

THE BULLETIN



OF THE FRIENDS OF FATHER CAFFAREL

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ASSOCIATION DES AMIS DU PÈRE CAFFAREL
49 RUE DE LA GLACIERE
F-75013 PARIS
www.henri-caffarel.org

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- 49, rue de la Glacière F-75013 PARIS
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EDITORIAL

Edgardo & Clarita Bernal Fandino
*(Responsible Couple, International Leading
Team of Teams of Our Lady)*
Saint Paul VI and Father Caffarel,



Very Dear Friends, Members of the Association
of the Friends of Father Caffarel,

With my wife, Clarita Fandiño, we were called to serve as international leaders of Teams of Our Lady and it is an honour for me to address you all, as we take on the presidency of the Association of the Friends of Father Caffarel. Just like all Team members and Friends of Father Caffarel, we often say the prayer for the canonisation of Father Caffarel, asking Our Father, through the intercession of Our Lady, to hasten the day when the Church proclaims the holiness of his life; we are indeed convinced that with this recognition, the graces emanating from the life project of Teams of Our Lady that were inspired by the Spirit to this Servant of God, will become better known by more couples throughout the world.

Last October 14th, His Holiness Pope Francis canonised Pope Paul VI, with whom Father Caffarel was very close. Today we can say that Saint Paul VI, with his knowledge of Father Henri Caffarel's life, constitutes one more intercessor who will raise Father Caffarel's life to the same level and honour. I wish to evoke an important moment in the relationship of these wonderful men, one that is intimately linked with the history of Teams of Our Lady: Saint Paul VI's speech to Teams of Our Lady in Rome in 1970. Indeed, this speech of the Pope's was the foundation of all our founder's research, thinking and writings from that time onwards. Father Caffarel exulted with joy listening to him and could not hide his emotion as he came out of the Basilica, *"These 2000 couples had never before heard nor read a Pope's teaching that gave them, like this one, the feeling that their difficulties, their efforts, their research, their aspirations were fully understood."*

On his return to Paris, in the editorial of May 1970, he affirmed, *"It is quite another thing now to have a teaching that emanates directly from Christ's representative on earth and which develops at length, explicitly, admirably, the foundations of conjugal and family spirituality ... of God's admirable thinking on everything that*

makes up their life: sexuality, conjugal community, the father's and mother's professions, the apostolic role of the couple..."

From that moment onwards, Father Caffarel fought for a profound renovation of Teams by asking them to massively choose this doctrine of conjugal spirituality. He dedicated his whole commitment to this cause, with the goal of having Teams of Our Lady convert itself into the Movement that the Church needed.

The post-Council years followed; it was the time of a deep crisis in the Church and a strong wave of unbelief, particularly amongst the young, reached the shores of the Movement, affecting even Team members' children.

It is the same crisis that we are experiencing today in our Church and which also affects our Team members. May the prophetic words of our Founder serve as a spur to face with intelligence and courage the situation we are experiencing. *"The turning point was triggered with our great pilgrimage to Rome in 1970. I say triggered. A great effort of prayer, reflection and transformation remains to be carried out with fierce determination to discover God's will for the Movement and its mission, in fidelity to the grace of the origins and intelligence of the needs of the time."*

Teams of Our Lady, faithful to this directive of their founder and with the life orientation proposed by the International Leading Team at international gatherings, bring a modern answer to the changes that have appeared in the world, without ever losing either their roots or their founding charisma. An example of this is the recent document *"Vocation and Mission at the Dawn of the Third Millennium,"* distributed by the International Leading Team at the Fatima International Gathering, that includes a reading of today's reality and a projection of our mission as a Movement. This reference document that contains all the Movement's fundamental documents, will guide its path in the years to come.

We ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten our discernment, in close collaboration with the International Leading Team, so that we always remain faithful and docile to our Lord's will for our Movement.

United in prayer with you,

EDGARDO BERNAL DORNHEIM

A Word from the Postulator

**Brother Angelo Paleri, o.f.m.conv,
Postulator in Rome for the Cause
of the Servant of God
Henri Caffarel**



Graces and Favours obtained through the Intercession of Father Henri Caffarel *Fama sanctitatis* of the Servant of God

In the space of ten years, from 2008 to 2017, we can count seventeen graces and favours that are attributed to the Servant of God Henri Caffarel. They were communicated to us by various Super-Regions and Regions of Teams of Our Lady; two-fifths come from Europe (France, Portugal, Spain and Italy) and three-fifths from Latin America (Bolivia, Brazil and Peru); moreover, it is worth noting that Brazil alone holds the highest number, that is, 8 out of 17!

