



Teams of Our Lady

Equipes de Nossa Senhora • Equipos de Nuestra Señora

## 2019 National Conference and USA Super Regional Team and College 07-16-2019

### Introduction to: “The Life Before Us (LVDN)” to Super Region and College

Good Afternoon! It is great to see all of you here in Navasota, Tx. Obviously, there has been lot of planning, and it shows!

We would like to begin this presentation today by reading a quote from Fr. Henri Caffarel, our Founder, and asking you to respond to his call. He is speaking about the aging of couples in teams in general, and about the retirement age of couples in Teams, in particular.

**There is no need to take notes, as we will provide all of you with a copy of our talk during this week.**

The year was 1987, the day was May 3, and the place was Chantilly, France. This was the last major, and possibly most famous speech, by Fr. Caffarel to the Movement. This speech, can be read in its entirety, on our website and in the new publication, The Guide To The Teams of Our Lady

I Quote Fr. Caffarel at the 40th Anniversary of the Charter:

*“.....Fifth and final point: what was not sufficiently appreciated at the start [of teams], which could not have been, and which now is. For goodness*

*sake, help the couples of the Teams to grow old very well, to have a good death, to live their widowhood very well. I know many of the friends of the early years and who are still in the Teams, **we should be very concerned about helping these elderly people to progress in holiness. Old age is a big trump card for making progress in God's love.....***” “Help the couples of the Teams to have a good death, and help your founder to have a good death! But before old age and death there is retirement. I ask myself if, in the Teams of Our Lady, enough is being done to make people discover the Christian meaning of retirement, of this time of life which is very important. I bring this to your notice without spending time on it.”

Fr. Henri Caffarel

Chantilly, May 3, 1987

Today, Sharla and I will introduce you to this outgrowth Movement of the Teams of Our Lady, and invite you to become a part of this Movement.

This Movement is called “The Life Before Us (LVDN)”. The LVDN stands for La Vie Devant Nous, which means “The Life Before Us, in English.

**The only requirement to join the Movement is to be around 75 years old and believe in the Trinitarian God.**

This Movement grew from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and Fr. Caffarel to a couple, Louis and Marie d'Amonville, who were the first Lay Couple to lead the Teams of Our Lady in 1975.

Louis and Marie had been active in the input used to create a document by the Satellite Team in 2007, and published in 2009, that studied the aging of couples, widows and widowers within Teams.

[ERI:The Equipes Notre Dame and its older members. 2009]. This document can be found on the International Teams of Our Lady website; <http://equipes-notre-dame.com/en/>

Louis had often lamented, while considering the aging of couples in Teams and shared with his wife Marie, “If Fr. Caffarel were here, he would find a solution for such situations. He, who wanted to help couples in every age of their lives, surely would not have abandoned them during this final stage of life.”

Marie had contemplated the quote from Chantilly, when Fr. Caffarel implied our need to address the aging:

Marie was given the answer to this contemplation during her hour of interior prayer before the Blessed Sacrament: Use the same pedagogy and begin a Movement of Spirituality, founded on prayer, reflection and exchange between people experiencing the same or similar realities.

## Statistical Facts on the “Elderly”

The world population between 1950 and 2010 increased by 270%

The number of people over the age of 80 between 1950 and 2010 increased 740%

At Baptism, we are called to be Priests, Prophets and Kings. Like Priests, the elderly are especially called to prayer, on behalf of others, by devoting themselves, above all, to couple and family prayer, to contemplative prayer and to reading the Word of God. Like Prophets, they must bear witness to God’s love and faithfulness, and hand on the ideas and values which are basic to their community and as Kings we are at the service of the world. It is important for all of us to discover a true perspective of life, which means we look at life from birth to eternity, for which there are stages, in which each stage acts as a preparatory step for the next stage. Old age is the last preparatory step before the “Grand Passing”, to eternity. We need not be afraid of this passing, but should be preparing for it. Although differing in proportion and location on this spectrum and perspective of life, depending on our age and health, we must continue to fulfill our call to be, Priest, Prophet and King.

People of all Christian faiths are invited to take part in “The Life Before Us (LVDN)”. The requirement is that we need to be around 75 years old and believe in the Trinitarian God.

## The Goals of the Movement

1. Bring an awareness of our value and responsibility that God has given each of us to help the world and to prepare for the “Grand Passing” which we all will face. Pope Francis reminds us that, “Old age has a grace and a mission too, a true vocation from the Lord. However, it is not easy to manage it alone!”
2. Relieve loneliness. We need to remember that the death of our contemporaries and/or spouses and reduced mobility limit the times when we can meet up with friends and family.
3. Practice Spiritual Help.....In other words.....Pray for each other.
4. Reflect on the Sacrament of the sick.
5. Develop practice of contemplative prayer.

