responsible Couple  
for the South Province*



← Scan the QR code  
to read their special  
testimonies

## East Texas Region

### Kingwood TX

On January 18, 2026, a new East Texas Region Responsible Couple, Nick & Joannah Landry of Kingwood TX 17 (far right), were installed at Christ the Redeemer Chapel in Houston, TX. It was a true blessing to be surrounded by couples from the Houston, Cypress, and Kingwood Sectors. Thank you, Steve & Lori Hesse (far left) for your four years of generous service, dedication, and love for Teams.



### Cypress TX

On October 19, 2025, a new Cypress Sector Responsible Couple, Tom & Amy Palmisano of Cypress TX 09, were installed at Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church in Houston, TX.

### East TX Summit

On October 18, 2025, the East Texas Region came together for a Summit. Participants from several different Sectors shared important information, enjoyed games and group activities, were deeply moved by videos and testimonies, and prayed inspired by the spirit of Father Caffarel. The group remembered why they chose to walk with Christ and within Teams of Our Lady.

## North Texas/Oklahoma Region



### Frisco TX

The Frisco TX Sector held an Advent event on December 13, 2025, organized by the Sector RC, Jim & Suzanne Kramer, at Holy Cross Catholic Church.

# Southeast Region



## Ocean Springs MS

In April 2025, Robbie & Roxie Stewart moved to Ocean Springs, MS from Monroe, LA. Looking for a new team, they agreed to be a Pilot Couple. There was so much interest, they are now piloting two new teams. In September, the first two teams in the state of Mississippi were formed!



## Ave Maria FL

First team in Ave Maria, FL: John & Beth Mortensen have been involved in Teams for 20 years beginning in Austria. Their new home is now in Ave Maria and they are piloting a new team, Ave Maria FL 01. Thank you John & Beth for your service and welcome to this new team!



## Orlando FL

Orlando FL is now a sector with five established teams in this area! On August 27, 2025, Anthony & Allie Cota of Orlando FL 01 were installed as the first Sector Responsible Couple. Thank you Anthony & Allie for paving the way for the Orlando Sector!



## Pinellas FL

On November 9, 2025, the new Pinellas FL Sector Responsible Couple, Dana and Tom Hurak of Palm Harbor FL 04, were installed at St. Ignatius of Antioch Catholic Church in Tarpon Springs, FL.



## Miami FL

Congratulations to the first Brazilian, Portuguese speaking team within the Miami FL Sector, Miami FL 08P! The pilot process began in September 2025 with five couples and Gustavo & Luciana Aguiar as the Pilot Couple. The Aguiars, who, through their journey with Teams in Canada, never gave up on promoting and forming a team in their new country and parish.



## Hillsborough FL

On August 9, 2025, the Hillsborough FL Sector welcomed their new Sector Responsible Couple, Alex & Vilma Gonzalez from Carrollwood FL 09S. Rev. Higinio Rosolen is the new Sector Spiritual Counselor. Thank you to the outgoing Sector RC, Gil & Valerie Morales of South Tampa FL 01 for an amazing 3 years and to Fr. Mike Muir for his service as the outgoing Sector Spiritual Counselor.

# Louisiana/Arkansas Region



## Plaucheville LA

On January 4, 2026, Mark & Karen Gremillion of Plaucheville LA 01 were installed as the new Responsible Couple of the Louisiana / Arkansas Region at Mater Dolorosa Church in Plaucheville, LA. Thank you to Larry & Charla Macicek of

Lafayette LA 02 for their years of service to this Region. Before this installation, a commitment ceremony of all couples in the Plaucheville LA Sector took place!



A warm welcome to the newest teams in this Region, Plaucheville LA 05 and Lafayette LA 04!



# West Texas/NM Region



## San Antonio TX

With great joy, we announce the first Spanish-speaking team in San Antonio, San Antonio TX 53S! Thank you to Hugo & Katia Guerra, Responsible Couple for the West Texas / NM Region, for piloting this new team. When love and service to God know no limits, wonderful things happen!



## Laredo TX

The Annual Responsible Couples Meeting, organized by Laredo TX Sectors A and B, took place on September 6, 2025. The event brought together the responsible couples from 23 Teams. With great joy, Greg & Melanie Gehrt, as well as Hugo & Katia Guerra, were able to attend and participate in this opportunity for shared learning and exchange. Congratulations to the Sector RCs, Adrian Flores & Sonia Sosa and Mario & Ana Lucia Garcia, for your wonderful work and leadership!



# East Province

Coastal | Lake Erie  
Mid-Atlantic  
New England

**Joe & Michelle Lawler**  
*Responsible Couple  
for the East Province*



← Scan the QR code to read their special testimony

## Coastal Region



### Berryville, VA

On November 8, 2025, a New Teams Welcome Celebration was held at St. Bridget of Ireland Catholic Church in Berryville, VA. Nearly 40 couples attended the event celebrating the new teams in the area that have just completed piloting. Fr. Stephen Vaccaro opened the day with a lively discussion on the importance of having a spiritual counselor on the base team.

To hear a portion of Fr. Vaccaros' message, scan the QR code.