Most of these concern a positive outcome for a variety of physical illnesses: there are patients cured of viral hepatitis and of tumours that have affected multiple organs and others who continue to live with tumours; patients who wake up from a deep coma, some who survive serious car accidents but also others who escape accidents that seemed imminent and inevitable; women who carry their pregnancies to term in difficult situations and foetuses that develop normally, whereas previous analyses had revealed serious anomalies and handicaps; and patients suffering from cardiac and respiratory problems whose pathologies are resolved for the better in an unexplained way, despite the lapse of time that could seriously compromise the result.

There are also graces that are more spiritual and mainly concern family life: the reconciliation of fiancés before marriage and spouses during conjugal crises.

The common thread that unites all these cases is Teams of Our Lady. Indeed, all the people who are directly involved belonged to the Teams of Our Lady, or they are family members who, on their own initiative, entrusted difficult and sometimes desperate situations of those dear to them to the intercession of the Servant of God Henri Caffarel.

In almost all cases, we observe a sort of race on the part of Team members to pray together: just like a chain whose rings expand to other Teams in the Sector, the Region and so on. And this is perhaps the strength of these situations: parents and friends members of Teams of Our Lady, who meet together to ask for the intercession of Father Henri Caffarel who, through his commitment, has led so many couples to create a union of heart and intention. They mutually support each other in the important stages of their life on earth, but especially in the difficult and painful times, when faith leads to confiding in Him, the only one who can answer the calls of men in impossible cases.

It is conceivable to use some of these favours for a diocesan inquiry into an alleged miracle. But we hope that other Team members will continue to inform us of important cases where Father Henri Caffarel's intercession has been decisive in resolving difficult, or even desperate, situations.

Brother Angelo Paleri

**News from the Association of the Friends of Father Caffarel
On being a Correspondent of the Association the Friends of
Father Caffarel within Teams of Our Lady**

François Genillon, Secretary of the Office of the Association of the Friends of Father Caffarel

A correspondent of the Association has been appointed in each Super-Region of Teams of Our Lady. Their role is **twofold**:

- To ensure, within the Super-Region, all actions promoting knowledge of Father Caffarel's work and thinking and the promotion of his cause of canonisation, to generate these actions and to make them known to Team members ;
- To ensure the permanent liaison between the Association on the one hand and the members and the various managers of Teams of Our Lady in the service of the Super-Region on the other hand, that is to say, to pass on information from the former to the latter and vice versa.

At the end of the conference on Father Henri Caffarel, which took place on December 8th and 9th, 2017 at the College des Bernardins in Paris, a meeting of international correspondents, who attended the conference, enabled exchanges between the correspondents. Of particular note were the power point presentations by two correspondent couples, recounting their initiatives and achievements in their own particular Super-Region (Lebanon and Brazil) to encourage couples to pray to Father Henri Caffarel, to learn about his thinking and his work in order to better disseminate them.

Here are some examples of achievements gleaned from their testimonials, that each correspondent can propose in their Super-Region in order to accomplish their mission:

- Propose the regular (even daily) recitation of the prayer for the canonisation of Father Henri Caffarel, as well as during Sector, Region or Super-Region gatherings
- Send a quote from Father Henri Caffarel regularly, for example, twice a month or more, by text message, to each Team member,
- Arrange for the correspondent to speak at each gathering organised within the Super-Region, with audio and / or video extracts from interviews with or lectures by Father Henri Caffarel
- Encourage Team members to subscribe to the Association in order to financially support the cause
- Work with the Super-Region Responsible Couple to coordinate with them on actions to promote the cause such as those proposed above.

Of course, this list of actions is by no means exhaustive and any other initiatives are welcome since they help promote the cause by raising awareness of Father Henri Caffarel's thinking and work.

François Genillon

Au Service

Father Henri CAFFAREL And His Presence at FATIMA, During the XII International Gathering of Teams of Our Lady



Entering the Basilica of the Holy Trinity in the heart of the Esplanade Sanctuary at Fatima, where the important moments of the XII International Gathering of Teams of Our Lady was held, it was impossible not to notice in its centre the bust of Father Henri Caffarel ...

But more importantly... The representatives of all Team members throughout the world present at this gathering were living proof that there are still a great number of us who want to continue the great task undertaken by Father Henri Caffarel and the creation of Teams of Our Lady. As Rémi and Françoise Gausseil said in their introduction to the day devoted to him, "*He wanted to establish the kingdom of Christ in homes, to make holiness take root in the modern world ..., to train good workers of the city, strong apostles of Christ.*"

This is why To and Zé Moura Soares, as well as the International Leading Team, in order to meet the expectations of all Team members, asked great witnesses to tell us about Father Henri Caffarel.

