

TEAMS OF OUR LADY
International Leading Team (ERI)



*To go
Further*

Study Topic
Long-Standing Teams



**Teams of Our Lady
International Leading Team**

This document is solely for the internal
use of Teams of Our Lady

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Presentation

Why are we proposing a study topic for long-standing teams?

Previously Father Caffarel had sensed the need to develop the teams that had been in existence for at least 20 years, and wondered how to revive the couples that tended to lose the enthusiasm that feeds the path to their own holiness.

Nowadays, this same question is even more acute, motivated by new challenges that, for different reasons, can lead couples to lose the capacity to confront the situations that are part of their lives.

It is apt to consider the increase in the number of older teams that by January 2018, had reached the figure of 4,000 teams; 29% of the total teams in the Movement. Such a large number of couples, at a stage of life where great changes require special attention and support, as well as proper spiritual formation.

The International Leading Team (ERI) would like to maintain its commitment to "make available a specific study topic for teams in existence for more than 20 years", announced in Proposition 4 of the Long Standing Teams booklet. This is a new theme, addressing the reality of these teams.

The proposed topic "To go further", intended for long standing teams, is an invitation to a new vigour and a new freshness, in order to rethink their engagement in a Movement centred on married spirituality, amid a fast moving and disturbingly changing world.



It is intended to help couples in these long standing teams to review and improve their personal lives, as well as their involvement in the Movement, in order to discern the "luminous" aspects and the "dark" aspects, in terms of progress and obstacles.

In this way, it is also proposed to help couples, with the support of the team and thanks to their own personal effort, to start afresh or continue their lives of giving and service at the level of the couple, the team, the Church and the whole world.

We thank the Lebanese team (from a region linked directly to ERI), who prepared this theme, the fruit of much prayer and charity, for facing the continual challenge of providing a means to help couples walk the path to Holiness.

*We conclude with this passage from the recent Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis "**Gaudete et Exsultate** (31)": "We need a spirit of holiness capable of filling both our solitude and our service, our personal life and our evangelizing efforts, so that every moment can be an expression of self-sacrificing love in the Lord's eyes. In this way, every minute of our lives can be a step along the path to growth in holiness".*

Paris, 25 April 2018.

Maria Berta and José Moura Soares

On behalf of the International Leading Team

Study Topic Scheme

The objective of this topic, to be studied over eight meetings, is to "enable members of long-standing teams to develop a new understanding of their life experiences and to re-energise their commitment".

With this aim, the study topic has been designed as shown below:

- A general review and a fresh look at personal life (meetings 1 & 2).
- A general review and a fresh look at the spiritual life (meetings 3 to 6).
- A reflection on belonging to the Movement, attendance at Church and being part of the world (meeting 7).
- Evaluation Meeting (meeting 8).

The eight planned meetings are as follows:

1. The unity of life
2. To accept one's age and continue to build on one's maturity.
3. Moving forward in spiritual life.
4. Deepening the charism of the Teams of Our Lady.
5. Rejuvenating team life.
6. Revitalising the life of the couple and of the family.
7. Revitalizing the commitment and its responsibilities.
8. Evaluation Meeting.



Each meeting, with the exception of the evaluation meeting, comprises:

- Presentation of the topic: here reflections are presented that are based on Church documents, the Movement and from other sources, in order to clarify the subject being considered.
- Questions: are proposed for exchange by the couple or by the team. The questions are merely propositions. A couple or a team can reshape them to suit a specific need.
- Texts for meditation: to be used for prayer time during the meeting, during the month and in the course of preparation for the meeting.
- Complementary texts: these texts are used to enrich and help deepen the reflection of couples.
- To go further: in this section, other texts are proposed to enrich the meeting's topic, titles of books, or articles intended to deepen our human or religious education.

The theme "To go further" will lead couples to reflect on the influence of wellbeing, on the spiritual life of the team, on being part of a team and the support offered by the Movement in facing their daily challenges.

We hope that the couples that study this topic will find in it helpful in reawakening their lives, valuing themselves as human beings and deepening their understanding of the Faith. Finally, we hope that it will encourage couples to move forward, simply because the Christian's mission is always to go further



Annunciation

«Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.»
... «Here am I, the servant of the Lord.» Luke 1, 28–38)

1^a Meeting

The Unity of Life

*Move further into deeper waters, says the Lord.
... I will let down the nets into the deep water.
(cf. Luke 5, 4-5)*

Jn opening this first meeting and the set of meetings that will follow, we would like to emphasize, with Pope Paul VI, the fundamental requirement of inner life for the human person of today: "our mind is too outward-looking ... We have to give the inner life its place in this agitated life: we must meet with ourselves so that the vivifying and sanctifying Spirit can dwell in us". To receive grace requires a cultivated and reflective inner person.

A – Presentation of the topic

For the scientific spirit, all knowledge is an answer to a question.

(Gaston Bachelard¹)

My question is :

What is the meaning of my life as a human being?

Our life, a project

Our life is an object of questioning, but it is also often subject of re-reading and re-evaluation.

Life is a project, which has at its beginning a free gift and a love: I was born, I was created and loved (passively), before I myself was able to love and give myself. I was born into

1 - **Gaston Bachelard**: French philosopher (1884-1962). He held the chair of philosophy of science from 1940 to 1954. His major works: *La dialectique de la durée*, *La psychanalyse du feu*, *La philosophie des sciences*.

a family, a culture, and a complex identity. I realized very early that I am a project: from birth to death. And how this project is full of twists and turns!

Opening to the world and limits

Through life in family and society, my egocentrism is transformed and becomes accessible to integration into social life and more humanization through education. This project of life, which traces the image of myself, is based on my talents and my abilities, but it is also conditioned by my limits, my deficiencies and my defects. I find myself interacting with others who also have their projects and their limits.

Continuité et ruptures

My life is constantly shaped by happy and unhappy events, successes and failures, friendships and rivalries. Far from being locked in egocentrism, our project meets and re-meets other people at different levels: emotional, professional, cultural or other ... I am a "being-with-and-for-others".

The couple: two designs for a single mission

In this perspective, the couple discovers to be a privileged space where two projects coexist, in a fertile interaction and reciprocity. Far from a merger or a dependency, the communion and interdependence between two spouses build unity in difference. The difference is not abolished, but promoted by convergence for a common project. In fact, the spouses feel called to commit themselves to the service of others, in community and in the world: to make the world and to make it happen. Therefore, they are called to be sent, finding their happiness in the construction of

a fraternal world. If conjugal love is a path to happiness, it is no less filled with trials (illness, accidents, loss of loved ones ...) and obstacles: the cross is a necessary passage to reach resurrection and holiness. The Christian couple has no more resources than another couple to circumvent evil, in all its forms. Its only advantage to not succumb is the support given by the Holy Spirit, and especially to be able to get up when they fall.

- "Stop believing in chance and you will believe," says St. Basil². It is not chance that drives the design of our life, but the Providence or Will of our Heavenly Father

B – Questions

For reflection as a couple

- In our life project, there were decisive turns – happy or unhappy – on a personal, conjugal, family, professional level ...? Which?

- Do we become aware of the gifts of God in our lives? Can we tell what they are and how we experience them? In the decisions we had to make, we invoke the Holy Spirit (never, sometimes, often) and feel that we were led by Him?

To exchange ideas at the meeting

- The couple is the junction of two life projects. What are the chances and risks involved in this juncture?

- Do you think God has a project for you as a couple? What?

2 - **Saint Basile The Great:** (329-379) One of the main Fathers of the Church. He is the author of a monastic rule called The Rule of St Benedict, adopted by the Eastern Church. He is one of the forerunners of social Christianity. For more information about him we can refer to the teaching of Benedict XVI on the Fathers of The Church published by Editions Bayard - 2008.

C – Texts for meditation

1 – The Vocation of Jeremiah - Jer 1, 4-10

God, our Father, creates us out of love and entrusts us with a project: to be witnesses to his love and to radiate it throughout our lives; "to build and to plant," to "bear fruit, and that our fruit be enduring."

Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD."

Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me, "Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

2 – Psalm 8, 4-7

The creator placed human being as the manager of creation, who is halfway between the infinitely small and the infinitely great. He made him almost a god. What responsibility!

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals] that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,...

D – Complementary text

1 – The storms in our life

It is always amazing to see the damage that storms, hurricanes or tornadoes leave behind them: devastated houses, broken bridges, overturned cars, destroyed crops, and sometimes many victims.

In addition to natural storms, we also experience spiritual storms in the form of trials, difficulties, complications These storms are very common in our lives, especially in our Christian lives, and spare no one. In general, when these storms occur, they disturb us and disorient us. We do not know how to get out of them, and often our emergency solutions, instead of helping to save us, can only sink us further into our problems.

What to do? In the first place, try to take the blow with the means available, and put ourselves as quickly as possible in listening mode to the message that the Lord sends us through his Providence, either by the people he places on our way or by his Word that it is transmitted to us through the Gospel, during our personal meditation or during our participation in the Eucharist, or in any other way, because the Lord does not lack ideas.

Paul's adventure in chapter 27 of the Acts of the Apostles can be enlightening on this subject.

The ship on which Paul embarked as a prisoner of the Romans, bound in chains, had two hundred and seventy-six persons on board. The boat was caught up in a very strong storm and risked wrecking, which would put the lives of the passengers in danger.

Paul, warned by an angel of the Lord (verses 24 and 25) advised the captain to interrupt the voyage because, as he

told him: a storm is brewing. But the captain would not listen to Paul, and he left Phoenix, port of Crete, to continue his journey. Then came the storm The sailors began to use the only means that would allow them to face the furious sea and avoid the shipwreck: to throw overboard the cargo of the ship: appliances, provisions of wheat ...

Paul, intervening again, prays and announces to the captain that no one will perish ... and that is how they all came to land safe and sound. They were in Malta.

The details of this intervention by Paul, quoted in the text (Acts 27), allow us to make the following observations:

- Paul has full confidence in God (v.24)
- He does not hesitate to proclaim his faith in an Almighty God (v.35)
- He declares that he has full confidence in God that he will do what he said (v.34)

This faith of Paul makes him unshakable.

To know how to read the signs of the times in the light of the Word of God, to listen to the messages that Providence directs us through different means (people, events, nature ...), allows us to find beneficial solutions to our problems and gives us joy, happiness and peace.

Summary of the article by Hilaire Bewa in "The Christian Life".

2 – In the service of the New Commandment ³

Introduction

Within the Church, lay movements, not just religious orders, have their vocation. Understand, therefore, that each one of them is called by God to an original Church service for a proper, irreplaceable function. Just as the vocation of the Benedictines is not that of the Jesuits, nor of Dominicans nor

³ - "In the service of the New commandment: Introduction". In: Caffarel, Henri. The mission of the Christian couple: The beginning and Journey of the Teams of Our Lady. Brazilian edition coordinated by ENS. Loyola, São Paulo, 1990. pp. 67-68. (Original title: Les Équipes Notre-Dame: Essor et mission des couples chrétiens. Secrétariat des END, Paris, 1988).

of whites, every movement of lay people has its own vocation. It is only little by little that a religious becomes aware of the multiple aspects of his vocation. Of course, a Franciscan, a Carmelite ... after ten years, twenty years, fifty years of religious life, he understands infinitely better the demands of his vocation. So it is with Movements.

However, it is of fundamental importance for both Movements and individuals to set aside certain privileged moments to reflect on their vocation.

These privileged moments are, for the Teams of Our Lady, our great international meetings ... Each time we strive for a better awareness of the vocation of our Movement and its mission in the Church.

Father Henri Caffarel

E – To go further

My paths of hope

In his book "The Paths of Hope," Michael Lonsdale has collected his favourite texts from our Christian heritage, which offers us texts that open up so many perspectives to the world and to the souls they seek; he wanted to share his favourites. Let us learn to pray with St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, to take care of ourselves with St. Bernard, to understand the action of the Holy Spirit with St. Seraphim of Sarov; let us see the conversions of Saint Augustine, Paul Claudel, Simone Weil; let us read the words of the martyrs Maximilian Kolbe, Christian de Chergé or Brother Luc; we will find great men of the Church, such as St. Augustine, Cardinal Newman, Pope Francis; let's recall the writers Pascal, Tolstoy, Hölderlin, Charles Péguy, François Mauriac, Julien Green ...

Michael Lonsdale⁴, Philippe Rey editor

⁴ - **Michael Lonsdale**, born in 1931, is a theater and film actor and a considerable artist. He is also the author of a dozen works such as *L'Amour sauvera le monde* (Philippe Rey, 2011), *En chemin avec la beauté* (Philippe Rey, 2012), *Et ma bouche dira ta louange* (Philippe Rey, 2013) et *Jésus, lumière de vie* (Philippe Rey, 2014).