### Raleigh, NC

The Raleigh NC Sector held their third annual Epiphany party attended by 34 team members and their families. The youngest children sit under the table and announce who gets the next piece of almond galette. One lucky person has a nativity figure hidden in their piece and is royalty for the day. Jim Martinec read the story of the Magi from the Gospel of Matthew.

## Mid-Atlantic Region



### Newark, NJ

On November 9, 2025, Dario & Carmen Canal, Mid-Atlantic Region RC, installed Angelica & Anderson Chivalski, Newark NJ 04P, as the new Newark NJ Portuguese Sector Responsible Couple at St. James Church. A visiting priest from Brazil was present for the installation along with several couples from the Newark NJ Portuguese Sector.

## Recharging and Renewing in Faith and Community Experience



Teams of Our Lady Trinidad and Tobago, host bi-annual retreats as part of our regular commitment to enriching our marriage spirituality within the Movement. This past year, as we are now associated with the USA Super Region, it was a wonderful opportunity to meet and greet two couples from overseas to not only experience our culture but also join together in reflection and comradery. The couples represented the ERI Liaison Couple for the Transoceanic Zone, TJ & Ellen Holt, and the Responsible Couple of the USA Super Region, Greg & Melanie Gehrt. This is the first time in over fifteen years representatives of the ERI have visited Trinidad.

Upon arrival, prior to the retreat, the visiting couples had an opportunity to experience Trinidad's history and culture. First was a drive by the Cathedral of Immaculate Conception, one of our Jubilee Sites and the Red House, Trinidad and Tobago's parliament building. Thereafter, a tour of our historic Magnificent Seven historic mansions occurred. His Grace, Archbishop Jason Gordon, was unfortunately out of the country; however, the visitors were able to visit His Excellency, The Most Reverend Santiago de Wit Guzman, Apostolic Nuncio. The day ended at the Belmont Community Centre learning to play the steelpan tutored by Phoenix Steel Orchestra representatives

The retreat was held at the beautiful, peaceful, and scenic Emmaus Centre from September 19-21. Twenty-five couples attend the retreat led by the group CTC (Companions of the Transfigured Christ). They created the entire framework for the retreat, under the theme Marriage & Family Life:

Canute & Natasha Hudson  
*Responsible Couple  
for Trinidad and Tobago Region*



*"The theme, reflections and sharing that happened over this weekend...were nothing short of an amazing weekend, moving us from places of despair to places of real hope."*

- G and W De Freitas



*"Edifying, deep and transformative. It is the essence of how the Holy Spirit creates new life from dead bones."*

- A. Castagne



*"The retreat in Trinidad was a truly enriching experience, marked by the warm and welcoming spirit of a faith-filled community."*

- T & E Holt

Sourcing, Sustaining & Sharing Our Hope, based on the scripture text of the "Road to Emmaus", Luke 24:13-35.

The retreat and visit was a fulfilling experience by all, locals and visitors alike. It provided a good template for future retreats.

# Forming a Team

- 1** New couples may **hear about Teams of Our Lady** most frequently by word of mouth and through a personal invitation. Others might hear about Teams from a bulletin announcement, pulpit talk or ministry fair.
- 2** Every couple (both husband and wife) needs to attend an **information meeting** to make a discerned and committed decision to join Teams of Our Lady. An information meeting is led by a well-formed, trained Information Couple(s). An information meeting can be held at your local parish, at the home of the Information Couple, or even at a local coffee shop or restaurant.
- 3** The Information Couple or Sector Responsible Couple will **follow up** with the couples that attended the information meeting to inquire how they have discerned, “yes” or “not now”. They are also available to answer any questions the couples may have during their discernment process.
- 4** A new **team is formed** once 5-7 couples have discerned “yes” to the 12-month piloting process and a Pilot Couple has been assigned. This process may take months (or sometimes over a year) to assemble a new team. Then, the Region Responsible Couple is notified to order piloting materials prior to the first meeting and submit the new team roster to the Secretariat after piloting meeting #1. The Secretariat assigns the new team their own unique team name and number. Some teams also select a Marian name for themselves. This is a beautiful practice carried out in other parts of the world.
- 5** The **Pilot Couple makes contact** with the new team couples to schedule the first meetings of the piloting process.
- 6** The **Pilot Couple guides the new couples** through the piloting process. In the USA-SR, this piloting process is currently a 12-meeting process. The Pilot Couple journeys with the new team to ensure the pedagogy and methodology of the Movement is practiced. Piloting is the best “job” in the Movement!
- 7** Once the **team completes piloting**, the Sector and Region RC’s are informed by the Pilot Couple. The Pilot Couple will carry out the commitment ceremony and Responsible Couple (RC) election of the new team. (The annual commitment, RC election, and annual evaluation will be carried out each

# Rebuilding a Team

Sometimes, things just don’t work out, despite all our best efforts. There are a number of reasons that a team may fall apart. This is when prayer can change hearts. It is critical that a Sector Responsible Couple visit with the couples to determine what each couple is thinking and feeling about continuing in the Movement now or possibly later. It is important to acknowledge the hurt of losing a couple or two from a team, even if the reason for leaving the team is totally understandable.