To and Zé Moura Soares reminded us that Father Henri Caffarel's mission, from the beginning of Teams, was based on the desire to give others the joy of entering the light of God, "*The essential thing is to seek Christ.*" For him, married Christians are seekers of God; they must learn, like Christ, how to serve God in their lives and in the world. Holiness, the fulfilment of conjugal love and the love of Christ, is the precise vocation of the couples in Teams of Our Lady.

Jean Allemand and Father Paul-Dominique Marcovits painted a portrait of Father Henri Caffarel's vocation on "*Human love, The Sacrament of Marriage and the Christian Life of the Couple.*"

Jean Allemand told us of his first meeting with Henri Caffarel. "*I met him for the first time in 1968. Fifty years ago. My first impression was entirely about how he looked: I had in front of me a small, thin, dry man whose gaze, extremely bright, impressed me. A long collaboration gradually brought me into the intimacy of this discreet and even secretive man. I discovered a man of God in the strongest sense, a man seized by God as I entitled his biography. That is, someone who has met God*

in Jesus Christ, who has been dazzled by Him and is striving to bring all people to meet Him. He himself, too, belatedly raised a corner of the veil."

Father Paul-Dominique Marcovits, editor of the cause for canonisation of Father Henri Caffarel in Rome, continued, "Yes, belatedly, he raised a corner of the veil on his encounter with Christ. Indeed, Father Caffarel was more than seventy years old when he confided to a journalist, who came to question him, that the love of Christ was revealed to him. Let's listen to him in his own words. 'March 1923. At twenty, Jesus became someone for me. Oh! Nothing spectacular. On that far off day in March, I knew that I was loved and that I loved, and that henceforth between Him and me it would be for life; the die was cast."

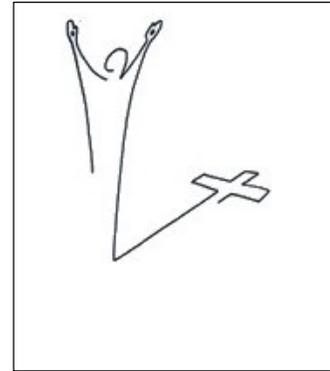
Marie d'Amonville, together with her husband Louis, now gone to the Father's house, worked with Father Henri Caffarel as collaborators first, before becoming the first couple in charge of the Movement. She told us about the call they received to commit to the Teams of Our Lady as Father Henri Caffarel's collaborators. "During a week of prayer at Troussures, we met Father Caffarel, whom we only knew through his writings, several times. At that time, I was inhabited by the desire to answer the Lord's call, out of love for Louis, more than out of love for the good Lord; then on the third day, I went to a small chapel, I confided everything to the Lord and I said "yes" to him. It was then that I experienced an exceptional encounter with the Lord and finally found peace. On the last day of the retreat, Father Caffarel called us in his office. It was then that he asked us to come and work at Teams of Our Lady. This did not seem to correspond to the call Louis had heard. So, Father Caffarel answered with this decisive remark, 'You want to help a priest? Why can I not be that priest you want to help?' He won and he hired us for 10 years."

During this gathering, we were all certain that, if Father Henri Caffarel had been present among us, he would once again exhort Teams of Our Lady couples to continue to strive towards holiness in this troubled but wonderful world in which we live. United and driven by the same spirit, we are sure he would have reminded us of what he said to the first Team members, "**Let us search and walk together ...**"

**Gérard & Marie-Christine de Roberty,
Association of the Friends of Father Caffarel**

Au Service

La Fraternité Notre-Dame de la Résurrection



“Many waters cannot quench love,” (Song of Sg, 8 :7)

Note: The citations in italics are Pope Francis’ words



The private Papal Audience with the participants in the International Convention for Consecrated Widows

On September 6th, 2018, in the Consistory Hall of the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the 90 consecrated widows (who had

pronounced the vow of chastity), all members of the *Fraternité Notre-Dame de la Résurrection* and of the *Communauté Anne la Prophétesse* together with the priests who accompany them. Europe and Africa were represented in equal measure. In welcoming them, the Holy Father demonstrated his support for this very old, but little known, vocation. This audience occurred on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the creation of the *Fraternité Notre-Dame de la Résurrection*, founded on September 8th, 1943. Back on that day, in the grotto at Lourdes, seven young war widows had turned to the Virgin Mary to ask for her help in guiding them in their search. They were convinced that conjugal love rooted in Christ could not be destroyed and they felt a calling to consecrate themselves completely to the Lord. It was Father Henri Caffarel who, over the next 35 years, guided them in the discovery of their vocation. May God be praised for this marvellous accompaniment!