The Visitation

*"And why has this happened to me,
that the mother my Lord comes to me?" (Luke 1, 43)*

2^a Meeting

Be your age and permanently build your maturity

*Nothing can honour a man more, whoever he may be,
that the possibility that he has to be co-creator,
not to suffer his life, but to give it*

Maurice Zundel⁵

The older we are, the more we realize that our life project dealt with in the first chapter is always an adventure and a path of happiness, though it is full of trials and obstacles.

A – Presentation of the topic

Be your age: implications and challenges

Wisdom and experience enables us to bring to the present reality a look that is both peaceful and burdened with anguish. On the one hand, we value the safe conditions and certainties that we can enjoy on a professional, medical, social and spiritual level. On the other hand, we realize that our intellectual, physical, sexual and basic personal drives assume a different aspect and reach a maturity that allows us greater efficiency in the different activities of life.

Despite our limitations, our frustrations, our apprehensions and our possible shortcomings ... although our house is exposed to the risk of gradually losing animation, a serenity can take care of us when we revisit a rich past of

5 - **Maurice Zundel**: Swiss priest (born in 1897 and died in 1975). Poet and lecturer. He has published about thirty books including, among others, "Je parlerai à ton cœur", "Hymne à la joie" edited by Anne Siger and "Croyez-vous en l'homme" in the editions of Cerf. As a bedside book, we highlight a collection of thoughts entitled «Dieu n'habite pas derrière les étoiles» published in 2007 by the Maurice Zundel Foundation in "Jubilee edits. »

its harvest and their consolations. We take from our faith, our conjugal and family life, and our friendships built over the years, comfort, hope and tranquillity.

(See the statement "**After 50 years, a new chance for the couple**" in the Supplementary Texts ahead.)

Seeking a maturity in permanent construction

We wonder to what degree we have reached the expected maturity? On this subject, the French sociologist J. P. Boutinet⁶ speaks of "The immaturity of adulthood". Indeed, in the adult training sessions he promoted, he realized how much these "grown-up" people hid under their quiet appearance, fragility, perplexity, and various childish aspects. It is enough to take a critical look at our partisan representations, our hostilities, our fixed ideas, our badly managed anger, our guilt and our true or false expectations, to realize how much the road to true human and spiritual growth goes through a minefield: human weakness, wounds, scars, fall and sin. "Honest people," observes Charles Péguy⁷, "have no defect in outer armour. They are not wounded.... They do not present this entrance to grace which is sin. Because they are not hurt, they are not vulnerable. Even the charity of God cannot heal him who has no plague. He who has not fallen will never be raised, he who is never dirty will never be clean. Honest people do not wash themselves with grace."

A watchful and critical eye reveals that many of us have been formed – or deformed – in the conviction that they should be perfect to be loved or even capable of loving; conditioned to think that love is something to deserve.

6 - **J. P. Boutinet**: French philosopher, emeritus professor at the Catholic University of l'Ouest. Author of several books and works including "**Psychologie de la vie adulte**". Collection "**Que Sais-je?**".

7 - **Charles Péguy**: French writer and mystic (1873-1914). His rich work includes essays, poems, plays and correspondence.

Accept the poor that is within us (humility and conversion)

The Gospel reveals in Christ a God who has a passion (and a compassion) for weakness and an immense and tender love for the sick, the poor, those who have a broken life and sinners in particular. He is only severe about the self-sufficiency of those who consider themselves "perfect." The real path to maturity and spiritual growth is through "fractures," bruises, weaknesses. It also involves a change of our eyes and an internal conversion. Father Frank Ramsperger⁸ distinguishes four types of conversions:

- Conversion of the head (brain), that distances us from all false lights, obsessions, the preconception and the lazy thought ...
- Conversion of the heart, that drives away negative anger, bitterness, jealousy ...
- Conversion of the hands, that removes the false security to which we cling, the possessiveness, the spirit of domination ...
- Conversion of the feet that distances us from our rigid positions, our fanaticisms and our self-centeredness to take the first step and the initiative to log in to the world of the others, different from us.

*If fear shrinks the heart,
only love can dilate the soul.*

B – Questions

For reflection as a couple (recommended for a duty to the END's "Sit Down")

- Overall, how satisfied are we with the evolution of our life?

⁸ - Frank Ramsperger s.j.: Jesuit priest works at the Collège Notre-Dame of Jamhour - Lebanon.

What consolations, in the past or present, allow us to give a positive and serene look on reality?

- Maturity and human and spiritual growth can only be acquired at the price of the obstacles to be overcome, as well as certain negative energies within us to be controlled, such as frustrations, obsessions, hostilities, rages, guilt, false expectations, representations. ... In front of this, we ask:
 - ▶ Did we experience one or other of these mentioned negative experiences? Has this experience allowed for liberation or conversion that contributed to our human and spiritual maturity?
- Do we have to make changes so that our lives conform to what we really want?

(Think concrete answers.)

To exchange ideas at the meeting

Our children live in a world that has different values from those we try to convey to them:

- How do we try to convey our values (moralizing speech? ... testimony of life? ...)?
- Among the values of the world, which are those that we consider valid, and which should be cultivated? And how to do this?
- What is the place of the Gospel today in our own Scale of Values?

C – Text for meditation

As for the disciples on the road to Emmaus, the acceptance of Jesus into our lives leads us to change our outlook on life, as well as our behavior in the face of events..

1 – Luke 24, 13-33

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.” Then he said to them,

“Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening

and the day is now nearly over." So, he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us] while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together

2 – Psalm 73 (72), 1-5, 15-18, 23-24

God's love for his people and the believer's faithfulness to this love represent a sure way to enter the Glory: "You took my right hand and directed me according to your counsel."

Truly God is good to the upright,
to those who are pure in heart.
But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled;
my steps had nearly slipped.
For I was envious of the arrogant;
I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
For they have no pain;
their bodies are sound and sleek.
They are not in trouble as others are;
they are not plagued like other people.

If I had said, "I will talk in this way,"
I would have been untrue to the circle of your children.
But when I thought how to understand this,
it seemed to me a wearisome task,
until I went into the sanctuary of God;
then I perceived their end.
Truly you set them in slippery places;
you make them fall to ruin....

Nevertheless I am continually with you;

you hold my right hand.
You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will receive me with honour.

D – Complementary text

After 50 years, a new chance for the couple

When the children leave the nest, couples can again concentrate on their marital life in all its dimensions. This crucial period can be an opportunity for a fresh start.

"The Dinosaurs": this is how the four adult children of Brigitte and Gilles introduce their parents to their friends. Respectively at the age of 55 and 54, these spouses are proud of their thirty-five years of marriage. Her 24-year-old "little last one" left home a few years ago to study in another city. Neither Brigitte, who, however, admits to being a "mother hen", nor Gilles suffered from the famous "empty nest syndrome", that feeling of abandonment and emptiness that parents can feel after the departure and independence of their children.

They both trust to be involved in their work and have the desire that this will last throughout their life. "Our life as a couple has not been built on the lives of our children, who will one day go off to build their own lives, but above all on us both," says Brigitte. For her, as for her spouse, the couple needed to make sense of themselves: "We have always cared to have moments for two, and especially we have built our relationship on our Christian faith", they say, together engaged in the Teams of Our Lady, a movement of conjugal and familiar spirituality.

As time has passed, time has become an ally: "We look for each other, we round the corners, and we become much more adapted," summarizes Gilles, noting that since the children's departure, "relationships have become simpler.

"So, for example, there is no longer any disagreement between us on issues related to education."

"The departure of the children from home is one of the indicators of the connection between the spouses: according to the case, it can accentuate their closeness or their distance", confirms Christiane Behaghel, conjugal and family counsellor, author of "Cler Amour et Famille". "The age of fifty is a crucial moment for the couple", she adds. Each is still in full swing at a stage of professional and family maturity. It is time for a mature evaluation of what has been accomplished or not. Possibilities begin to shrink. You may want to change work, life ... "And we come face to face, in everyday life. Sometimes we need to learn how to live as a couple again."

Strong, with her experience as a therapist, Christiane Behaghel insists on the need for everyone to stop, to think about their needs, to wonder about the truth of their marital relationship, the way time was spent on two (he was actually chosen, shared?). "The together-time given to the spouses again is a great opportunity to deepen and strengthen their ties," says the spouse counsellor. "It is the moment to open their eyes to the place given to their conjugal life, in the affective plane and in the different activities, to modify their priorities, to reorient their way of life."

This can be done naturally or can be accompanied by questioning. You cannot run away from the issues. "Many times, behind the criticism of one or the other, they manifest the lack of will to try to find one another again: it is the chance to start again, to re-energize their married life", says Christiane Behaghel. Yes, there may be laments, wounds, but if, in spite of all, the couple held and resisted, the future is promising. And for the desire to stay together, it's worth making some adjustments.

Excerpted from the article by **France Lebreton**,
published in "La Croix" on 4/22/2014

But in fact, what is faith?

Here is one of the best definitions of it: “a participation in the knowledge that God has of himself” and, we must add, ‘in his knowledge of everything’. It is precisely of this last aspect that I want to speak to you for a moment before inviting you to question yourselves on your faith.

Do you have God’s outlook on everything? What he values, what he does not like; do you share these? I will not, in fact, dwell further on this first consideration, although there is much to be said about it. My aim, today, is to lead you to ask yourself this question: “Does my inner sight lead me to see God present, active and sanctifying everywhere? Does it see the divine dimension of people around me and of events?” Let me explain by means of examples: When you are in a coach or in a train, do you look with the eyes of Christ at all these people you see around you with their worries and burdens?

Does Christ’s great loving concern swell up in your heart for them?

This sick person, this poor man, this abandoned woman who ask for your help, do you discern in their call the unmistakable sound of the voice of Christ?

You, parents, looking down at your little child, do you discern the Holy Trinity present in its soul? It is said that Origen’s father would quietly approach his sleeping child and kiss his chest, the tabernacle of his God.

When happenings in your lives upset your plans, do you discern the hand of God? In this connection, call to mind the words of Pascal: “If God himself were to give us masters, how willingly would we not obey them! Necessity and happenings in our lives are such undoubted masters”. And when newspapers report cruel, disconcerting and worrying world events, does your faith tell you that Christ conquers all, that he controls history with a master’s authority and that his irreproachable and unfailing love can-

not be frustrated by human beings?

Do you want to acquire the outlook and reactions of faith that he commands?

Allow me to suggest a way: Decide that, today from morning till night, you will make a very special effort to see all beings and happenings with the eyes of faith. You will begin the day with that prayer inspired by Ezekiel (11: 19) "Lord, put a new spirit in my heart". I assure you that your day will be like no other.

Father Henri Caffarel

Monthly Letter of Equipes Notre Dame ; December 1956

E – To go further

***However you promised me "la vie en rose"
(literally, life in pink)***

Expectations

- ▶ Conversation
 - However, you promised me that everything would be fine.
 - No, not at all.
 - But you said we'd be friends.
 - Yes, but friendship does not mean that everything will always be flowers and that I will always agree with you.
 - Well, but that's what I thought.

▶ Disappointments

Disappointment is a very instructive feeling. It can open cracks in the more sheltered life by bringing in a very healthy flow of realities. People who have false and unrealistic expectations prepare for the

educational shock of discovering that the real world is very different from what they dreamed about. The conversation above shows the naive attitude that one can find not only in a relationship of friendship, but also in marriage, religious life, or any other situation. If we grow up in the unreal paradise of the spoiled child, where the least desire is satisfied, we run the great risk of waiting for the rest of the world to be there to respond to our every whim. The first time someone will "dare" to contradict our selfish expectations, we will certainly be furious, but at least the shock will begin to put us on the road to the harsh realities of the world.

► Contracts

In an excellent book titled "Sexual Celibacy," Donald Goergan refers to Kenneth Mitchel's study of "Contracts." A contract is an agreement that sets the level of expectations. But what causes conflicts and misunderstandings is the secret contract. So we made a contract with someone and set a certain level of expectation towards him, without his knowledge, and sometimes even without our being aware of it. In our conversation at the beginning of the chapter, the friend passed the secret contract that the other would always agree with him, but he never expressed this until the moment when this clause, implied by him, was violated.

A nun who hopes that all her companions have the same maturity as her, has passed a secret contract that will be violated at the slightest sign of immaturity. A community that expects all priests to be like the "Cure of Ars" or "St. Francis of Sales" will be forced to revise their secret contract when the priest's human weaknesses appear.

► Expectations of God

Our expectations for God will depend on the image we make of him. If I consider God a stern judge, I will wait for him to watch over me to find me at fault and punish me. If God is a businessman to me, I will try to discuss and negotiate with him, the famous misunderstanding, "what will you do for me if I ...?" If God is my servant, I expect him to attend to all my needs: arrange it, prepare it, make this plague disappear, make me succeed, etc.