Prayer is also critical for the remnant of the existing team. It can seem uncomfortable to think about adding new couples to your team. How will it change our dynamic? Will new couples really fit with our team? Do we have to repilot?... These are some of the concerns from teams needing to add couples. Prayer will lead you to the answers to these questions and prepare hearts for the change in team dynamics.

When discerning **adding couples** to your team, think about the following factors and discuss them with your Sector Responsible Couple:

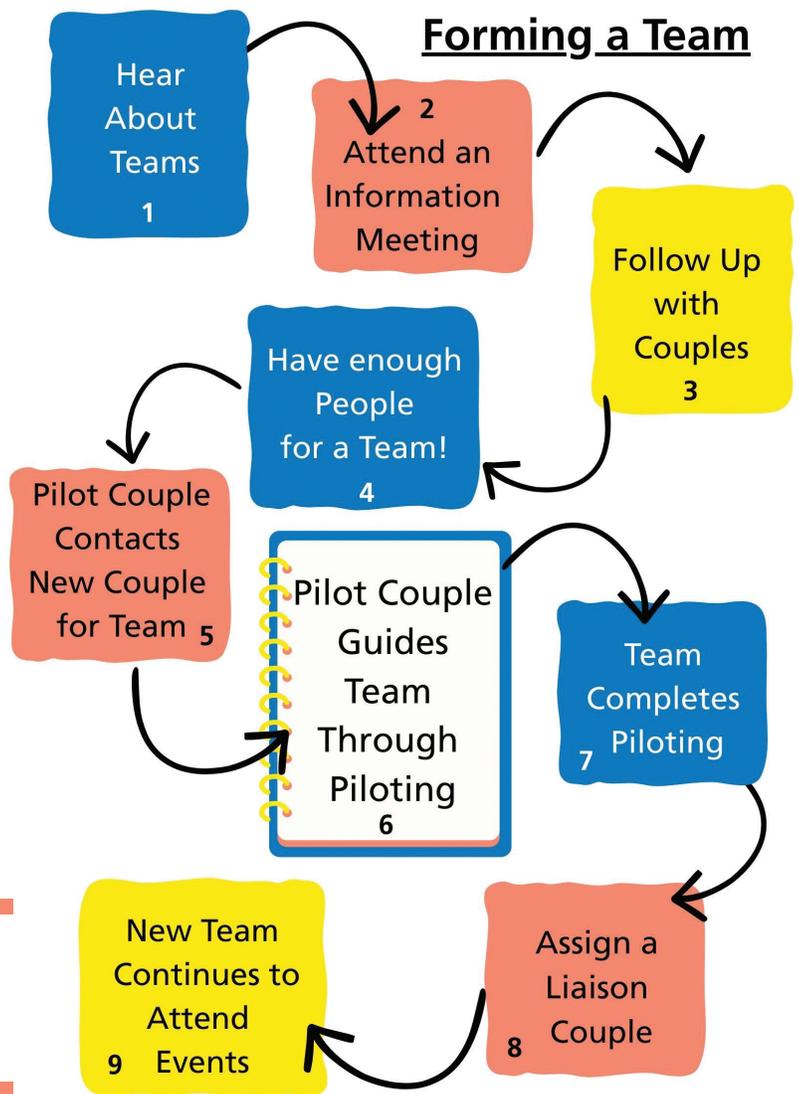
- It is best practice to add more than one couple to an existing team, if possible
- Consider the option of combining two existing teams that each need additional members to be a team of 5-7 couples
- Consider adding couples previously on a team to the existing team. Sometimes, couples just need to step away from the Movement for a few years due to life’s circumstances or experiences and are happy to rejoin the Movement at a later time.
- Invite new couples to an information meeting with the option to join an existing team.

subsequent year by the current team RC.) The Pilot Couple will also train the newly elected RC until they are able to attend a Sector or Region RC training.

**8** The new team will be **assigned a Liaison Couple** by the Sector RC to walk with them, answer questions, and keep them connected to the Movement. In smaller sectors, this may be a Sector or Pre-Sector Responsible Couple. A Liaison Couple meets with the team 1-2 times each year.

**9** Teams are **responsible for attendance at events** like a New Teams Welcome Celebration, Sector Events, Sector Responsible Couple Meetings or Regional Colleges.

**Accompaniment is a hallmark of the Movement and can not be short-changed or side-stepped.**



Once new members are added to an existing team, there are options for **Repiloting**. This is critical for the rebuilt team to share formation, just as the previous team had that opportunity.

The following are ways to pilot new couples onto an existing team and should be discussed with your Sector Responsible Couple before proceeding.

- **Traditional piloting with an external Pilot Couple:** The Sector RC assigns a Pilot Couple to accompany the entire team through the piloting process using the USA-SR Piloting Material. This Pilot Couple is NOT a member of this team but from another team in the Sector or Region. Your Study Topic for the next year is the Piloting Material.
- **Traditional piloting with an internal Pilot Couple:** This assumes the existing team has a well-formed, trained Pilot Couple as part of the existing team membership. This couple can serve as the Pilot Couple and guide the team through the piloting process using the USA-SR Piloting Material. Your Study Topic for the next year is the Piloting Material.