Already 61 years ago, in a conference entitled, “The Child without a Father,” (1957) Pope Pius XII explicitly addressed widows, but since then no Pope had received widows as widows. This past September 6th, 2018, the 90 widows therefore represented all the widows throughout the world: 300 million widows! Indeed, in this speech, the Holy Father expressed his *“cordial greeting to all those who suffer the death of their spouse. [...] Losing one’s spouse is particularly difficult,”* he said, expressing in this way his paternal concern for this cross, this terrible suffering.

But gradually, with the grace of God, the grief of widowhood often turns into an



increase of love for their own family. *“Some display an ability to concentrate their energies in a greater dedication to their children and grandchildren,”* said Pope Francis, citing his own exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* (n° 254). A widow’s first duty is indeed to be found in her family, particularly in the transmission of

faith to her children and grandchildren, not only through the Word, but also by her example, loving God and serving her neighbour. That is holiness on a daily basis!

Beyond this usual human and Christian path, widows of the *Fraternité Notre-Dame de la Résurrection*, *“recognise a particular call of the Lord and respond to it by consecrating (themselves) to Him out of love and with love. Together with you I give thanks to God for the fidelity of His love that unites each of you, beyond death, to (your) spouse.”* It is God’s love, ever faithful, that keeps the widow in communion with her spouse beyond death. *“Many waters cannot quench love,”* says the Song of Songs (8:7). Forever faithful to his creature, God makes human love, anchored in the marriage sacrament, stronger than death.

Of course, such a vocation is experienced in the Church and the Pope continued, *“Your consecration in widowhood is a gift that the Lord gives to His Church to remind all the baptised that the power of His merciful love is a path of life and holiness, which allows us to overcome trials...”* Far from begging for a look of pity, consecrated widows are a gift for the Church, they bring to the world the proof that the Risen One is everywhere renewing hope and joy and that Jesus loved above anything brings daily victory over the forces of evil. Consecrated widows are risen in Christ provided that they *“cultivate the particular bond that unites (them) to Him. Because it is there, in the heart to heart with the Lord, listening to His word, that we draw the courage and perseverance to give ourselves, body and soul, to offer the best of ourselves [...] Be the leaven for this world, light for those*

who walk in darkness and in the shadow of death [...], be close to the little ones and to the poor, to show them God's tenderness ..."

The *Fraternité Notre Dame de la Résurrection* in 2018 and its Mission

After 75 years, the call to consecrate oneself to God remains heard by numerous widows. And so, 270 widows from France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Switzerland belong to the *Fraternité Notre Dame de la Résurrection*, and now an equally important number of Africans are joining from Burkina-Faso, Cameroon,



Congo Democratic Republic and Rwanda, as well as India. White or black, rich or poor, widows have very varied family situations: a short or long conjugal life, a happy or painful home, with children (sometimes numerous) or not. They exercise various professions: rural, manual, intellectual, social, etc. Most have volunteer activities in society or in the Church: instead of favouring escape, devoting oneself to

God entails serving the brothers. Beyond this diversity, they are all the same in their deep desire to bear witness around them to the resurrection of Christ. "Quick, go tell his disciples: he is risen," said the angel to the women, who came to the tomb on Easter morning (Mt 28:6). They want to testify that this world leads to eternal life, that with their passage to God they will discover the face of eternity of their husband. With the whole Church, they are waiting for the return of Christ, the Bridegroom: he will come again, he has promised it! In the meantime, they help each other like sisters on their often arduous journey through life.

By blessing the widows, who are consecrated within the *Fraternité Notre Dame de la Résurrection*, the Church entrusts them with a mission: to offer to the Lord all the difficult little "yesses" that constitute holiness on a daily basis and to pray for couples and families. At a time when the marriage vocation is under attack, against all odds, they intercede for their married brothers and sisters and for the world they are immersed in.

Fraternité Notre Dame de la Résurrection (FNDR)

68 rue des Plantes 75014 Paris

Tel +33 6 70 63 73 65

e-mail: ndr.veuves@waadoo.fr; www.veuves-chretiennes.cef.fr

Au Service

The Priest, the Beggars and the Treasure



***February 25th, 1939, the first Teams of Our Lady meeting.
Pierre & Rozenn de Montjamont's Testimonial
Saint Ouen, France, Gathering, November 20th, 1977***

[...] Our story is called "*The Priest, The Beggars and the Treasure,*" and it takes place in Paris in 1939, seven months before the war.