Christ made the experience of false images and expectations of his disciples. The classic example is that of Luke 24, when the disciples are on their way to Emmaus and express their sadness after the crucifixion and the cause of this sadness: "We hoped that the Christ would be the one who would deliver Israel! We know that Christ manages their expectations by the Word of God that inflames their hearts. A similar experience is found in the Acts of the Apostles (1: 6), Jesus taught his friends for 3 years and 40 days, but their question reveals their deeply anchored expectation: "Lord, time has come? Is it now that they will restore the kingdom of Israel? ". Jesus' response sent them back to the real task that awaits them through the power of the Holy Spirit.

► Reflection in prayer

Based on the Scriptures mentioned above, check what expectations you feed toward about twenty people in your life (even God). It would be good to take as a starting point an experience of deception, circumstances in which these people did not live up to expectations. Can you discern secret contracts? Pray for an education

of the heart, based on realistic expectations that are born of an authentic perception of the person to whom we are connected.

Frank Ramsperger S. J.⁹

9- Frank Ramsperger SJ: Jesuit priest who works at the Collège Notre-Dame of Jamhour - Lebanon



The Nativity

"After worshiping Jesus Christ, the Three Kings returned to their land, travelling along another route. (Cf Mt 2, 11-12)

3^a Meeting

Spiritual Life: Growing and Deepening

*The church we are with Jesus;
this makes us immense, universal, like Jesus,
to carry with Him and in Him, the whole
of humanity, the whole universe.*

Maurice Zundel

Moving Forward in Spiritual Life

No one can feel satisfied with the knowledge that was previously learned. If faith continues to be the same, we never finish "understanding what we believe and believing what we understand." We must learn to speak about our faith – not just to witness it, but also to nurture it

Bernard Housset,
*French Catholic Bishop*¹⁰

A – Presentation of the topic

Introduction: Conversion and Instruction

Conversion (subject matter in the previous chapter) and instruction are two fundamental constituents of our spiritual life. Our faith is animated by love and illuminated by intelligence. We cannot love what we do not know. Knowledge remains a key to spiritual experience or to a continually cultivated and in-depth spiritual formation.

10 - **Bernard Housset** is a French Catholic prelate, emeritus bishop of La Rochelle and Saintes, since 2016. His main works are: *Joie de Croire, Joie de vivre* (1981) and *Estime de Dieu* (2012), a book that speaks of faith. See the "Complementary Texts" section to read the author's article which shows why Christian formation is nowadays more important than ever.

Spiritual life can only be built and developed by seeking, without ceasing, new paths in response to the issues of concern and facing the real obstacles to be overcome

Growing up into spiritual life

The instruction received by the catechesis given in the family, in the school, in the parish, in the movements in which we engage, is an essential component of our spiritual life. In fact, faith is transmitted to us through these different mediations. It feeds on our religious practices and worship, our prayer, our meditation and our experiences lived in truth and transparency. Our religious membership marks us and contributes to give us a certain identity that, paradoxically, can be closed or opened. Closed identity can engage us in the ways of fanaticism, isolation or sufficiency.

Open identity finds its enrichment in the acceptance of difference, in plurality and complexity. Amine Maalouf speaks of a "murderous identity" that he opposes to an "open identity" (see his essay on "murderous identities" published by Grasset 1998).

Religious identity, even if open, runs the risk of being diluted in formal practices. Far from minimizing the importance of religious practices and rituals and the fidelity that nourishes them, it is more a matter of opting for an effort to personalize our faith and open the door to maturity. The habits, the routine, the ease, can hide the essential and prevail over the acceptance of our reality, the internalization of our experiences, the deepening of the sense of the mystery of ourselves, the other and God.

Paths to spiritual growing

How to develop and deepen spiritual growth that pleases the Lord? The key is to look for a relationship of trust.

Faith and trust have the same root. We should seek to maintain with God a person-to-person relationship, a relationship of Father with the child. "Well, it's Someone," says Maurice Zundel, "it's Someone to love, it's Someone who trusts us." Yes, our God is the One who comes to us, is Emmanuel. He is not an idea, a concept or an idol. He is. Someone who is Presence, Love and Welcoming. The prayer that pleases Him is an entrance through the door of trust practiced and experienced. A prayerful attitude punctures our egocentricity. The experience of the encounter with God heals us from our dispersion, our indifference and our myopia to make us ascend to unification, communion and sharing.

Spiritual experience opens us to the mystery of the presence of ourselves, the Other, and others, and leads us to love and service. As with any life experience, this growth, which is imbedded with the moment, must make sense to us: we are called to use it for our benefit, not against us or to damage us. The moment arrives when it permits us to cultivate our talents and realize our hope. God created us "to bear fruit," as St. Matthew says (25: 14-30). This spiritual growth enables us to discern "the signs of the times" and thus to better understand the plan of God in our lives, and to join with him.

In the end, all spiritual growth means a growth of communion with God and with others.

Conclusion

In our pursuit of happiness in the communion, and conscious of our need to advance in the spiritual life, four paths open to the achievement of our goal:

- 1 - Work to reconciliation oneself with Him.
- 2 - Forgive yourself to receive the forgiveness of

God and the light of the Holy Spirit.

3 - Nourish yourself with the Word of God that becomes our Rule of Life.

4 - Go out to others to listen, a gesture of solidarity ...

Faith and trust have the same root.

B – Questions

For reflection as a couple

(recommended for a duty to the END's "Sit Down")

- Do we care to feed our spiritual life? What are we doing in practice in this regard?
- *Several paths help us deepen our faith: prayer, listening to the Word of God, liturgical life, Church life, religious culture, Annual Retreats, service, life review ...*
 - ▶ Among the suggestions proposed above for the deepening of our faith, which are the most suitable for us as a couple? Why?

To exchange ideas at the meeting

- What is the difference for you between "religiosity" and "spiritual life"? What in your life is linked to religiosity, and what is connected with authentic spiritual life?
- Pope Francis invites us – almost daily – to go to our neighbour, to perform acts of mercy towards him ...
 - ▶ Can our spiritual life be authentic without this relationship with our neighbour? Who is or who are our neighbours? And what kind of relationship do we have with them?

C – Texts for meditation

*To listen to the Word of God, to guard it with care,
(As for Mary, she kept all these things in her heart),
vivifies us, lifts us up and comforts us.
His Word is light on our way.*

1 – Psalm 119 (118), 10-12, 17.37, 105, 29-131,171-176

With all my heart I seek you;
do not let me stray from your commandments.

I treasure your promise in my heart,
for fear that I may sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord;
teach me your statutes.

Deal bountifully with your servant,
so that I may live and observe your word.

Turn my eyes away from all that is futile;
give me life in your ways.

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light on my path.

Your decrees are wonderful;
therefore my soul keeps them.

The unfolding of your words gives light;
it imparts understanding to the simple.

With open mouth I pant,
because I long for your commandments.

My lips will pour forth praise,
because you teach me your statutes.

My tongue will sing of your promise,
for all your commandments are right.

Let your hand be ready to help me,
for I have chosen your precepts.
I long for your salvation,
O Lord, and your law is my delight.
Let me live that I may praise you,
and let your ordinances help me.
I have gone astray like a lost sheep;
seek out your servant,
for I do not forget your commandments..

2 – Luke 10, 38 - 42

Jesus Visits Martha and Mary

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

D – Complementary text:

1 – The Christian, the man on the move

The Christian is a walker, a man on the road, a pilgrim. He tends towards a term: "The heavenly Jerusalem", following the expression of the apocalypse. Hear: the great

gathering of all men in God. It is the vigour of its momentum towards this term which assures its religious value.

The Christian is worth what his momentum is worth. Mediocre, the one who only softly tends towards this Jerusalem, towards the Lord. Holy, the one that a powerful dynamism carries to God, who aspires to the great appointment.

As for the Christian who settles, who far from tending to another country strives to comfortably arrange his earthly stay, which is deaf to the call of God so as not to be obliged to walk to meet him, Does he still deserve the name of Christian?

When the Hebrew people, after forty years of walking in the desert, after the hard fights of conquest, established themselves in Canaan, it soon fell. – So the Christian who "settles". – It took great disaster and terrible exile to put the Jews on the march towards a homeland, no longer carnal this time, but spiritual.

Do you understand why the Jews, for ten centuries, the Christians for twenty centuries, made pilgrimages? Why do twentieth-century Christians return to the tradition of pilgrimages? It is a question of regaining consciousness of one's vocation, of the call of God, of discovering that one was settling and renewing in one's soul the impulse of the answer to the divine call, of restart.

You will say to me: but it is neither in Jerusalem nor in Rome that God is waiting for us, it is in his eternal home. "Yes, but this road to Jerusalem or to Rome, by all the efforts it requires, helps to free us from the bonds and comforts that clutter our lives. And in these high places of Christendom, God gives us the graces that make us aspire

to join him and help us walk more briskly towards him.

Every true Christian feels himself in unison with this Jewish pilgrim who prayed thus: "May your dwellings be desirable, Lord Sabaoth! My soul languishes and sighs after the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh shout with joy to you, living God!"

Many of you will go to Rome. Many will be prevented. But to all of them without exception I come to say, at the beginning of this year: Make yourself a pilgrim soul, free from all that threatens to hold it back and weigh it down, a soul slender to our God who calls us, everyone by our name and all together.

Father Henri Caffarel

Monthly Letter of Teams of Our Lady, October 1958

2 – Christian Formation To Improve the Relationship with God ¹¹

One of my brothers-in-law, who has lived in the USA for several years, was impressed by a colleague's remark: "You spend a lot of time developing your skills in your profession, in sports, in your cultural knowledge. If you are surprised to not find God instantly, ask yourself instead, how much time do you spend improving your relationship with God?"

(...) Christian formation has always been necessary. And today it's more than ever. No one can, in any field, be happy enough with his initial knowledge. Everything evolves. And if the content of faith always remains the same, the way of expressing it and of living it changes.

¹¹ - . Access to this article is through the Diocese of Montauban-Fr website. (Home page> History and heritage> List of bishops> Mons Housset> Texts of Mons Housset).

We never finish understanding what we believe in and believe what we understand.

Even more so because radically new questions appear. The repetition of formulas conceived in an ancient culture is not enough to account for the Gospel in its permanent novelty. As the Pope said at Reims in September 1996, "the Church is always a Church of the present time. She does not look upon her heritage as the treasure of a buried past but as a powerful inspiration for advancing the pilgrimage of faith in way always new " .

It is not only the intelligence that is interested in this permanent renewal. **It is the whole Christian being**, in the diversity of its dimensions, from bodily expression to its spiritual and even mystical life. Moreover, because the appropriation of the content of the faith is not the sole purpose of a formation initiative. It also includes the acquisition of competence in the exercise of responsibilities within the Church.

Taking possession of the content of the faith, knowing better the Word of God, theology, the history of the Church, the sacraments and spiritualities, allows us to structure the Christian life, to give itself a backbone. And do not simply store knowledge. We will never have finished becoming Christians.

As for the practice of responsibilities, each has the tendency to settle for action, or even to play in activism, with the risk of becoming the owner of a job. The training allows you to just take a step back and analyse your action to improve it. This is how the

Church's sense of participating in the work of God unfolds, without someone installing it on its own.

A dynamic of training also allows you **to learn to speak of your faith**, and thus to nourish it. A love that is not spoken, withers. Likewise, a faith that is not expressed becomes anaemic. The liturgical expression, though essential, is not sufficient. How beneficial would it be for the vitality of the Church if Christians would give themselves a little time to find the words that express their faith, their hope, and their thanksgiving.

It will never be repeated enough with St. Paul, that the reason for formation is to arrive at the "Christ being formed in every Christian" (Galatians 4:19).

Bernard Housset,

Bishop Emeritus of La Rochelle and Saintes

E – To go further

- If we want our faith to be deepened and "consolidated" by a better knowledge of the Scriptures we can read the book entitled "**Entrer dans la Foi avec la Bible, jalons pour une catéchèse d'adultes**" (*Enter the faith with the Bible, milestones of an adult catechesis*) published by the International Institute Faith Art and Catechesis, at editions "Parole et Silence - 2015".

- Also regarding the deepening of conjugal spirituality, our Movement END has already made available to team members, two works in which we highlight the chapters on this subject:

- ▶ The conjugal spirituality', chapter 4th of the book 'Father Caffarel, Prophet of the marriage' edited and released by Teams of Our Lady in 2009.
- ▶ The chapters "Foundations of conjugal spirituality", "Spiritual maturity", and "The means of conjugal spirituality", from the Study Topic "*The path to spiritual life as a couple*" edited and released by the ERI in 2012.