- **Concurrent piloting with a Pilot Couple:** The new couples joining the existing team meet once a month with a trained Pilot Couple (either internal or external) to go through the USA-SR Piloting Material. In addition, the new couples also meet monthly with their new team members and follow the Study Topic being used by the team. This option requires the new couples to attend two meetings per month which could be difficult for them.
- **Concurrent team couple to new couple piloting overseen by a Pilot Couple:** A trained Pilot Couple assigns specific chapters in the USA-SR Piloting Material to each existing team couple. The existing team couples rotate meeting with the new couples once a month outside of their regularly scheduled team meetings. This allows the new couples to get to know each of the existing couples as they go through the piloting process. This option also requires the new couples to attend two meetings per month which could be difficult for them. A trained Pilot Couple closely follows the team development process and stays in contact with the couples on the team.

# The Sharing Moment



Sharing on the Endeavors is a key part of every team meeting. In fact, it can be considered the most crucial part of the meeting since the Endeavors are what distinguishes Teams of Our Lady from other marriage groups. It is vital that every couple in Teams practice and live these Endeavors and witness their experiences to their fellow team members.

The 4th Annual USA-SR Mixed Teams Night last August was enjoyed by many throughout the USA and Trinidad! Thank you to those who participated! For those who did not have an opportunity to participate, here is a glimpse into the topic and the outcomes of this virtual event! The topic was “Sharing on the Endeavors” or “The Sharing Moment” at the meeting. Fabio and Camila Cristino, South Province RC, and Carol Fishbune, Treasurer, pulled together the information to prepare for the discussion topic. “Sharing the Endeavors”, written by Fabio and Camila Cristino, really dives into how important this time in the meeting is and the opportunity this is for us to support the growth of each of our teammates.

## Excerpt from the material...

*“We should bring our souls without masks, we have to talk about what you felt changed in your life when practicing one or more Endeavors. We should talk about why we don’t practice, what sabotage we are doing to ourselves to not do it, to not dedicate time to it. We must admire those who succeed and follow their examples, encouraging each other. In the end, if we are all here for the same goal, we cannot lose focus on it, we all want to work towards it in the same direction!”*

**To read the full document “Sharing the Endeavors”, please scan the QR Code.**

English



Spanish



Portuguese



## What were your key takeaways from your Mixed Team?

### Comments from participants...

“The importance to discuss in the monthly meeting to support each other and make sure to work to implement them as a couple.”

“From Trinidad and Tobago!!! Formation is key. Piloting on the Endeavors must be done correctly. Those teams that practice the endeavors have stuck together and have been well formed in their vocation of marriage. Fr. Caffarel knew what he was doing!!!”

“Everyone struggles with discussing the endeavors at a meeting; sharing the positive outcomes of the endeavors is important to share at each meeting; was able to share the chart that the Turlock Sectors use to track progress on endeavors. Now available in the member portal.”

“Foi nossa primeira participação e partilhar com outras equipes, vê a realidade de todos e o que tem de dica para aplicar na nossa.”

“Que debemos desarrollar mejor la participación de los PCE en las reuniones de equipo.”

“Solidarity. It’s never too late to reinvent ourselves! We have some good ideas to take back to our team based on the discussion.”

# national MIXED TEAMS NIGHT

Come meet other team members throughout the country!



**AUGUST 22 2026**  
5PM PT | 7PM GT | 8PM ET



Sign up here!

Meeting format and questions will be received by August 9, 2026.

The USA-SR will once again be hosting the National Mixed Teams Night on August 22, 2026. Use the QR code in the ad above to register to attend. You will receive further announcements and registration opportunities in the upcoming monthly letters.

## We look forward to meeting you!!

“Whenever couples practice mutual help and fraternal love, their hearts grow little by little. Soon their love reaches the home, their neighborhood, their country, until their love reaches the furthest shores.” Father Henri Caffarel



## Daily Conjugal & Family Prayer



As couples committed to Teams of Our Lady, we mustn't forget about our need to focus on the six endeavors of the movement. As Teams of Our Lady tells us, "The endeavors are attitudes to awaken within us and not merely tasks to be accomplished." Let's have an attitude of awakening and focus on the Daily Conjugal and Family Prayer for this issue.

**Conjugal Prayer** allows couples to confide in the Lord the most important questions touching their lives and love. Conjugal prayer should be a high moment of celebration for every couple. The couple kneels in God's presence and adores, praises, and listens to Him as well as asks Him for the grace to live out their sacrament of marriage and human love as a reflection of His love. Conjugal prayer reinforces the link of love between husband and wife, between both of them and the Lord. Each of them maintains and develops their personal relationship with God; however, as the couple progresses in their conjugal prayer, it structures their way of praying as a couple.

**"...Tobias got up from the bed and said to his wife, 'Get up, dear. Let's pray for the Lord to be merciful and to protect us.' Sarah got up so that they could pray together and ask God for his protection."** –Tobit 8:5

Each couple is unique and has their own characteristics, which is why there is no rigid rule concerning conjugal prayer. What is important is not the way in which it is done but the desire to pray together. If schedule is an issue, arrange a time in the day when you can pray together. If you wait for a suitable time, it will never come. Be regular and perseverant. Conjugal prayer is a form of liturgy which requires effort. It is built up gradually and gently, step by step in love. To achieve a deep union with God, perseverance is very important. Even though it may be difficult at first, this effort will bring many graces.