## 6. Possibly to help others understand Baptism or Confirmation

We must remember that the elderly still have a need to belong to a community. We must remind them that they are still called to holiness and have great value and holiness. We live in a culture that oftentimes considers the elderly a “throw away” aspect of that culture. We associate the value of a person with the amount that he or she contributes in dollars and cents to our society. Our culture does not readily see the value of the elderly, because we do not readily see the value of prayer and suffering. We have been told so many times, that we are “valueless” when we grow old, that we have begun to believe this, ourselves. Nothing can be farther from the truth!

This is a time that we can pray for the world, and especially our families and to and for our spouses! Suffering can become our friend, not our fear.

## How Do We Form a new LBU “group or team”

### Form a Leadership Team

1. Leadership Team should be formed as soon as possible.

2. The Leadership Team is made up of three or four lay people and a Priest. There should be at least one Leadership Team per Province.
3. This team prays, reflects, follows and knows every team.
4. This team organizes general meetings, Masses, recollection Days and possible retreats.
5. This team designates the equivalent of a Pilot Couple for each new team.
6. After the first year, this team suggests and proposes new study topics.
7. There should be one Leadership Team in each Province, to begin.
8. The Leadership Team helps to form Base Teams

## Base Group or Team

**Base Group or Team:** consists of 8-10 people

**Meeting regularity:** meets monthly, maximum 1 1/2 –2 hours

long. No meals need to be served at meetings. Possibly very light snacks and/or coffee, tea or water.

**Composition criterion:** Geographic proximity of the participants.

**Location:** Team members home, retirement home, parish hall, Senior Centers or wherever the least ambulatory can get to.

**Base Team Leader:** Responsible for the guidance of the team for 6 months. The Base Team Leader would be the equivalent of a Pilot Couple.

## Study Topics

During the first year, in the United States, we will be following a study topic, “Come Pray Together”, that is an invitation to pray and prepare for the “Grand Passing”. This was put together using a series of letters written by Fr. Henri Caffarel, that encourage us in the knowledge of God’s love for us, at all stages, in our full perspective of life. The study begins with, “You are Expected”, which reminds us that God is ALWAYS waiting for us, and ends with, “Beacons Along the Road”, which is a letter from Fr. Caffarel to a wife who recognized the sanctity of her late husband and asked Fr. Caffarel to comment on his holiness, as Fr. Caffarel was his confidant. Fr. Caffarel realized that this man’s source of holiness was his yearning for God and the realization of God’s presence within him. Fr. Caffarel realized that the man’s own “value” had exceeded all expectations, in that his value did

not depend on him, or his accomplishments, but He, who resided in him. One of the last conversations Fr. Caffarel had with him, was when the man realized that he desired nothing, but that he was the “desired” and God was the one that desired him. We are that important to God!

Every year, the Team will make an evaluation of the previous year, so as to make positive changes to the Team.

## Information Meetings and Communication

Information meetings are given and we outline what each meeting will entail. The elderly do not like changes, so it is important to make sure the Group or Team meetings follow the same format.

Get all contact information from prospective members written down at an information meeting. Call them within a few days of getting this information and thank them for their time. Tell them, at that time, when and where the first and, hopefully, the rest of the meetings will be held.

## Meeting Format

Always begin with prayer and end with prayer.

First meeting, everyone should introduce themselves to the group. Each time a new member is coming to the group, everyone should re-introduce themselves to the group.

Time for Sharing (grandchildren, current events, spouse, etc.) The group is not designed for chit chat, so this should be avoided during the meeting.

They can socialize before and after the meeting or on their own time

Scripture Reading and Reflection

Prayer Intentions

Read short letter from Fr. Caffarel

Discuss the study questions given. It is not critical to complete and answer the questions, but for each of them to have read and thought about the questions.

## Administrative Matters

Discuss meeting times for next meeting and other necessary announcements

## Closing Prayer

Our Father.....

## Simple Beginnings

We invite you to begin with only two base “Groups” or “Teams” in your Provinces. We will begin these teams as soon as we get the Leadership Team in place and after one year, we will evaluate the successes and failures of the process. This process will be repeated each year.

This Movement was inspired by the Holy Spirit through Fr. Caffarel and the obedience of one couple made this happen. We must always remember that God will qualify us in all our endeavors.....the success of the Movement belongs to Him, so He has a vested interest.

We have been encouraged by the Director of Marriage and Family Life, Jay Wonacott from Boise, Idaho, Jason Kidd, the Director of Marriage and Family Life from the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon and also Bishop Liam Cary, the Bishop of the Diocese of Baker, in Redmond, Oregon. All three are very excited to see this Movement begin and take hold.

The short range goal for The Life Before Us (LVDN) is 8 teams by the Spring of 2020.

The mid range goal for The Life Before Us (LVDN) is 24 teams by September of 2021.

All Study Guides are \$10.00 each and when you order the books for your teams, please send in the amount of money for the books you need. This will help to cover the cost of producing and shipping the Study guides.

The USA Super Region has generously supported the beginning of the costs and has purchased 50 copies of the first year of study. That book is in front of you.

Thank you for your time !!

Hopefully, we have 5 minutes or so for questions.