Jesus is presented in the temple

"... and a sword will pierce your own soul too." (Luke 2, 35)

4^a Meeting

Spiritual Life: Growing and Deepening

*"You give but little when you give of your possessions.
It is when you give of yourself that you truly give."
Gibran K. Gibran¹²*

Deepening the Charism of Equipe Notre Dame

Ugreat effort of prayer, reflection and transformation must now be made, with a fierce will to discover the will of God regarding the Movement and its mission, in fidelity to the grace of its origins and in the understanding of the needs of our time.

*Father Henri Caffarel,
The mission of the Christian couple (A missão do casal cristão).
Loyola, São Paulo, 1990. P.129*

A – Presentation of the topic

In the preceding chapters, we have emphasized the two dimensions, personal and communal, of every journey of human and spiritual maturation. Effectively, any maturation, whether human or spiritual, cannot take place outside a community and without communion with the values of this community. Community life and

12 - **Gibran K. Gibran**, Lebanese writer in Arabic and English, was born in Lebanon in 1883 and died in New York in 1931. The above thought is part of the chapter "The gift" from his main work: "The Prophet". His work combines an almost mystical romanticism with an aspiration for social change. A selection of his most beautiful texts has been translated into French and published in the collection "J'ai Lu" ..

communion with these values suppose a **journey** with a group and the creation of **roots** in an environment. In this regard, a founding promise was given to us by the Lord: "Where two or three are effectively gathered in my name, I am there among them." (Mt 18, 20)

Just as a tree only grows and broadens its branches if it is rooted in a land prepared to receive it, the marriage is only successful if it is rooted in an environment prepared to give it sustenance and that allows it to grow and bear fruit. In an arid land, the tree dries up and dies; marriage cannot live outside an environment that sustains it: the demands of love as expressed in 1Corinthians 13, 47 (the hymn to love) cannot be lived by a couple locked in on themselves. In order for the conjugal relationship to flourish, it must be lived, on the one hand, under the sign of openness to God, the source of all love and of all fruitfulness, and, on the other, under the sign of openness to others, which can become its bearer medium.

Teams of Our Lady, inspired by "The Second Wind", which introduces the idea of 'returning to the source' of the Movement, aims to be for the couples that are part of it, a means of support with: **a reason for being** – helping couples to cope with the increasing challenges to which society exposes marriage; a **founding charism** according to which marriage, as well as in the various forms of consecrated life, is a path of holiness; and the **practical means** through the endeavours in **team life**, helping couples in their marital and spiritual journey.

This path of holiness in which we engage should be – or become – a source of testimony that shows the world that marriage, despite the trials and difficulties it contains, remains a path of happiness and holiness.

Reason for the Teams of Our Lady and Structure of the Movement

1 What is the justification for END and what does this movement propose to couples?

Father Caffarel, in a letter addressed to Jean and Annick Allemand when his book "The Teams of Our Lady, Growth and Mission of Christian Couples" was published, sets forth the *raison d'être* of teams.

So we can sum up his thinking:

- Faced with the evil that arose in the twentieth century and which is called "sexual liberation", with all that it generates (free unions, divorces, abortions, homosexual marriages ...), Christian couples affirm their desire to live fully, their love and sexuality within marriage.
- Encouraged by the teaching of popes since Vatican II, couples witness to true conjugal love by integrating a fully Christian and at the same time fully human sexuality.
- Thus, men and women, at least the most lucid, will understand that only Christ can heal the great human realities, particularly marriage, and thus save our civilizations threatened by shipwreck.
- Therefore it may be thought that a great purifying wind may arise upon the people of God.

2 Some of these couples, made up of teams, have given themselves a Charter of the Teams, that defines the goals, the mystique, and the organization of team life.

In addition, with the international expansion of the Movement, which currently exists in around ninety countries, an administrative structure was set up to ensure the loyalty of teams throughout the world, to the spirit of Movement and its Founding Charism.

3 This administrative structure comprises several levels of service, which require of their holders a developed sense of responsibility, as well as an attitude of welcome and service. Moreover, at each level there is a Spiritual Counsellor who ensures the doctrinal and spiritual contribution to the team of which he is a full member and which elevates it by stimulating it to prayer and to the practice of the Endeavours.

4 Team members may be required to provide a range of services (see 7th meeting ahead) that require their holders to be grounded in prayer and to exercise them with full loyalty and responsibility.

Generally, the assignment of responsibility contributes, on the one hand, to giving people in their care the opportunity to mature and grow in humanity, and on the other hand, enables the person who exercises that responsibility to be the primary beneficiary. In the spiritual field, proper exercise of responsibility enables the person who exercises it, as well as the community or group benefiting from it, to deepen the faith and progress in spiritual maturity.

Finally, the mission of couples engaged in Teams of Our Lady/END, who have had the opportunity to deepen their

spiritual and conjugal life, is an urgent mission. Let us remember the word of Jesus as recorded in Luke 10, 2, **"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."**

B – Questions

For reflection as a couple

(recommended for a duty to the END's "Sit Down")

- How are we, regarding the Charter?
Do we bother to be aware of it?
Is it for us as a couple, a reference to which we return from time to time?
Do we have examples to share?
- If the Movement asks us to entrust ourselves with the responsibility of a service in a given area and at a certain level, are we ready to accept and fully engage ourselves?
What would be the service we could best ensure?

To exchange ideas at the meeting

The END's Founding Charism is often a vague idea in the minds of team members. And here we have an opportunity to reflect on this.

To ease the exchange of ideas, we can refer to the summary that Father Caffarel gave at his conference in Chantilly on May 3, 1987.

(This summary is included in the "Complementary Text" D section below).

C – Texts for meditation

1 – Colossians 3, 12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

2 – Psalm 128 (127), 1 - 6a

Happy is everyone who fears the Lord,
who walks in his ways.

You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands;
you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you.

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house;
your children will be like olive shoots around your table.

Thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.

The Lord bless you from Zion.

May you see the prosperity
of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

May you see your children's children

Peace be upon Israel!

D – Complementary text:

Founding Charism

At his conference held at Chantilly on May 3, 1987, Father Caffarel summed up the elements of the founding charism. Teams demanded a set of rules that would allow their members to progress on their path. It was therefore necessary to summarize the elements of the founding charism as they emerged during the Movement's years of existence. Father Caffarel summarized the founding charism in 7 points that had been well regarded:

1. Marriage is a labour of God and is the masterpiece of God.
2. Marriage has a soul, which is love. To despise love is to condemn marriage.
3. Men and women cannot be faithful to love without the help of Christ. That is why he invented the sacrament of matrimony, which needs to be deepened.
4. Married Christians, like others, and like monks, are called to holiness, and this seemed quite original. The Council had not yet happened, and it was in

the Council that the call of the laity to holiness was strongly insisted.

5. Marital life contains great riches and also great demands.
6. It is necessary and indispensable to develop a spirituality of the couple, which cannot be the spirituality of a celibate or a monk.
7. This can only be lived with the help of a Movement to guide the thoughts and frame life

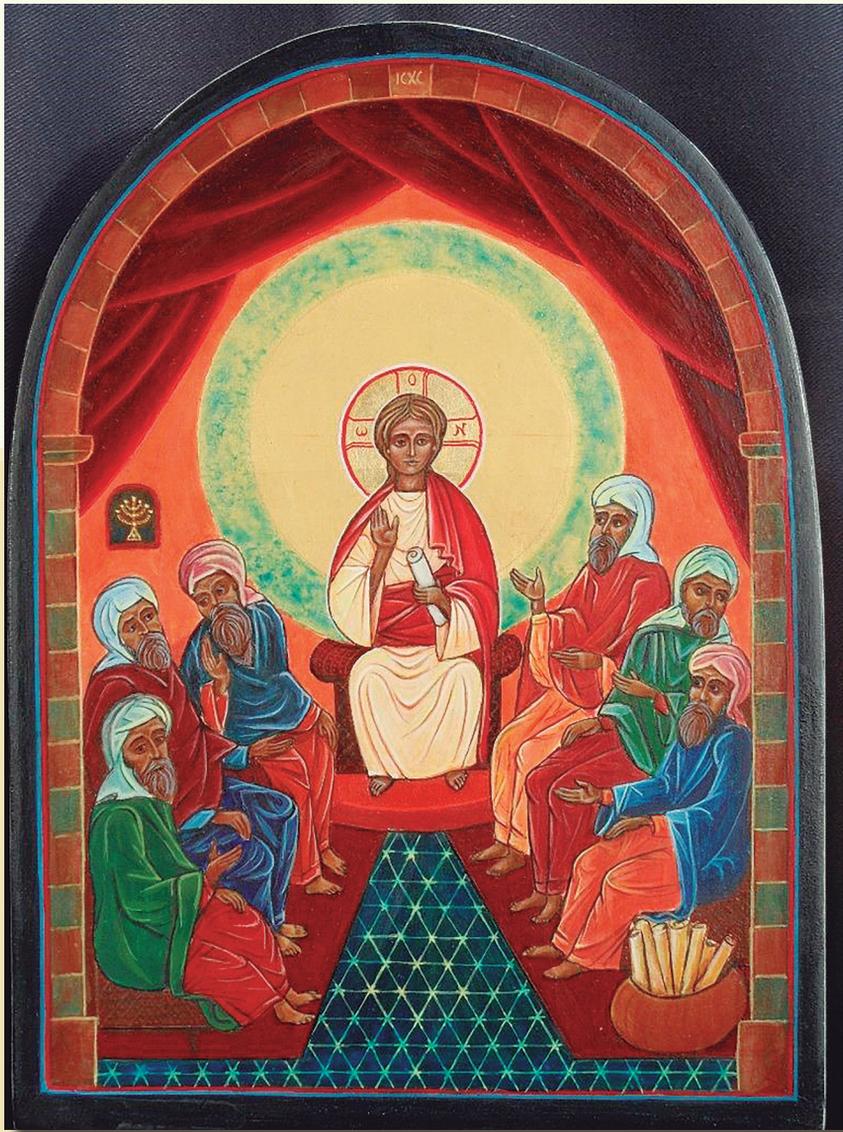
See all the text of the conference that has as central theme the founding charism.¹³

E – To go further

- Two documents, which give a complete idea of the vocation and mission of the Teams of Our Lady, can be consulted with benefit to the subject of this meeting:
 - ▶ TEAMS OF OUR LADY. **"Father Caffarel, prophet of marriage"** (Extracts from texts – by Carlo and Maria-Carla VOLPINI). English version, published available
 - ▶ JEAN ET ANNICK ALLEMAND. **The way of the future: "The Teams of Our Lady: Growth and mission of Christian couples"** – Texts of Father Caffarel presented by Jean and Annick ALLEMAND – English version, published available

13 - The original French text, *"But n° 1"* (The first Goal), was published in the French END's monthly letter of February 1950.

- Regarding the conjugal relationship, we can also read the book of Olivier Belleil, entitled "*The conjugal relationship, liturgy of love*", Editions des Béatitudes – 2009. The author proposes an approximation between the conjugal relationship and the Eucharist in its different phases: request for forgiveness, liturgy of the word, offertory, communion, thanksgiving, sending on mission.



The boy Jesus in the temple

*"He came to what was his own,
and his own people did not accept him." (cf Jo 1, 11)*

5^a Meeting

Spiritual Life: Growing and Deepening

*They do not know what they are missing,
those who do not know how to listen to the silence.*

Maurice Zundel

Part Three: Renewing Team Life

But if union with Christ is for you the essential, and if END seems to you to be the providential means of attaining it, then I tell you that Teams must occupy an essential place in your lives.

Père Henri Caffarel. *"The first Goal"*¹⁴.

In: Henri Caffarel 1903 -1996:

In: Henri Caffarel 1903-1996: Selected texts

A – Presentation of the topic

Rejuvenating the life of a team that has been working for several years, means reactivating the various factors that intervene in the life of this team. These factors may lose their importance as a certain routine can settle in the relationship between its members, and may create resistance among some of them.

Thus, for example, communication between members can be transformed and listening attentively to the other, be changed to an attempt to prepare a "convincing" response. On the other hand, some

¹⁴ -L'article « **But n°1** » du Père. Caffarel a d'abord été publié dans la Lettre mensuelle, février 1950.

blockages can arise because the relationships between the members of the team, becoming very familiar, can alter the good functioning of the meeting, to the point that deviations in the behaviour of couples may arise.

Good communication within the team gives all the courage during the meeting's intense moments (particularly sharing and prayer). As long as communication goes on deteriorating, we will easily lose sight of the Lord's statement that where two or three are gathered in His name, He is in the midst of them.

The success of a team depends on several factors: trust and respect among its members, which make us appreciate the points of view of others; discretion, delicacy and benevolent gaze to accept the diversity of viewpoints as well as the differences between personalities and the attitudes of others. We can also add listening to mercy and inner (and outer) silence that allow us to create an environment where each one can freely express himself without feeling judged.