**Family Prayer** encourages the spiritual growth of its members and strengthens family bonds. Conjugal prayer and family prayer energize each other. Parents give an example to their children of how to pray. **"Conjugal prayer blossoms into family prayer,"** says Fr. Caffarel. The Christian family is the first place where children learn how to pray.

Family prayer can be strengthened by using the Church's liturgy at specific times such as Christmas, Lent, or Easter. Children need to be encouraged to join in according to their ages, and family prayer must be adapted to take account of this. If older children no longer participate, the younger ones can pray for them.

"Pass on the habit of prayer to your family and to your children. Teach them to pray, for a child who prays is a happy child and a family that prays is a united family," says St. Teresa of Calcutta.

*(The above excerpts are taken from The Endeavors booklets in Teams of Our Lady Piloting material)*

Let's pray  
for the Lord to  
be merciful and  
protect us.

### THE ENDEAVORS

Regular Reading Of  
The Word Of God

Daily Meditation  
Or Personal Prayer

Daily Conjugal  
and Family Prayer

Monthly Sit Down

Rule Of Life

Annual Retreat

# New Teams Welcome Celebrations

On November 8, 2025, the East Province hosted a New Teams Welcome Celebration (NTWC) in Berryville, VA. 39 couples and two priests participated in this inspiring celebration! Jim & Sarah Martinec (East Province NTWC RC) supported a group of passionate Teams couples in making this NTWC a success. A special shoutout to the leadership couples that made this NTWC possible: the Brodericks, the Gils, the Joneses, the Resendezes, and the Sundys.

An NTWC is an event that capstones the piloting process and is facilitated by Teams couples from the local area. Throughout the day, participants listen to a local priest and 4 different Teams couples as they provide talks or sessions as witnesses to living life in Teams, covering the fundamentals from the piloting year. Couples also experience fellowship through small group sharing, participate in a couple sit-down, and end the day together at mass. Please be on the lookout for an event coming to your area soon!

## Upcoming NTWC Events:

**North Province – 3/28/2026, Fargo, ND**

**East Province – 4/18/2026, Raleigh, NC**

**North Province – 9/19/2026, Steubenville, OH**

**South Province – 10/10/2026, Orlando, FL**



Attendees at the New Teams Welcome Celebration in Berryville, VA on November 8, 2025



## Do You Know?

## There are Member Responsibilities

Some of us might recall our piloting well, but others may be quite far from this time. During piloting, teams receive the blue card with the Magnificat prayer on one side. On the other side are the Endeavors (Concrete points of effort) and the Member Responsibilities.

At the team meeting, there is time dedicated to sharing on the living of the Endeavors, so most team members know these well. However, many have not recently thought about the Member Responsibilities.

- **Pray Magnificat daily**
- **Attend Monthly Team Meeting**
- **Prepare monthly Study Topic as a couple**
- **Make an annual contribution for the support and growth of the Movement, equal to one day's wages.**
- **Read the Teams of Our Lady Newsletter**
- **Complete Annual Team Evaluation and Commitment**
- **Show hospitality to fellow Teams couples**
- **Attend Sector events**
- **Attend an extra weekly Mass as a Service Couple**
- **Imitate Christ in our daily life**



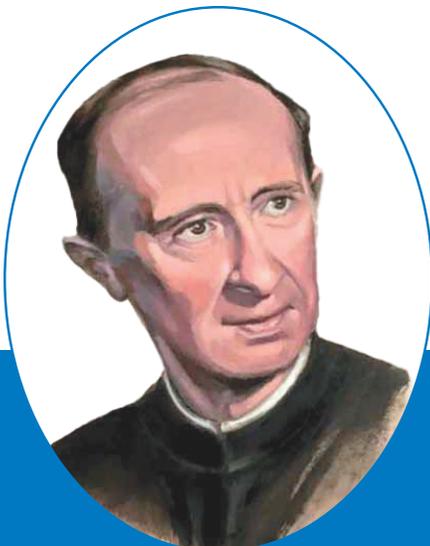
# Father Caffarel Update



**Paul and Monique Harris**  
USA Super Region Liaison Couple  
for Friends of Fr. Caffarel



Scan QR to make to  
donation to Friends of  
Father Caffarel



## Friends in Christ,

We feel quite humble in our role as Liaison Couple for Friends of Fr. Caffarel and at times, undeserving and overwhelmed. Sometimes, we just have to focus on the task at hand to liaison between Friends of Father Caffarel and you, and to liaison between you and Friends of Father Caffarel. The recent Friends of Father Caffarel Bulletin No. 37, January 2026, posted on our USA Teams website, tells us that any progress with Father Caffarel's canonization now lies with the Vatican; however, the Cause is still in need of prayers for his Cause and any miracles attributed to him.

In the meantime, there is so much that we would like to do to spread the word about the works of Father Caffarel, not only to team members but to the whole world. We envision all of his writings eventually being translated into English, along with the other official languages of Teams of Our Lady. For us, that work so far has been primarily through our study material and postings on our Teams website. We are so delighted to see our current Teams study book focused on his works. Granted, some folks have difficulty grasping the message as it is always challenging to portray the exact meaning in the translation from one language to another. Overall, those who create our material have done a great job. However, we would recommend that to better understand his writings, we also consider the time in church history of when Father Caffarel revealed the beauty of the Sacrament of Marriage. His writings were and are truly revolutionary.