There was a priest who believed in our sacrament of marriage. All priests believe in it, of course! But this one most particularly ... He sensed the immense spiritual riches of our sacrament and he also knew that many find it difficult to sanctify themselves in marriage. He thought about it often but knew few enough young couples and he missed that. He sensed that Christian couples possessed an unexplored treasure ...

And us, young couples of that time, we were these people with a great treasure that we did not fully understand. We believed ourselves to be poor, a bit like beggars who sit on mattresses full of unused riches. In short, we were falsely poor. There was, on one side, this priest, Father Henri Caffarel, you guessed it - that most of you know well - so this priest and the grace of his priesthood, and then, there was us, who needed this grace so much.

So, God said, "*What if we make them meet? And get to know each other for good, my priest on whom I can count, who will be faithful to my grace, and these falsely poor couples, who are a little bit blind too, who seek every which way, without knowing how to tap into their own treasure, that I have given them.*"

And it happened in a very simple fashion. Father Caffarel was our friend. After a few conversations, we understood that he already had a wonderful message to bring us ... We could not selfishly keep just for ourselves the enlightenment he unfolded, because it foreshadowed an even greater one ... There was a gold mine to exploit together, couples and priests together.

We asked him to allow us to invite some of our friends, newlyweds like us, to a meeting with him. And indeed, this idea corresponded precisely to his desire to get to know closely couples seeking God, in order to work together.

And so it was that on February 25th, 1939, our four first households gathered around our priest. Their names were Frédéric and Marie-Françoise de la Chapelle, Michel and Ginette Huet, Gérard and Madeleine d'Heilly, Pierre and Rosennn de Montjamont and respectively they had been married for 6, 5, 4, and 2 years.

As of that first evening, we began by praying together in meditation and then together seeking God's gaze on our marriage.

We had so much to discover that evening meetings were not enough. They became whole days, days prolonged by thought, prayer and often by long telephone conversations.

We only had a few such "days" before the great dispersion due to the 1939-45 war. They were packed however because we were searching intensely, in a tangle of discoveries, and with a very strong sense of urgency. Father Caffarel often said to us, "*There is urgency*," although like us, he did not know that the great turmoil of the war was so near. In a few meetings, all avenues of future research were opened, incompletely visited without doubt, but opened nonetheless ...

These avenues were explored subsequently, firstly in a monthly newsletter of a few pages entitled "Letter to Couples," which was warmly received and quickly spread, then in "The Golden Ring" which followed it. But that is another story...

Our little group had no name and did not think about it. But suddenly something forced us to take a name quickly. We were looking for what would be our star ... when, spontaneously if we dare to say so, the Blessed Virgin came along. We needed Her so badly. We became the "Groupe Notre-Dame" and out of gratitude for the many joys given to us, we chose "Our Lady of All-Joy" as our name.

Later "Group" became "Team" and the words "of all joy" faded away. But Notre-Dame, Our Lady has stayed. It was the essential part and it is wonderful.

In that year of 1939, what questions did we ask ourselves? First of all, how does our life, full of human happiness, cares, attachment to creatures, allow us to respond fully to our God's demand of love? This requirement of holiness, which some think can only be answered by consecrated celibacy, is it also addressed to married people?

And our priest said, "*It concerns you too, that's certain.*" "*Then,*" we said, "*If it concerns us, how could we answer it, attached, tied together as we are by thousands of ties of the heart, the body and the spirit?*"

And our priest responded forcefully, "*To answer it, you have your own sacrament, but we do not know that sacrament so well.*"

Thus, the first stage opened up before us. We understood that we had to set out on an attentive and passionate search for God's thinking about our marriage. Not yet on home life or the children's education, but firstly about the Source from which all this flows: our sacrament of marriage in itself. What is it? What does it produce in us? What is its own grace? How finally does it give us to God and give us God?

[...] Our priest told us, *"God looking at a couple sees all the people that emerged from it, a real human river whose source is the love of two beings. How much one must care for this love since it is always fruitful – a fertility visible according to nature, or sometimes invisible, and yet certain."*

Our marriage, our love, the source of a river ...

As this thought matured day after day, the pressing necessity of unceasingly purifying and renewing this source appeared to us as a pressing necessity, for only then would it become the Source of Life in response to what God expected.