Another interesting point to work on: promoting the spirit of creativity that allows the team to renew itself by adopting new ways of working to progress in the spiritual life, in mutual help, in hosting and welcoming, at the fellowship meetings, celebrations or of birthdays ... And finally: personal asceticism represents an important element both for spiritual progress and for the good functioning of the team.

An equally important point is to practice continuous evaluation at the end of the Monthly Meeting, as well as at the Evaluation Meeting, to remedy the weaknesses identified during the evaluation and to consolidate the strengths.

Lastly, it is the role of each team member to ensure that the team does not fall into fatigue and routine. Furthermore, it must be remembered that a Christian community can only live and progress if it is centred in Christ.

B – Questions

- **For reflection as a couple**
 - ▶ In all teams there are different personalities, having different attitudes and reactions to situations and problems.
 - ▶ How much do you come to accept the diversity of points of view and personalities in your team? Can you bring examples?
 - ▶ Some members of your team at certain times may have experienced difficulties and trials that have disrupted the couple's life. Were you present with them at such times? Has mutual help been practiced? If so, in what way?

- **Team Discussion**
 - ▶ What is the quality of listening in your team? Does each team member express himself freely without feeling judged?
 - ▶ Communication is an important component in the life and cohesion of the team. In this regard, are you generally satisfied?

Were there problems in your team that disturbed communication? Name one recent case.
 - ▶ Do you think there is a good spirit of brotherhood among team members? If so, how to maintain it, and, if not, how to develop it?

C – Texts for meditation

1 – Philippians 2, 1-5

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.

2 – Psalm 104 (103), 1ab.24ac, 29bc-30, 31.34

*Faced with the splendors of creation,
man can only marvel and praise God.*

Bless the Lord, O my soul.
O Lord my God, you are very great.

*O Lord, how manifold are your works!
the earth is full of your creatures.
when you take away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.*

When you send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the ground.
May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works

*May my meditation be pleasing to him,
for I rejoice in the Lord.*

D – Complementary texts:

1 – Recovering breath

Father Caffarel expresses his thoughts on what a Team of Our Lady and a Team Meeting should be in his second to last editorial, a text almost as a last will and testament:

- “Would you like to speak to all our teams all together in one gathering?”
- On what subject?”

My interrogator reflects a moment, looks at me with a mischievous smile and responds:

- “Suppose that you were to die the day after our conversation together, what subject would you like to have discussed during that last contact with the couples and the teams?”

I am grateful to that person for her response. She has compelled me not only to meditate on death, but also to clarify my thoughts about the topics that I consider most important to convey to members of teams:

- conjugal spirituality: the way to God, specific to married Christians;
- the Charter: the document which twenty-five years ago gave the Movement its spiritual direction, structure and methods;
- the team, charity success: the goal of so many teams;
- the psychology of small groups: what are the conditions for a group to find its cohesion and maintain its momentum towards the objective pursued;

- the deepening of the faith - at that time when it is so threatened;
- the mission of the Teams of Our Lady in today's world.

It seemed to me that each one of these topics, in succession, was going to be equally important. I ended up by opting for another way. On the point of death, with little time remaining and unable to cover everything, a spiritual testament is necessary: words that touch directly on the essential. And I decided to speak of the Christian significance of a Team Meeting. I hasten to explain:

The monthly meeting of a team must not be defined only by its structure, its spirit, the friendship between its members, the desire that it be a step in the search for God. First of all, it must recognize its supernatural substance and its mystery. In fact, it is, or it should be, a very different reality from a meeting on a simply human level. It must be understood in the light of these verses of Matthew: "For where two or three meets in my name, I shall be there with them." (Mt 18, 20) I tell you again: "If two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven." (Mt 18, 19.)

Amongst these couples gathered in a home, the Risen Lord is intensely present, alive, attentive to all, and loving each one as they are, with their good and their bad qualities, and anxious to help each one to grow to his potential. It is as on Easter, in the upper room in Jerusalem, when suddenly, the Risen Lord appeared to the other members of His team, the apostles. He breathed on them and said; "Receive the Holy Spirit." And they became new men. Jesus Christ, among the couples, does not stop breathing his Spirit on them. And those who are open to His

Breath, which is grasped little by little – become people of this Breath. And the meeting proceeds animated by the Spirit. To these men and women who, at the end of a work day, often arriving exhausted, preoccupied, this Spirit communicates the two-fold passion of Christ: his impatience for the glory of the Father and his burning and tender mercy towards the multitudes “who are like sheep without a shepherd.”

What I have just said, that’s not what happens every time, but it is what should happen, because a team meeting which does not include, primarily, an effort by all to encounter Christ is something very different from what a meeting of a Team of Our Lady should be.

To encounter Christ means, in the first place, to begin to listen to Him whom we know is present. He speaks to us in the Scriptures – that is why we love the Word of God. He speaks to us through the teachings of the Church, and, little by little, through meditation on the Bible. He speaks to us through the hearts of our brothers and sisters, but not always through words. He speaks to us in different ways during the meeting, but we must have ‘a listening heart’, according to the biblical expression. He speaks to us to instil confidence in each one of us to reveal the Father and his plan for us. He speaks to us to invite us to conversion (we are never completely converted), He speaks to us inviting us to reach out in support of others... He speaks to us, and we recognize that all that is very difficult to put into practice. Moreover, He is not content to just speak to us, but to transform those of us who admit their powerlessness by giving them this Spirit of Power, that which changed simple villagers of Galilee into tireless witnesses of the Saviour.

But the main question is this: are you going to understand what I have just said merely as compassionate and edifying phrases, or rather as the reality of a team meeting? "That will be the measure of your faith,": Christ said to the people of Palestine, and that is what He says to each one of us at the beginning of each meeting.

There was a time in Teams of Our Lady, and it was a time of great vitality in the Movement, when there was much discussion about what was called the small "ecclesia." This word "ecclesia" was very much appreciated because it emphasized the original character of a meeting of Christians in the name of Jesus Christ. Didn't Saint Paul say ecclesia to what he met at the home of Aquila and Priscilla, a couple for whom he felt great affection?

And if someone asks me what allows me to use the same word "ecclesia" which refers to the whole Church of Jesus Christ, for a small meeting of faithful followers as well, I will answer briefly to bring my thoughts to a close: the small Christian group is truly a cell of the Church. Each cell lives in the life of the body: in every cell in my body, my soul is present and living. In the same way, in each cell of the Church, in each "ecclesia," the soul of the whole Church is present, living, impatient to become sanctified.

What a great leap it would be for our teams if they fully grasped these insights concerning the monthly meeting! And if they were to live them!"

Father Henri Caffarel

Monthly Letter of Teams of Our Lady, March April 1973

2 – Jesus and Respect for Others

Meditation of Cardinal Albert Decourtray ¹⁵

Man has never respected others like this man.

For him, the other is always more and better than the one to whom the received ideas, even of the Sages and the Doctors of the Law, tend to diminish him. He always sees in the person that he finds a place of hope, a living promise, an extraordinary possibility, a being called to a whole new future, although and beyond his limits, his sins and sometimes his crimes. He even discerns there a secret wonder, whose contemplation plunges him into a thanksgiving!

He does not say: This woman is inconsistent, light, crazy, she is marked by the moral and religious atavism of her environment, she is just a woman. He asks for a glass of water and engages in a dialogue.

He does not say, Look there, a public sinner, a prostitute bogged down in her vice. He says, "She has more chances for the Kingdom of God than those who value their riches or take refuge in their virtue or their knowledge."

He does not say: She is just an adulterous woman. He says, "I do not condemn you. Go and sin no more."

He does not say: The one who tries to touch my cloak is just a hysteric. He listens to her, speaks to her and heals her.

He does not say: This old woman who puts her small donation in the collect for the Temple works is superstitious. He says, "how extraordinary she is and how good it would be to imitate her detachment."

15 - Albert Decourtray (1923-1994) is a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church. Archbishop of Lyon (1981-1994), President of the Conference of Bishops of France (1987-1990). He was elected member of the French Academy on July 1, 1993. Works: *Une voix dans la rumeur du monde* (1988); *Un Evêque et Dieu* (1989), Chez Fayard; *Le Testament inachevé* (1994), Chez Flammarion, faithful report of the interviews with Nicolas Domenach and Maurice Szafran, journalists.

He does not say: these children are just children. He says, "Let them come to me and try to look like them."

He does not say: This man is only a corrupt official who enriches himself by pleasing the powerful and making the poor bleed. He invites himself to his table and ensures that his house has received salvation.

He does not say, like those who accompany him: "This blind man certainly pays for his faults or those of his ancestors." He says that people are completely deceived about him, and he astonishes them all, his Apostles, the scribes and the Pharisees, showing very well how much this man enjoys the favour of God: "It is necessary that the action of God be manifested in him."

He does not say, "This centurion is just a profiteer". He says, "I have never seen so much faith in Israel".

He does not say, "This wise man, Nathanael, is only an intellectual." He opens the way for a spiritual rebirth **instead.**

He does not say, "This man is an outlaw." He tells him, "Today you will be with me in paradise."

He does not say, "Judas will never be more than a traitor." He lets himself be hugged and says, "My friend!"

He does not say, "This braggart is just a renegade." He tells him, "Peter, do you love me?"

He does not say: "these high priests are only wicked judges, this king is only a doll, this Roman procurator is only a coward, this multitude conspiring against me is but a plebeian, these soldiers who mistreat me are nothing but torturers. He says, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do ..."

Jesus never said, "There is nothing good in this here, or that there, in this environment, or that."

Nowadays he would never have said it: he is only a fundamentalist, a modernist, a leftist, a fascist, an unbeliever, a fanatic ... a bitch ...

For him, others, whoever they may be, whatever their deeds, their status, their reputation ... they are always people loved by God. Never before or after him did a man respect others like this man. He is unique.

He is the only Son of Who makes the sun shine on the good and the wicked.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, have mercy on us sinners!

E – To go further

1 – Called together just as we are

In Christian communities, it seems God likes to call to the same community people who are humanly so different, even from different cultures, classes or countries. The most beautiful communities come precisely from this great diversity of people and their own nature. This drives each to overcome their sympathies and antipathies, to love the other despite their differences.

These people would never have chosen to live with others. Humanly, this seems an impossible challenge, but it is precisely because it is impossible that they have the inner confidence that it is God who chose them to live in this community. And then the impossible becomes possible. They do not rely on their own human capacities or on

their sympathies, but on their Father, who called them to live together. He will gradually give them this "new heart and new spirit" so that all may become witnesses of love. In fact, how much more humanly impossible it is, it is a sign that their love comes from God and that Jesus is alive: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13: 35).

In that first community of apostles, Jesus chose to live with him, profoundly different men: Peter, Matheus (the publican), Simon (the Zealot), Judas ... They would never have walked together if the Master had not called them.

We should not seek the ideal community. It is about loving those whom God placed beside us today. They are to us a sign of the presence of God. We could have preferred different people, more cheerful and smarter ... But these are the people that God gave us, that he chose for us. It is with them that we must create unity and live the covenant.

*Jean Vanier*¹⁶:

La communauté lieu du pardon et de la fête.
Edition Fleurus/Bellarmin. 7^e éd., P. 24.

2 – Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Amoris Laetitia"

We can refer to Pope Francis's apostolic exhortation "Amoris Laetitia", particularly to paragraphs 91 to 119, which consists of a commentary on the love hymn of 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7.

"In this apostolic exhortation, the Pope reminds us that all authentic social life rests on love and that it

16- Very interesting is the book by Jean Vanier: "**La communauté lieu du pardon et de la fête**". Fleurus/Bellarmin 7th ed. It is an in-depth reflection on community life. Jean Vanier is the founder of L'Arche, home to adults with learning disabilities, who organized in 1971 the first international pilgrimage "Faith and Light" in Lourdes, attended for the first time by thousands of such people from several countries.

compromises the whole person, his body, his affections, his intelligence, his age, his maturity, his masculinity or his femininity." (**Mons. Philippe Bordeyne**, in: Presentation of the Apostolic Exhortation. P. I, Salvator editions)



The wedding at Cana: Mary teaches the prayer of intercession

*When the wine gave out,
the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine. (John 2, 3)
Present to the Lord the need, then leave the need to Him to respond.*

6^a Meeting

Spiritual Life: Growing and Deepening

*The END are based on a certain idea of love.
... that conjugal love is a magnificent reality:
... that reveals the union of love that God
wants to contract with each of men and women.*

Father Henri Caffarel¹⁷

Part Four: Strengthening the Life of the Couple and the Family

After twenty years of teamwork, couples are, on average, forty to fifty-year-olds, beginning to lose their breath because of all the obligations they have to face, with energies that are practically limited. That is why there is an urgent need to find ways to reinvigorate the life of the couple and the family.