We also marvel at Fr. Caffarel's love and connection with the couples he communicated with, in particular, after having read and translated his book, *At the Crossroads of Love*. As such, we believe that it would benefit all to have access to Father Caffarel's message in his books, pending efforts to make the translations available. That will be our focus of our articles in the *Magnificat*, along with his other writings.

As a side note, since we have not been successful obtaining a U.S. publisher for Father Caffarel's books, we have requested the French publisher consider publishing his books on Amazon as ebooks.

In the latest bulletin is a column of Testimonies of Graces received from prayers with the intercession of Fr. Caffarel. Graces are wonderful, however the Vatican requirements for miracles are very stringent and we still need documented miracles. Continue to pray for a miracle.

Finally, please renew your membership with Friends of Father Caffarel. Just put it on your calendar as a yearly reminder. Friends of Father Caffarel needs your help to continue to further the Cause of his Canonization.

**Father Caffarel, pray for us.**

Paul & Monique Harris

**"Equipes Notre-Dame (Teams of Our Lady) has as its essential aim to help couples, to strive after holiness – no more, no less."** Father Henri Caffarel



**Bob and Janie Mericksko**  
*Historian Couple*



# From the Archives

## Growing Pains

On October 11, 1992, Harry & Josie Gieske, the USA Super Region Responsible Couple then, wrote a letter to the ERI (International Movement) titled "The Equipes Notre Dame: Reflections on Its Mid-life Crisis and Dangers in Success." Just as the annual evaluation is crucial to the health of each base team, so was this thoughtful evaluation of the Movement as it developed. We recently attended a Zoom talk, "Marriage and the Well Being of Men and Women", given by Dr. Brad Wilcox, Sociology Professor at the University of Virginia. His opening statement was "The American heart is closing to marriage and the family. One in three will not marry, the birth rate is 1.6 babies per couple, and one in four will never have a child." These striking statistics reinforced our decision to pull this letter from the Teams archives. We have printed excerpts to fit the available space. For the complete letter, scan the QR code to access.

– Bob and Janie Mericksko

The mid-life crisis in human organizations occurs principally because the organization has gained success toward its original goals, thereby attracting the attention and interest of others who do not share the vision and passion of the original founders....

During its years of existence—from before World War II till now—the Equipes Notre Dame has produced remarkable results in the lives of its members during a time when the secular world virtually denied the need for marriage. "Equipes couples" have demonstrated a vision of marriage that in today's world is unique. This vision has led not only couples in the confirmation of their Sacrament of Matrimony, but also priests in their Sacrament of Orders. It is particularly impressive to observe that much of the numerical and spiritual growth of the Equipes has taken place during a time when the secular world enthusiastically rejected the indissolubility and spirituality of marriage which are the foundational principles of the Equipes Notre Dame.

The forty-five years of Equipes Notre Dame success has not gone unnoticed. Within the Roman Catholic Church, the Equipes Notre Dame have been honored by 3 or 4 popes. And in April 1992, the historic past work of the Equipes has been recognized through the approval of the Equipes Notre Dame as a private association within the Church.

However, the success of the Equipes and its potential influence within the Church and the world will not go

unnoticed by those who would seek to use the Equipes for their own purposes. Firstly, Satan surely cannot be happy that there is a Movement which seeks to strengthen the bonds of husband and wife with the person of Christ. There cannot be any doubt that the Evil One will use whatever means to destroy the original vision of the Equipes and its work for good within the world. Without doubt, we can expect that the Evil One will seek to destroy the Equipes from within by offering heresy as truth, tolerance of evil as charity, and compromise as compassion....

Because the Equipes has been successful and recognized by the Church, the Movement will inevitably be exploited by some people to achieve a "political" goal within the Church. Some persons will be tempted to use the Equipes Notre Dame, its respectability and its numerical strength to give respectability and acceptability to their own theories and agenda for the Church, even when the theories and agenda have nothing to do with the purpose or experience of the Movement. Some persons believe that the Church is a human institution and that political processes should be applied to its moral, doctrinal and disciplinary matters. Since the Equipes could be used for a political advantage, we can expect that persons, both in and outside the END, now and in the future, will attempt to use the Equipes for "ecclesial political" purposes.