However, in this spiritual quest, it was important for it not to become a search for ourselves, nor a pleasant entertainment of the mind. For this reason, our priest ensured that our search remained one of the soul listening to God. Also, an essential place was given to prayer in our fraternal meetings, so that they were primarily meetings with God.

It must also be said that from the beginning we felt very strongly the grace of what we called the "marriage" of our two Sacraments, Orders and Marriage. Represented by our priest and our couple, they collaborated in perfect harmony in this quest for God's thinking. It was not the first time that a priest had devoted himself to couples, but from then on, we better understood and admired the role of the priest, who chose consecrated celibacy not out of contempt for marriage. Because he was free of this personal attachment, he was able to better enlighten and better serve couples, the children of God.

Our spiritual father did just that, served our couples better, by highlighting an essential discovery for us, which we remain deeply grateful to him for: not only is it possible to sanctify us in marriage, but our marriage is really, in itself, a call to holiness.

Human love - conjugal, paternal, maternal - speaks to us of God, he is very image of it. Moreover, marriage is a revelation of the very mysterious marriage of God with the Christian soul. We believe too much that this union with God, described as mystical (this sometimes frightens us) is reserved for clerics, for saints with halos ... But that is not true. We are all called to it and should think more about it. We too

are consecrated, by baptism first, but also by our sacrament, because it is not a concession made to the flesh nor a second zone sacrament. *"This sacrament is great,"* says St. Paul. It is the consecration of our love, imperfect though it is, and it always remains, throughout our lives, the source of graces and a path to holiness.

Pierre & Rozenn de Montjamont



*A Team of Our Lady,
At a Study Session in 1965*



FATHER CAFFAREL'S ARCHIVES

AN EXTRACT FROM FATHER HENRI CAFFAREL'S TALK DURING THE PILGRIMAGE TO ROME IN 1959

The Vocation and Itinerary of Teams of Our Lady

THE ORIGINS

Going back up the river to its source, you will find four young couples, rich with a brand new love. Because they are convinced Christians, they intend not to live their love on the fringes of their faith. In the absence of very precise ideas on the doctrine of Christian marriage, a very strong intuition fills them with hope and leads them to the priest: "*This human love which is our wealth and our joy, it is not possible that God does not think it is very beautiful and very big; we want to know about what he thinks, you have to reveal it to us.*" Listening to them, I can easily guess that I will disappoint them cruelly if I content myself with giving them legal definitions and offering them moral rules. Previously, in a similar circumstance, I had already received an ironic and disappointed reply, "*We talk to you about love, and you answer family.*"

I was not much more ahead of the game than these couples. At least I had the conviction that, since love was from God, marriage was a divine institution, and that the divine idea of love and marriage must be infinitely more exalting than anything those young men and women could imagine. My answer was, "*Let's search together, let's unite and go out and discover.*"

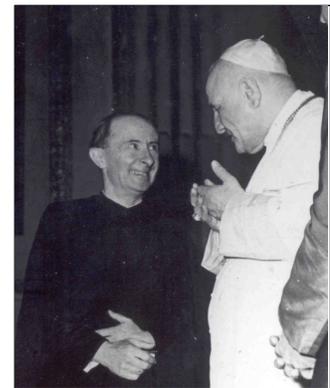
Unforgettable meetings, with same atmosphere of joy as that of starting a race in the mountains at dawn, on a beautiful summer day. Each of us brings our asset: the priest, his knowledge of marriage and the whole of Christian doctrine; them, their springtime

experience of love and marriage. Without doubt, to find what we are looking for, we must not limit ourselves to biological, psychological and sociological considerations and go beyond legal and moral points of view alone. If marriage is a "*great mystery*," as St. Paul proclaims, only a glance of faith can penetrate into its divine wealth. And indeed, our meetings take place in an atmosphere of lively, curious and enthusiastic faith.

Gradually the eminent place of Christian marriage in God's great design emerges. It appears to us to be all ordained for the glory of the Lord. Its end goal is in fact the multiplication of the sons and daughters of God, the mutual help of the spouses in the pursuit of holiness. There is no need to look elsewhere to advance towards the Lord: marriage is a sacred way, the Christian family is a living cell of the Church.

Not only is marriage in God's plan, but it reveals its riches. And this was one of the happiest discoveries of these young minds eager for knowledge. With what application they practiced deciphering the parable of marriage! The prophets often resorted to marriage to make us understand God's covenant with his people Israel. St. Paul himself found nothing better than this parable of conjugal love to make us see the union of Christ and the Church, and the mystics after him used it to reveal the intimacy of Christ's love with the Christian soul to us.