A – Presentation of the topic

The life of the team is a place of spiritual renewal and a dynamic space for the life of the couple in which progress and retreat are continually succeeding. Filled with enthusiasm, young team-mates are determined to follow the charisma that Father Caffarel gave as the motor of the Movement. To what level do our couples and families manage to maintain their breath and the first impulse given by the "grace of beginnings"? In response to this first question, let's "radiograph" the lives of couples and teams of our Movement and watch their two sides: the dark and the luminous.

17 - The above concept is part of Father Caffarel's article "Just Parents", published in the END's Monthly Letter of March, 1952. (See the full article in the "To go further", "E" section of this meeting).

1st watching - the "dark side"

At the beginning, we find that, after two years of growth, the moments of maintenance arrive. Taken up by work, small children, studies, the couple is satisfied with "more or less". The Study topic is usually not worked out in so much depth, and negligence starts to be felt in meetings.

After a few years as a team, couples may get tired because of hectic lives and then lose focus on the essential: God in their lives. Meditation is careless; the "Sit Down", neglected. On average, they are in their forties or fifties. They had concerns to be overcome: growing children, parents and in-laws aging, a spouse with professional or health problems. In short, it becomes urgent to "sit down," to become aware of the factors that can affect their lifestyle, and to discern, under the eyes of God, the decisions that need to be made.

Because time and energy are limited, a couple at this stage of marriage rarely have the opportunity to recover. When they laugh together, it's probably because one of the kids said something funny. They became "daddy and mummy" and forgot to be "husband and wife". An "X-ray" of the couple's life would make it possible to perceive the level and quality of the spouses' love, as well as their evolution through the joys, trials and problems of all kinds through which the couple passed. For many, 'wear and tear' is already a fact of life. On the other hand, children who grow up have many problems, especially from adolescence: the need for presence and attention by the parents to the choice of lifestyle, through the preoccupation with studies, the professional orientation, sometimes the marriage and all the other problems to which young people today are exposed.

Among the problems that couples encounter during their lifetime, there are those in relationships with parents and

in-laws. How distant should one keep from them? What attitude should each spouse adopt regarding in-laws?

2nd watching - the "luminous side"

However, from a more positive point of view, we must remember that some couples, as well as some teams, have been able to continue in their impulse, seeking to grow more and to progress, both in the level of faith and in social life. To reinvigorate, they have been able to apply their talents, skills and successes to the service of others, accepting responsibility within the Movement, in the parish, in the diocese or in the life of the city. They also had their difficulties, with ups and downs, but they overcame challenges and overcame obstacles. There are several team members and their testimonies are radiant. "When we fully assume our quality of 'saved', says Madeleine Delbr el¹⁸, "we become powerful, bright, and in a sense enlightened". We should not forget, for reasons of intellectual integrity, the case of some team members who, without seeking the means to progress and re-enrich themselves, gave up and left the Movement because they were stagnant, felt that they gave nothing to others and that they were falling behind.

Concluding

In a Christian home, it is important to know how much we seek to learn about the Church's teachings about the couple and the family.

Finally, we can reflect on what we can expect from the team on these issues.

18 **Madeline Delbr el**: "*S'unir au Christ en plein monde*" - Edition by Nouvelle Cit e. She is a French mystic who converted to Christianity at the age of 20. She is also an essayist and poet, and has left an important literary work. Madeleine Delbr el was recognized as venerable by the Catholic Church.

B – Questions

For reflection as a couple

(recommended for a duty to the END's "Sit Down")

- How could we evaluate:
 - ▶ our evolution as a couple?
 - ▶ our interaction with the children (communication, studies, lifestyle choice, projects for the future, etc.)?
 - ▶ our interaction with the grandchildren (when there are some)?
 - ▶ our relationship with our respective parents?
- Quelles décisions pouvons-nous prendre sous le regard du Seigneur par rapport à ces questions ?

Team Discussion

- Do you have any knowledge of the Church's teaching on marriage and family?
 - ▶ Do we know the title of the documents dedicated to this subject?
 - ▶ What can we do to learn from this teaching?
- Do you know any team members or teams:
 - ▶ Who have been able to constantly revitalize their commitments?
 - ▶ What may have been their success factor?
 - ▶ Who left the Movement? In your opinion, why?
 - ▶ What role, in your view, can fidelity to the Endeav-

ours play, more specifically the duty to Sit Down, in the evolution of the couple and the team?

C – Texts for meditation

1 – Ephesians 3, 14 - 21

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of His glory, He may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through His Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to Him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

2 – Psalm 127 (126)), 1 - 5

Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labour in vain.

Unless the Lord guards the city,
the guard keeps watch in vain.

It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest,
eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives sleep to his beloved.

Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord,
the fruit of the womb a reward.

Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the sons of one's youth.

Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them.
He shall not be put to shame
when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

D – Complementary texts

1 – Christians in the world

This text, from the 2nd century, was written by an unknown author for apparently a fictional persona (Diognetes) with an apologetic purpose.

A picture of the Christian that should make us reflect.

"Christians are not distinguished from other men by country, language or customs. After all, they do not live in their own cities, they do not use a special dialect, and their lifestyle has nothing special about them. Their doctrine was not discovered by the imagination or by the reveries of restless spirits; do not judge themselves, like so many others, defenders of a doctrine of men.

They dwell in Greek and barbarian cities, following the destiny of each one; they adapt to local customs by clothing, food and the rest of existence, manifesting the extraordinary and truly paradoxical laws of their lifestyle. Each one resides in his own homeland, but as foreigners domiciled. They fulfil all their duties as citizens and support everything as foreigners. Every foreign land is a fatherland to them, and every homeland to them is a foreign land. They marry as everyone, have children, but do not abandon their new-borns. They share the table, but not the bed.

They are in the flesh, but they do not live according to the flesh. They spend their lives on earth, but they are citizens

of heaven. They obey the established laws, and their way of life is more perfect than the laws. They love all and are persecuted by all. They are not known, but condemned; they are killed, but this is how they find life. They are poor, but they enrich many. They lack everything, but they have everything in abundance. They are despised, but it is in contempt that they find glory. They are slandered, and in slander they find their defence. They are insulted, but blessed. They are outraged, but they do honour. Even if they do good, they are punished as evildoers. Although they are punished, they rejoice as if they were earning a living. The Jews wage wars with them as foreigners, and the Greeks pursue them; those who hate them do not know the cause of their hostility.

In short, just as the soul is in the body, Christians are in the world. The soul is spread by the members of the body so Christians are in the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body and yet does not belong to the body, just as Christians inhabit the world, but they do not belong to the world. The invisible soul is a prisoner of the visible body; it is also with Christians: we see them living in the world, but the worship they dedicate to God remains invisible. The flesh detests the soul, and with it, it causes conflicts, without it harming it, but because it prevents it from enjoying pleasures; in the same way that the world hates Christians, without their having harmed them, but because they oppose their pleasures.

The soul loves the flesh that hates it, as well as, its members, just as Christians love those who detest them. The soul is enclosed in the body, but it is it that holds it; and Christians are held in prison in the world, but they are whom maintain the world. The immortal soul encamps in a mortal tent: likewise, Christians camp in the corruptible world, waiting for the incorruptibility of heaven. The soul

becomes better when suffering from hunger and thirst, and Christians, persecuted, are multiplying more and more. The place God has kept for them is so beautiful that they are not allowed to desertion. "

Excerpt from "Letter to Diogneto"

2 – Your children¹⁹

(...) Your children are not your children.

They are sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you.

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,

which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday...

Gibran Khalil Gibran

¹⁹ - Here is a text taken from Gibran's masterpiece "**The Prophet**". The text reminds us of the Law of Life and draws our attention to the fact that no one owns anyone, even our children do not belong to us.

E – To go further

1 – Just Parents²⁰

The solid foundation of the family is the couple. To ensure first of all the strength of the couple and to carry on to the end the strengthening of conjugal love is then what matters.

"I was recently told by a couple: 'The Teams of Our Lady no longer believe in love. We did not find wives and spouses there, only parents'."

Of course I was not too alarmed by this over the top remark. However, I asked myself if it would not have a part of truth, and I opened up with a responsible one. Gently and a little protective, he answered me: "You do not expect that, married for 15 years and with 7 children, we still play to the lovebirds! But that does not stop us from understanding each other. "This answer did not reassure me at all: he had just used the verb "to understand" where I expected to hear 'love'."

The Teams of Our Lady are based on a certain idea of love. More precisely, in the deep conviction that conjugal love is a magnificent reality: the work of the sixth day that crowned the pyramid of beings, the most dazzling and most essential symbol, the one that reveals the union of love that God wants to contract with each one of the men – that reveals and also that realizes that union. What a pity that I cannot reproduce here my article "Vocation de l'amour" published in "Mystère de l'Amour". I ask you to read it again if you have reached the stage where you still "understand each other well". Please read at least these lines on the first page of

20 - Father Caffarel's article "Just Parents", published the first time in the END's Monthly Letter of March, 1952. More recently also in the book Henri Caffarel 1903-1996: Selected texts. 2009.

the Letter: "The couples of the Teams of Our Lady want their love, sanctified by the sacrament of marriage, to be a praise to God, a testimony to men, proving to them, with all the evidence, that Christ has saved love. "

Above all, do not lie to yourselves. If you no longer have faith in love, do not call it wisdom or maturity. If your love is fading, do not try to excuse yourself by saying that there are so many more urgent things, if not more important: the education of growing children, the social responsibilities that become burdensome. But these children have an imperative need of your love: it was this one that made them be born, only it can make them grow. Your worth as a person, whatever your successes and your stripes, is in danger if your love decreases. Do not be too easily reassured that at least your spiritual life will gain what your love loses. We cannot build the first with the ruins of the second.

Even the world around you is frustrated if your love cools. This world, which is not far from despairing of love, a certain quality of love, and submerging itself in matter, has a right to your witness. It needs to see divine love radiate from a human tenderness, to learn from you that Christ came to save love. Will you refuse this testimony to the world?

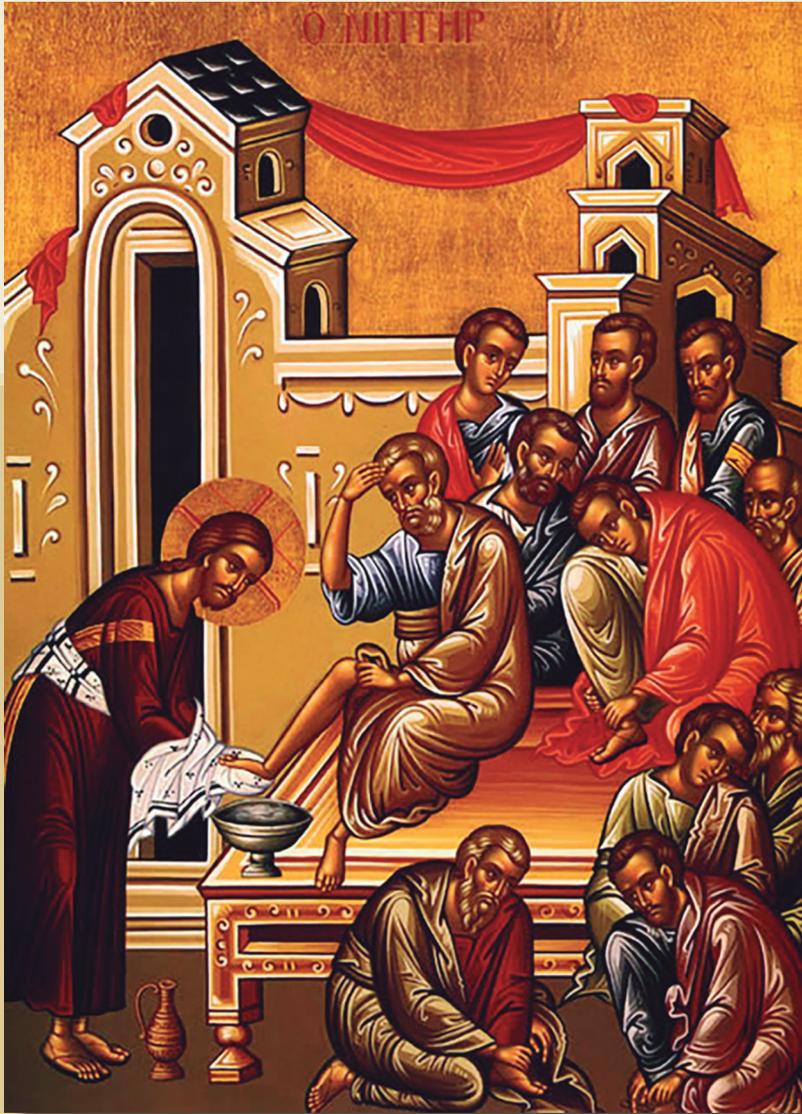
P.S.: *I am not unaware that love, as it evolves, changes its face. In fact, I ask you not to love each other as you did in your twenties, but with a deeper love each day. Never take advantage of the decline of your love, never ascribe maturity of love to what it is but a weakening of love".*

Father Henri Caffarel

Monthly Letter of Teams of Our Lady, March 1952

2 – Evangelizing sexuality

Regarding the various aspects of the couple's life, it is interesting to examine the document published in 2017 by Équipes Notre-Dame, titled "**Sexuality and Conjugal Spirituality**" – **an invitation to dialogue**. This document brings together and deepens the theme of sexuality and spirituality, inviting couples of the teams to live the experience of a dialogue and helping them to reflect as a couple, willing to authentically be witnesses of this precious and fruitful gift of God.