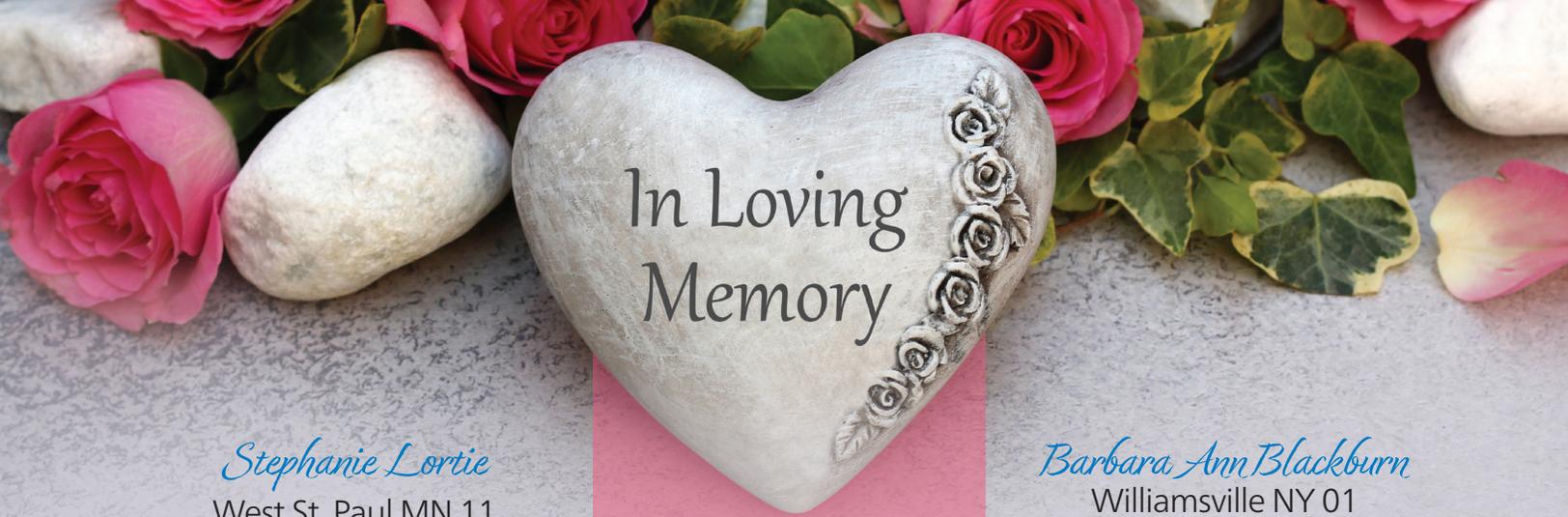
It is also true that well meaning persons, clergy and laity, will seek to use

the Equipes to remedy problems and situations which are outside the purpose or scope of the Equipes. Some bishops and priests may be tempted to use the Equipes, as a movement, to provide for the spiritual or corporal needs in their diocese or parishes. Some laity may be tempted to use the Equipes to affect Church teaching. We have already seen that some persons have attempted to use the Equipes as a "group therapy" for troubled marriages. There will be no limit to the number of times that the Equipes will be proposed as a solution to one or another problem not germane to the purpose or charisms of the Movement.

In these times of success and danger for the Equipes Notre Dame, Responsibles at all levels must first of all be knowledgeable and always aware of the vision of the founders of the Equipes. Joined to this knowledge and awareness, there must be a conscious personal commitment by every Responsible to remain faithful to that vision. To act otherwise is to change the Movement to something it was not and is not....

The Equipes Notre Dame must be continually vigilant and examine its actions and proposals for action with the bright light of the inspiration of its founders. Fidelity to this founding inspiration is the only safeguard our Movement has against the Evil One and those who would use the Equipes for their own purposes.

**Harry and Josie Gieske**  
*October 1992*



# In Loving Memory

*Stephanie Lortie*  
West St. Paul MN 11  
January 2025

*Patricia Hoffman*  
Petoskey MI 08  
June 5, 2025

*Harry Hunt*  
Spring Hill FL 01  
June 9, 2025

We honor the lives of these fellow Teams of Our Lady members as we mourn their passing and recognize their contributions to the Movement, their communities, their families, and their base team.

If you would like to share an obituary announcement with us, email us at [info@teamsofourlady.org](mailto:info@teamsofourlady.org) or mail to Teams of Our Lady, #109, 12620 FM 1960 W STE A-4, Houston, TX 77065

*Barbara Ann Blackburn*  
Williamsville NY 01  
November 15, 2025

BRIGADIER GENERAL  
*Peter "Pete" Bellisario (Ret)*  
Clinton MD 01  
January 31, 2026

*Jesus Murillo*  
Coppell TX 4S  
February 16, 2026



In 2025, the USA Super Region Team theme was **"HOPE"** for our meetings and colleges.

In 2026, our focus will be on **"FAITH"**.

May our **FAITH** in God, faith in our spouse, and **FAITH** in our team strengthen us for our journey to holiness. May our prayers to St. Francis this year strengthen our **FAITH** to become models of holiness and witnesses of peace to all those we encounter.

As we journey through our remaining time as a USA Super Region Team, we will focus on **LOVE** in 2027 and **UNITY** in 2028. The change of USA Super Region Team will take place in July of 2029.

# TECH TALK

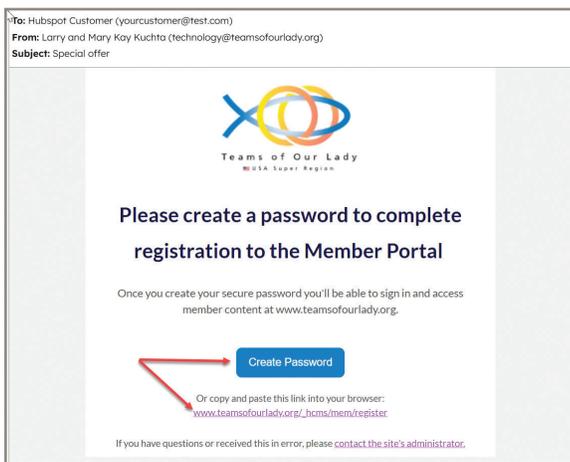
## Did you know as a Teams member you have access to the Member Portal on the Teams of Our Lady website at [teamsfourlady.org](http://teamsfourlady.org)?