There was even more to discover. Sacramental Christian marriage not only represents the union of love between Christ and the Church, but it involves the couple in this union. I mean that thanks to the sacrament of marriage, the love that unites Christ to the Church is the one that works to unite, support, and delight husband and wife.



We had been working for barely a year when the great ordeal broke out. Our group, and each of the couples, was split up by the departure of the men for the war. But a capital experiment was accomplished, and here I would like to briefly highlight the lessons learnt because they explain the orientations to come.

I had glimpsed the best way of presenting the Christian doctrine of marriage to young people if you want to convince them to walk and journey towards God in this way with a sprightly step. I have just sketched it for you and will not dwell on it further.

At the same time, I had been given the explanation of the classic phenomenon which distresses priests and couples themselves: the decline of Christian life at the beginning of the marriage. Once the symptoms were diagnosed, the remedy could be found. This decrease is due to the fact that young couples dissociate human love and divine love, not seeing the link between the two. If we show them that there is no need to diminish one to enable the other to grow, that human love must lead to divine love and divine love to the love of the spouse, they understand that through the sacrament marriage is not only sanctified but becomes sanctifying. And so,

entering into marriage will not entail a decline in Christian life but will mark a new beginning. And thus, they avoid counting on their first disappointments as a reason to turn to God!

The fruitfulness of the collaboration between priests and couples seem just as obvious to me. Not only to me, but to them too; one of them had understood this very well when one day in his prayer he thanked God for "*the marriage of our two sacraments*." The priest contributes the doctrine and couples the experience: from this conjunction emerges an art of Christian living in marriage.

It was not only between couples and the priest that a relationship was established, but also between the couples too. They had experienced that nothing unites as much as searching together for God's thinking. And nothing is more necessary than this union for couples, who want to make progress in this research in order to continue to live in a better way.

Another lesson emerged from our experience, from the importance that prayer had taken in our meetings: just as the ray of light goes back to its source when it meets a mirror, likewise falling into pure and upright hearts, the truth that comes from God goes spontaneously back to God in the form of prayer.

Henri Caffarel

EXTRACT FROM FATHER HENRI CAFFAREL'S TALK
TO EUROPEAN REGIONAL RESPONSIBLES COUPLES
CHANTILLY 1987

The Founding Charisma

I cannot help but share with you the story of those beginnings. It was the seed that contained all this dynamism that prevailed in the Movement. One day, a married woman came to see me in 1939, in March, to ask me if I wanted to help progress in her spiritual life. Of course, I accepted. Fifteen days later, she asked me if I would also accept her husband, I did. And a month later, both of them asked me if I would meet with three couples, friends of theirs, who were wondering how to progress in their Christian life. They were four young couples under the age of thirty. [...]

They were very characteristic of the young households of those years, they had managed a double reconciliation. First, a reconciliation between love and marriage; there was a famous phrase often repeated at that time and especially in

previous years, "*Love is one thing, marriage is another.*" I think it was Maurois or Mauriac who wrote that sentence. Well! For these young couples, almost all of whom had been in the scouts' movement, this particular reconciliation had been made, "*Love and marriage*" was one and the same thing. They had not had a sentimental adventure before their marriage, their first love was their spouse and their marriage was made up of a happy love.

Their second reconciliation was "*Religion and the love of Christ is all bound up together.*" I do not know if you can imagine what it was like at that time, and a few years before, especially, when I was in College, we did not talk about the love of God, for we were in a France that was still strongly influenced by Jansenism, and a priest who spoke of the love of God was scolded. I was lucky enough to meet a spiritual father, who was not afraid to tell me about the love of Christ. But it was a true reconciliation to bring about in Catholic circles and fittingly, these four couples had managed this reconciliation.

To such an extent that I had in front of me couples who were inhabited by two loves: the love of their spouse and the love of Christ. At first glance, one might think that marital love like the love of Christ are totalitarian, uncompromising loves, and the couples themselves experienced this curious fact whereby, these two loves that are absolute, were perfectly reconciled in their spiritual life without being able to truly understand this conciliation of the love of the spouse and of the love of Christ. And that is why they were very eager to discover how to progress towards holiness with these two loves in their heart. At the first meeting, very happy, very full of ambitions, from this great joy that was theirs, to love and love Christ, they asked me 36 questions and suddenly, I lost my apprehensions, I was even surprised to feel so comfortable and then I understood why I felt comfortable. For some 10, 15 years, I had been experiencing a relationship of love with Christ and in front of these couples telling me about their love, I discovered that in the couple's life, the laws that I had discovered in my relationship with Christ, the laws of love are the same everywhere. And it is precisely that, that immediately won me over and excited me. We were therefore going to be able to help each other; they would bring me the concrete life they lived and I, I would bring them the few notions of spirituality that I had. How many times have I told myself that, if instead of meeting these four households, I had started my ministry by discovering marriage in the confessional, I would not have evolved in the same way. I would have known of the moral difficulties, I would have known of the psychological difficulties, I would have had a much darker idea of the union of man and woman. Fortunately, I began take an interest in marriage with these four couples.