Jesus washes the disciples' feet

"But whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave." (Matthew 20, 26b-27)

7^a Meeting

Rejuvenating life in the team

We have not given anything until we give it all!

Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus

 Every baptized person is called to engage, every Christian couple is called to engage, every Christian community is called to engage ... and, for us, Christian couples, what does it mean and what should we engage in??

A – Presentation of the topic

We are called to engage

Since the first meeting, we have strongly emphasized that the spouses have a common and open project: "they are called to engage in service to others in community and in the world ... They are called to be sent, finding their happiness in building a fraternal world". To go further, we ask ourselves as long-standing teams, designed in our different realities across the five continents of our world, in these first decades of the third millennium: in what to engage? Why engage? And finally, what is engaging?

On what to engage?

The question: "What should we engage in?" imposes itself on our Movement, which always made it clear that it was a Movement of "conjugal spirituality" long before it was a Movement of Action. As we have tried to show throughout the previous meetings, the main concern of

END was to see the team members being filled by the gifts and promises of the sacraments of baptism and marriage in communion with the Trinitarian life, trying to grow in this life until "the full dimension of Christ", as St. Paul says.

Saint Augustine of Hippo, when giving communion to the believers, said: "Become what you are receiving, the Body of Christ" and commented: "I mean": The Body of Christ, and then you respond: "Amen".²¹ Conjugal Spirituality, the specific characteristic of our Movement, reminds us that our engagement comes from within, from spiritual rootedness in communion with the Trinitarian life. It is not an external and activist obligation, but a call to be more and the vocation to be for others. "This is the basis of" spiritual mutual help, "the life-giving soul of the team's life", and END rushes to complete this definition by saying: A movement of conjugal spirituality, consisting of couples engaged in service to the Church and to the world.

(Charter of the Teams of Our Lady)

Engagement makes us grow

Freedom is permanently threatened to be disoriented. It only finds its direction and its true meaning, making itself responsible for itself and for others. Engagement can frighten and seem expensive and out of fashion, but, it is more than ever, indispensable and rewarding.

"Each one needs to be pushed and educated for the engagement", Mons. Michel Dubost reminds us, in a document published in 2012 by END under the title "Growing with Engagement". Because in order to get involved we have to love. Mons. Dubost insists on love at

21 - "The Eucharist according to St. Augustine". In Homily 272, To baptized church members on the sacrament. Saint Augustine (354 - 430), Bishop of Hippo (Northern Africa) and Doctor of the Church for the New Baptized.

first sight, necessary for engagement. For St. Augustine, engagement is a "positive response to unforeseen enlightenment".²² The calls for engagement are many, you have to dare to let it light up to respond. Dare to believe that you can take something to someone and be ready to live this adventure."

In "Heartbeats - Letter - Space - Teams", Marco gives this testimony of his life as a team player: "The responsibilities we have assumed within the Movement have made us grow. We have learned to work together, to listen to one another, and to us as a couple, to give space to each other. This engagement also allowed us to find a large number of very enriching people. We are very happy to live this engagement in the Church".

Irrevocable engagement open to the whole world

Our engagement can start from within the Movement and become involved in the service of the Church and the world. Pope Francis shook the bourgeoisie of the ecclesial institution, those that passively await. That is, people who go to Church and just stay waiting "without moving". He calls us to go out, to risk, to break the chains and to meet the wounded and the poor. "I would like a poor church for the poor", he says on March 16, 2017, in an audience with journalists.

At the Synod on the Family, Pope Francis confronts us with the precarious situation of the irrevocable engagement of Christian marriage, and calls us to be witnesses of God in a world that prefers temporary engagements to definitive and irrevocable engagements. He also reminds us that "freedom and fidelity do not oppose" (Audience of October 21, 2015).

22- The comments quoted from the work of **Monsignor Michel Dubost**, "Grandir avec l'engagement", Pygmalion, 2012, 18 p., were obtained from the "Coups de cœur Lettre" section of the Super-Région France-Luxembourg-Suisse Website.

The Holy Father encourages us to engage with love, lucidity and perseverance, in the construction of peace, justice, ecology ... He does not hesitate to push us toward engagement in politics, a difficult and often corrupt environment. He says that this engagement is "a kind of martyrdom, a daily martyrdom, in search of the common good, without being corrupted ... through small things, tiny things, little by little."

Concluding: what does it mean to compromise?

"Engaging is living, but living and engaging," says Archbishop Michel Dubost, "to engage", so he continues, "you have to carry that loving gaze on the beauty of life". Engaging is still hoping, living the charity and to examine, without ceasing, our own conscience about fidelity to the Gospel..

B – Questions

For reflection as a couple

- As a couple, how can you harmonize these two demands: spiritual life and commitment?
- Can you share somehow in Marco's testimony: "Have the responsibilities we assumed within the Movement made us grow?" Give some examples

Team Discussion

- What can be the incidence of our engagement in our spiritual life and, conversely, what can be the contribution of our spiritual life to our commitment?
- What engagement can we take, as a couple, within the Movement, or in the Parish, in charitable associations, in politics, etc., in these other cases also personally?

- How to respond to the Holy Father's calls on this matter?
- Each one needs to be pushed, educated for engagement." Why this need? How can we educate and educate ourselves for engagement?

C – Texts for meditation

1 – Psalm 115 (113B), 1-3, 12 -18

Not to us, O LORD, not to us,
but to your name give glory,
for the sake of your steadfast
love and your faithfulness.

Why should the nations say,
"Where is their God?"

Our God is in the heavens;
he does whatever he pleases.

The Lord has been mindful of us;
he will bless us;

he will bless those who fear the Lord,
both small and great.

May the Lord give you increase,
both you and your children.

May you be blessed by the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

The heavens are the Lord's heavens,
but the earth he has given to human beings.

The dead do not praise the Lord,
nor do any that go down into silence.

But we will bless the Lord
from this time on and forevermore.
Praise the Lord!

2 – 1Corinthians (3, 5-15)

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labour of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw – the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.

D – Complementary texts

1 – Get out of yourself

The story tells us about a journey from Jerusalem to Jericho. I made this journey on foot, along Wadi Qelt. The twenty-five-kilometre path runs through a desert and rocky country. But the story speaks of a more internal journey. The word Luke uses to say "journey" is the same (hodos) he uses to speak of the Christian faith: "The way". The parable is a journey that transforms our understanding of God and humanity. The master of the law asks: Who is my neighbour? At the end, Jesus asks a different question: Which of the three was neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the bad guys? The master of the law's question puts him in the centre. Who is our neighbour? This is the most radical journey that every human being has to make, the liberation of selfishness. We begin this journey from our birth. The newborn is the centre of your world. Growing up, he discovers little by little that there are other people and that they do not exist only to do our will. Then, behind the breast, there is a mother. We become fully human when we learn to give the central place to others. For each of us, the greatest challenge of our lives is to stop being the centre of the world.

***Meditation by Timothy Radcliffe O.P.,
on the Parable of the Good Samaritan.***

(May your joy be perfect, CERF, 2002, page 41-42)

2 – You have undertaken to help and support the members of your ²³

You feel responsible and want to be (in part) responsible for their human and Christian fulfilment; it is now a matter of working at it, of giving to them, of giving yourself to them. However poor we may be, we have a lot to give since, what those around us need first of all, is not our goods but ourselves. That is also the most difficult thing to do. "My heart is tied with an elastic: as soon as I give it, it comes back to me". Thus spoke a man who wanted to make me understand his selfishness. It is difficult and draining to give oneself to others and to be always available to them: available to give them some practical help, no doubt, but first and foremost to provide the far superior service of an attentive, understanding and encouraging heart that is reliable, knows how to speak the truth and dares to be demanding. There is a yet more precious gift. Very few are those who go that far. I am referring to God's life in us that is our principal wealth and which we are so reluctant to share. Whether that is out of reserve or bashfulness or human respect, the fact remains that this life remains locked up in each of us. "From his heart shall flow floods of living water," said Christ "speaking of the Spirit which those who believe in him were to receive" (Jn 7, 38-39). But his disciples close the flood-gates. An increasing number of teams have adopted for a year or two what we call the meditative method of gospel reading. Many have acknowledged that a much greater union has resulted, precisely because members are invited to reveal in a brotherly way what they have understood, as they prayed over the chosen page of the gospel. There is a perfect Christian way of giving that

23 - Fr. Caffarel's article, "*You have undertaken to help and support the members of your team*", was first published in French (*Vous avez pris en charge les membres de votre équipe*) in the Monthly Letter, April-May 1957, and more recently in the book "Father Caffarel: Prophet of Marriage" released by END in 2009. P. 24

is sacrifice: “No one has greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15: 13). Team life often requires that we sacrifice our taste, our will or our personal preferences. To give up in the face of a demand is to fail in love; it is to turn down the greatest benefit we can draw from a team, namely: that it makes us die to ourselves. Christ rises again in those who die to themselves. A team is in jeopardy when its members lose the spirit of sacrifice.

Father Henri Caffarel
Monthly Letter, April-May 1957

E – To go further

POPE FRANCIS' ADDRESS TO TEAMS,

Rome 10th September 2015

I am pleased to welcome you, dear leaders and spiritual counsellors of the Teams of Our Lady, on the occasion of your world meeting. This meeting which I have the joy of attending with you is only a few weeks before the Synod of Bishops that I wished to call together in Rome, so that the Church may reflect with ever greater attention on the situation experienced by families, the vital cells of our societies and of the Church, and who are, as you know, threatened in the present difficult cultural context. In this circumstance, I ask you, as well as all the couples on your Teams, to pray with faith and fervour for the Synod Fathers and for me.

Naturally, a movement of conjugal spirituality such as yours fully express the attention that the Church wants to have for families, and it does so both by promoting the maturation of the couples who work with your

Teams, through the fraternal support given to other couples to whom they are sent.

Indeed, I would like to insist on this missionary role of the Teams of Our Lady. Every committed couple certainly receives a great deal from its Team experience, and its conjugal life is deepened by refining itself through the spirituality of the Movement. However, after receiving from Christ and from the Church, a Christian is irresistibly sent out to witness to and pass on what he has received. "The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized" (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 120). Christian couples and families are often the best placed to proclaim Jesus Christ to other families, to support, fortify and encourage them. What you live as couples and as families – accompanied by the very charism of your Movement – the profound and irreplaceable joy that the Lord enables you to feel in domestic intimacy in joy and sorrow, in the happiness of your spouse's presence, in the growth of your children, in the human and spiritual fruitfulness that He grants you, all this is to be witnessed to, proclaimed and communicated outside so that others, in turn, may set out on this path.

In the first place, then, I encourage all couples to put into practice, and to live in depth, with constancy and perseverance, the spirituality the Teams of Our Lady follow. I think that the proposed "concrete points of commitment" are truly effective aides, which enable couples to progress with confidence in conjugal life on the way of the Gospel. I am thinking, in particular, of the a prayer of couples and prayer in the family, a beautiful and necessary tradition that has always supported the faith and hope of Christians, unfortunately

abandoned in so many regions of the world. I am also thinking of the time for monthly dialogue proposed to the spouses – the famous and demanding “duty to sit down”, which runs so counter to the habits of the frenetic and agitated world pervaded by individualism – a moment of exchange lived in truth under the Lord’s gaze. It is a precious time of thanksgiving, of forgiveness, of mutual respect and attention to the other. I am thinking, lastly, of faithful participation in Team life, which brings to each one the richness of learning and of sharing, as well as the help and comfort of friendship. In this regard, I emphasize the mutual fruitfulness of this encounter experienced with a priest who supports you. I thank you, dear couples of the Teams of Our Lady, for being a support and encouragement to the ministry of your priests, who always find priestly joy, fraternal presence, emotional balance and spiritual paternity in their contact with your Teams and your families.

Secondly, I invite the couples, fortified by Team meetings in the missionary commitment. This mission which is entrusted to them, is all the more important inasmuch as the image of the family – as God wills it, composed of one man and one woman in view of the good of the spouses and also of the procreation and upbringing of children – is deformed through powerful adverse projects supported by ideological trends. You are certainly already missionaries by the radiation of your family life to the spheres of your friendships and relationships, and also other areas. In fact, a happy and balanced family, inhabited by the presence of God, speaks in and of itself of God’s love for all men. I also invite you to commit yourselves, if possible, in an ever more concrete way and with ever renewed creativity, to the activities that can be organized to wel-

come, form and support in the faith young couples in particular, before and after marriage.