But that's **ONLY** if you have completed the **One-Time Registration** that we started back on May 24, 2025.

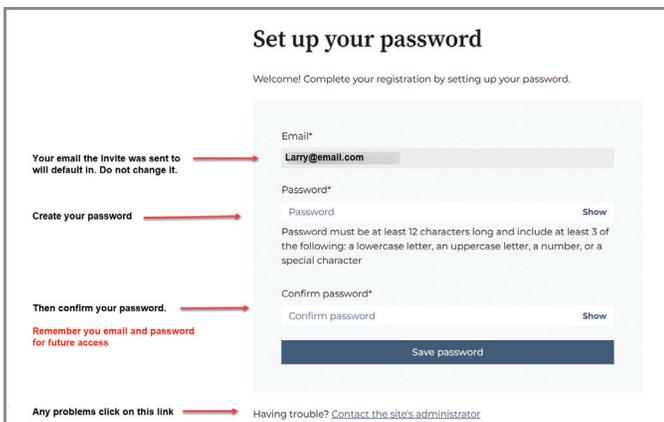
Look for the blue **Member Login** button on the website header:



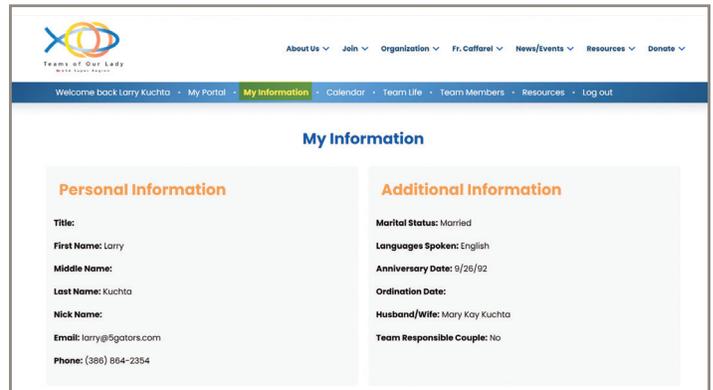
Every month we will send out an email to those **non-registered** active Teams members with an **email address on file** in our **member database** inviting them to register to the Member Portal:



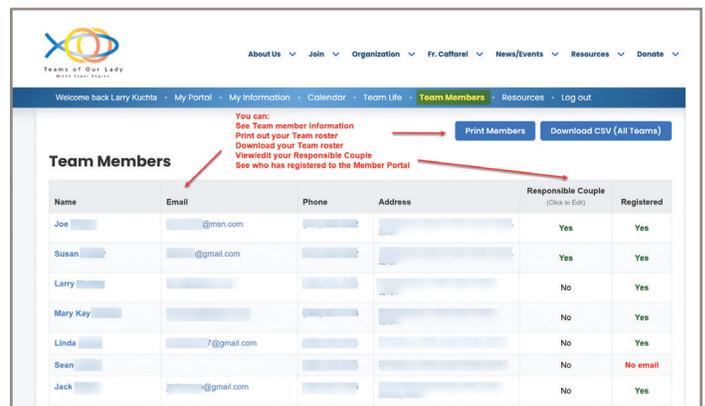
This invite is unique to each member and is required to register for access to the Member Portal. Responding by clicking on the "Create Password" button or the link in the email is the **ONLY** way you can get registered. So, if you are **NOT** already registered, look for this registration invite. We will send an invite monthly until you are registered or you tell us you prefer not to register in the database to access the member portal. Keep in mind that we send the registration invite to the email address we have in our database. If you are not receiving this invite, then we may not have your correct email address on file. Contact either the Technology Couple ([technology@teamsfourlady.org](mailto:technology@teamsfourlady.org)) or the Secretariat Couple ([secretariat@teamsfourlady.org](mailto:secretariat@teamsfourlady.org)) Once you have clicked on the "Create Password" or link, you will be directed to a web page to set up your password:



Once your password is set up, you will be directed to the My Information page of the Member Portal. Please review your information. By clicking the "Edit Profile" you can update your information and help us to keep your information up to date. Note: if you want to change your email address, please contact the Secretariat Couple ([secretariat@teamsfourlady.org](mailto:secretariat@teamsfourlady.org)).



Upon subsequent logins to the Member Portal, you will be brought to the Team Members page. Here you can see your Team roster, print it out or download it, view/edit your Responsible Couple, and see who is registered to the Member Portal. Please verify the information so we can keep the team rosters up to date. If any changes need to be made to your Team roster, contact the Secretariat Couple. Additionally, as a registered Teams of Our Lady member you will have access to content only available to members.



If you have not already registered, look for the registration invite and get registered! If you are already registered, don't forget to log in to the Member Portal regularly and see what is new and to keep your personal and team information up to date.



Teams of Our Lady

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Houston, TX 77065

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