The other idea from the beginning was therefore to discover God's thinking about couples and about all the realities that affect couples. And I think that we grasped here one of the fundamental elements of the founding charisma, to such

an extent that we listed all the elements that made up the couple's life and their family life and we told ourselves that methodically we would seek the will of God in all these elements. We did not know that four months later, war would be declared and that the four households would be dispersed and that I, myself, was going to leave for the army.

Here is the second orientation: all of them had no trouble thinking that their vocation was holiness, holiness appearing to them as the blossoming of love. The fulfilment of conjugal love and the love of Christ. And then, the reflection immediately led them to discover in a completely new way the sacrament of marriage, not simply as a formality but as a source of prodigious grace, Christ coming to save love that had been sick since original sin and to bring relief and enormous graces to this love.

Another very important thing emerged and one it was verbalised by a woman during a meeting where we prayed, because, at each of these meetings, we prayed, spontaneously. It was a need and it was especially the need to praise God for what these couples were experiencing and what they were discovering about God's thinking. They were amazed to discover that God had such a wonderful idea of human love. Well, one day, during prayers, a woman spoke to God in these words, "*Lord, we thank you for the marriage of our two sacraments: priesthood and marriage.*" I think that this was a very deep thought, and I think that it is part of this dynamism of the beginnings, the alliance of priesthood which represents the Church, the Church's thinking and couples who bring their wealth, their needs, their questions and the need for dialogue so that the Church's teaching are not disconnected from concrete realities, but also that the Church's teaching strives to meet not only the needs but the couples' inspiration. And throughout the life of Teams, we have been very keen on this marriage of the two sacraments. We had only four meetings together, that's all. But it was enough, I was going to say, to decide me in my vocation. These meetings enthused me tremendously and then in July 1940, I came back, having escaped the Germans three times. I was appointed parish vicar, and immediately I met with other couples and told them about the experience we had had. They too asked me to set up this meeting of couples.

Henri Caffarel

Prayer for the Canonisation of the Servant of God, Henri Caffarel

God, our Father,
You planted deep in the heart of your servant, Henri Caffarel,
A fountain of love, which bound him totally to your Son
And inspired him with a wonderful capacity to speak of Him.

A prophet for our time,
He revealed the dignity and beauty of the vocation of every person
In the words Jesus addresses to each of us: "Come follow me."

He made couples enthusiastic about the greatness of the sacrament of marriage,
The sign of Christ's fruitful love for the Church and of His union with her.
He showed that priests and couples
Are called to live a vocation of love.
He was a guide to widows: love is stronger than death.
Prompted by the Holy Spirit,
He accompanied many Christians on the path of prayer.
Seized by a devouring fire, he was a dwelling place for you, Lord.

God, our Father,
Through the intercession of Our Lady,
We ask you to hasten the day
When the Church will proclaim the holiness of his life,
So that people everywhere will discover the joy of following your Son
In accordance with their particular vocations in the Holy Spirit.

God our Father, we invoke the intercession of Father Caffarel for.....
(Indicate the particular favour being sought)

**Prayer approved by Monsignor Andre Vingt-Trois – Archbishop of Paris.
"Nihil obstat": 4th January 2006 – "Imprimatur": 5th January 2006.**

In the case of a particular favour obtained through the intercession of Father Caffarel,

*Contact: The Postulator,
Association "Les Amis du Père Caffarel"
49 rue de la Glacière – F 75013 PARIS*

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Brother Angelo PALERI, o.f.m. conv

Editor of the Cause of the Canonisation of Father Henri Caffarel :

Father Marcovits, o.p

Director of publication :

Edgardo Bernal Dornheim

Editorial Team :

Loïc & Armelle Toussaint de Quièvre-court

THE FRIENDS OF FATHER CAFFAREL

Law 1901 Association for the promotion of the
Cause of the canonisation of Father Henri Caffarel
49, rue de la Glacière - (7th Floor) - F 75013 PARIS

Tel: + 33 1 43 31 96 21 - Fax: + 33 1 45 35 47 12

Email: association-amis@henri-caffarel.org

Web Site: www.henri-caffarel.org

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