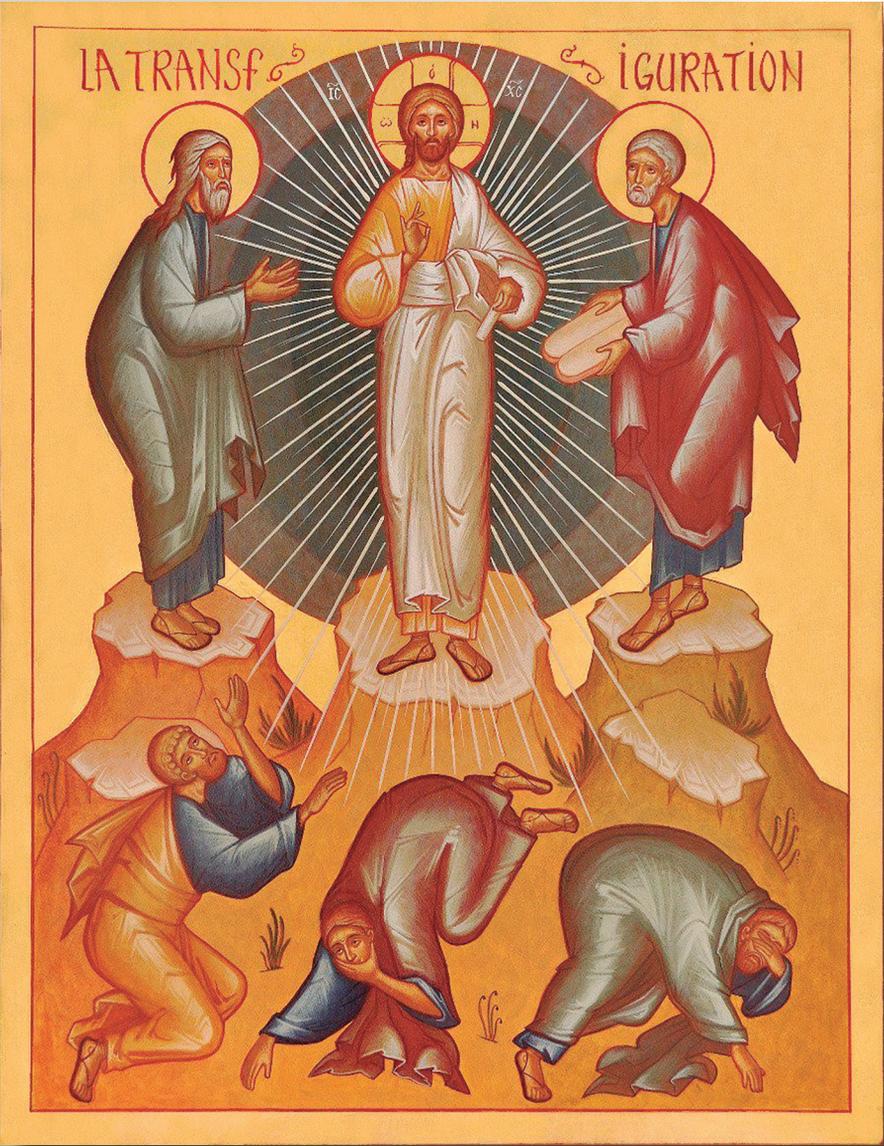
I also exhort you to continue to be close to wounded families, who are so numerous today, due to unemployment, poverty, health problems, mourning, worry over a child, the imbalance caused by an estrangement or absence, a climate of violence. We must have the courage to come into contact with these families, in a discreet but generous way, materially, humanly or spiritually, in those circumstances where they are most vulnerable.

I cannot but encourage the couples of the Équipes Notre Dame to be instruments of the mercy of Christ and of the Church towards people whose marriage has failed. Never forget that your conjugal fidelity is a gift of God, and that mercy has been exercised on behalf of each one of us. A united and happy couple can understand better than anyone else, as from within, the wound and the suffering caused by abandonment, betrayal, failure of love. Therefore, it is necessary that you be able to bring your testimony and your experience to help Christian communities to discern the real situations of these people, and to accept them with their wounds, and help them to walk in faith and in truth, under the gaze of Christ the Good Shepherd, to play an appropriate role in the life of the Church. Nor should you forget the unspeakable suffering of youngsters who experience these painful family situations: you can give them much.

Dear Teams of Our Lady, I renew my confidence in you and my encouragement. From the moment that the Cause of Beatification of your Founder, Fr Enrico Caffarel, was introduced in Rome, I have prayed that the Holy Spirit may

enlighten the Church in the judgment that she will have to pronounce in due time in this regard. I entrust your couples to the protection of the Virgin Mary and of St Joseph, and I impart to you my heartfelt Apostolic Blessing.

Vatican City, September 10, 2015



The Transfiguration

"Jesus Christ, true man and true God"

8^a Meeting

Evaluation Meeting

*Do not be afraid, little flock,
Jesus, the Good Shepherd,
watches over you night and day!*

A – Presentation of the topic

Dear Spiritual Counsellors, dear Team Members,

The evaluation meeting is a special moment of sharing and mutual help, as a couple and as a team, held in an atmosphere of prayer, truth and communion. In a spirit of charity, we are all invited to evaluate our personal and couple journey as well as that of the team and, opening up for discussion the difficulties and joys, failures and successes ...

"the essential thing is to seek the will of God (...) and to respond to His call to live out more authentically the agape-love which is the soul of every Christian community. " *(The Guide of The Teams of Our Lady - p.22).*

Let's remember the different moments of this meeting:

- Prayer
- Meal and General Sharing (month relevant moments experienced by the couple)
- Election of Responsible Couple
- Assessment:
 1. - Reviewing the year at the level of couple and team.
 2. - Review of the life and evolution of the team since its beginning.
 3. - Suggestions and Guidance for the future and decisions ...,
 4. - Assessment of the topic: observations, suggestions, proposals ...
 5. - Evaluation of the meeting itself.
- Magnificat.

Recommendations for this "special" review meeting:

- It is convenient to prepare this meeting in writing (reflections, ideas, suggestions ...), for greater efficiency with less delay.
- Let us devote to this meeting the necessary time, so that each of the team members has the possibility and the time to put itself in relation to all the mentioned points. It would be interesting to dedicate a weekend to this review meeting.

B – The meeting

Prayer

1 – Invocation of the Holy Spirit

Veni Creator Spiritus

Come, Holy Spirit, Creator blest,
and in our souls take up Thy rest

come with Thy grace and heavenly
aid to fill the hearts which Thou hast made..

O comforter, to Thee we cry,
O heavenly gift of God Most High,

O fount of life and fire of love,
and sweet anointing from above.

Thou in Thy sevenfold gifts are known;
Thou, finger of God's hand we own;

Thou, promise of the Father,
Thou Who dost the tongue with power imbue.

Kindle our sense from above,
and make our hearts overflow with love;

with patience firm and virtue high
the weakness of our flesh supply.

Far from us drive the foe we dread,
and grant us Thy peace instead;

so shall we not, with Thee for guide,
turn from the path of life aside.

Oh, may Thy grace on us bestow
the Father and the Son to know;
and Thee, through endless times confessed,
of both the eternal Spirit blest.

Now to the Father and the Son,
Who rose from death, be glory given,

with Thou, O Holy Comforter,
henceforth by all in earth and heaven.

Amen.

Rabanus Maurus (776-856),
Monk Director of the Benedictine school at Fulda, Germany.
In 847 became archbishop of Mainz.

2 – Psalm 40, 1-11

I waited patiently for the Lord;
he inclined to me and heard my cry.

He drew me up from the desolate pit,
out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.

He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear,
and put their trust in the Lord.

Happy are those who make the Lord their trust,
who do not turn to the proud,
to those who go astray after false gods.

You have multiplied, O Lord my God,
your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us;
none can compare with you.
Where I to proclaim and tell of them,

they would be more than can be counted.

Sacrifice and offering you do not desire,
but you have given me an open ear.
Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

Then I said, "Here I am;
in the scroll of the book it is written of me.
I delight to do your will, O my God;
your law is within my heart."

I have told the glad news of deliverance
in the great congregation;
see, I have not restrained my lips,
as you know, O Lord.

I have not hidden your saving help within my heart,
I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;
I have not concealed your steadfast
love and your faithfulness
from the great congregation.

Do not, O Lord, withhold
your mercy from me;
let your steadfast love and your faithfulness
keep me safe forever.

Meal and General Sharing

(month relevant moments experienced by the couple)

Election of Responsible Couple

This election must be held before the assessment, so that the elected couple can take all the conclusions of this assessment to ensure that they will be applied during their mandate.

Assessment

1. Review of the year

At the level of couple:

about our journey, personal and as a couple following Jesus: desert time, strong moments ... decisions ...

"We do not engage in teams to achieve, but to make progress, each of us at our own pace".

At the level of Team

A "Team" is not simply a human community. It comes together "in Christ's name" and attempts to help its members to make progress in the love of God and in the love of one's neighbour in order to answer fully the invitation of Christ.

- a** Has our team progressed in terms of listening, respect for points of view, support and encouragement? What means were used to develop friendship and team spirit among us, members?...
- b** Are the various parts of the meeting respected? How were they lived: the meal, the general sharing, the prayer, the sharing of endeavours, the study topic; Was it with the special attention of each of them?
- c** What was the mutual help between the team members, in the special situations or in the difficulties that a couple could have had?

d What was the role and presence of the Spiritual Counsellor throughout this year? What effort must be made by the couples and what is the effort to be considered by the Spiritual Counsellor?

e How do you assess your connection with the Movement (contact with the Liaison Couple, reading the Monthly Newsletter, access to the national and/or international site, participation in local and national activities, annual contribution ...)?

2. Review of the life and evolution of the team since its beginning

At this point, an exchange of ideas could be proposed as a team, on the questions addressed in the Sit Down.

- The "movement" of the team members during the existence of the team: were there desertions, departures, admission of new couples ...? Has there been a change of Spiritual Counsellor? What was the impact of these changes on the life of the team (their cohesion, their dynamism, their spiritual tone ...?)
- Has there been a concern in the mandates of the various responsible couples (and usually by all other couples in the team) to help the team progress in the paths of fraternal charity and holiness? As well as the concern to get the team to participate in national (and international) activities? Have there been initiatives or occasions that have led the team to make a fresh start? Which was? Have situations occurred that slowed the pace of the team's journey? Which was?

- Have the various parts of the meeting been observed normally? Were there initiatives to avoid routine meetings? What were they?
- Were the endeavours seriously experienced by the team? If not, what were the points that had problems?
- Have the various study topics been of interest to all team members? Were they usually studied by couples before the meeting?
- What was mutual help within the team?
- Which place do the team couples give to welcome and hospitality? Do you have any testimony in this regard? Which ones are they?

3. Suggestions and Guidance for the future and decisions

It is interesting to define for the future, given the conclusions of this assessment, the guidelines and decisions to be made, to put them in writing, and to review them from time to time.

4. Assessment of the topic: "To go further"

- Has this topic, as a whole, been interesting to you?
- In it, have you found weaknesses, or not interesting points? Which are?
- Would you have any comments or suggestions to make on this? Which are?

- Would you recommend it to other teams?

2. 5. Evaluation of the meeting itself by each of those present, following around the table.

We must remember that "the teams are not kindergartens for well-meaning adults, but are made up of unremitting God-seeking couples who are eager to live out their faith. Who is a member, should play the game loyally." (The Guide of The Teams Of Our Lady)

Magnificat

Documents of the Magisterium of the Church

POPE JOHN PAUL II. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "*Christifideles Laici*", on the vocation and the mission of the lay faithful in the church and in the world. 1988.

POPE FRANCIS. Apostolic exhortation "*Evangelii Gaudium*", on the proclamation of the Gospel in today's world. 2013.

POPE FRANCIS. Post-synodal apostolic exhortation "*Amoris Laetitia*", about love in the family. 2016.

POPE FRANCIS. Apostolic exhortation "*Gaudete et Exsultate*", on the call to holiness in today's world. 2018.

Documents from our lady teams

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END. *Guide of the Teams of Our Lady. 2001.*

END. *The second wind, 1988.*

END. *What is a team of our Lady, 1977.* (In: Henri Caffarel, *The Teams of Our Lady, Growth and Mission of Christian Couples.* © Henri Caffarel, Paris, 1988. P. 165-173).

END. *Long-standing Teams Manual.* January 2017

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A daily face to face with God. (Original title: *Une tête à tête quotidienne avec Dieu,* END-ERFS, septembre 2000).

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