



Equipes Notre-Dame Teams



Newsletter for the GB Regions

Equipes Notre Dame, Teams, is an International Christian movement for married couples of all ages.

Charity Reg. No: 1044902

Equipes Notre-Dame • Teams of Our Lady • Equipos de Nuestra Señora • Equipas de Nossa Senhora • Ehegruppen E.N.D

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■ Newsletter Editors

Please send all contributions for the December 2011 - February 2012 edition by October 1st 2011, preferably by e-mail to

David & Avril Cockshoot

We list below future events throughout our Regions – some organised by Sectors, some by the Regions. We hope that, by advertising all events in this newsletter, if there is an event in a neighbouring area that you would like to attend, then you will feel free to do so.

Regional Gatherings The theme is “Live Simply” (CAFOD Theme)

2011	Central Region - 8th October St Gregory's in Cheltenham Central to produce the Mixed Teams literature	Piotr & Dzia Chodzko-Zajko Regional Couple
	Southern Region - 15th October St Mary's College Southampton Southern to produce the liturgies	Kevin & Elaine Taylor Solent Sector Couple
	Northern Region - 22nd October St Joseph's Wetherby Northern to produce the Workshop Material	Mark & Dympna Edwards Regional Couple
Nov 26	Surrey South & Sussex Sector Birthday Party Ladywell Convent, Godalming The sisters are happy to offer us their wonderful facilities for this important event. Mass will be celebrated for team members in their Oratory followed by a shared supper in their refectory.	Bernard & Susan Kelly Surrey South & Sussex Sector Couple

www.TeamsGB.org.uk • Web Site

Many people are now accessing the GB Web Site. If you have any recommendations for a retreat centre or for study topic material you can either send an email to the GB Newsletter Editors (davidcockshoot@btinternet.com) or the wedded web couple Paul and Annette O'Beirne (webmaster@TeamsGB.org.uk)

Central Region Letter

Dear Friends in Teams

Stop for a moment and think about the fact that there are over 55,000 other couples – just like you – within the Teams movement.

55,000 other couples, who meet within a team every month to listen to the Word of God, pray together and support each other.

55,000 other couples who might be struggling with their faith, sharing their problems and relying on the support of their team to help them through.

Now summer is almost behind us perhaps it is also time to stop and think about next summer and how we will support the movement at the 11th International gathering in Brasilia. The theme is “To dare to live the Gospel” and it is tremendous to think that the whole movement – those 55,000 couples in 50 countries, along with their Spiritual councillors are getting ready for by using the same pre-gathering study topic and, just like us, are deciding whether to attend or not.

As a couple we have decided to go and give thanks for our 25 years of marriage - which we will celebrate at the gathering. We will also give thanks for our 20 years within Teams without which our life together as a Christian married couple would undoubtedly have been harder. We urge you all to join in the spirit of the gathering either by attending or supporting the solidarity fund helping others to attend. Equally important are your prayers both individual and as a Teams. If there is no couple from your Team planning to attend than let us at least together as a movement prepare and with one voice, “dare to live the Gospel”.

Please note the dates of your regional gathering in October and be assured that if the date is not convenient you will be made more than welcome at the gathering of any of the other Regions.

God bless and be assured of our love and prayers .

Dzidzia & Piotr Chodzko-Zajko

Central Regional Couple



*Fr. Simon Penhalagan is the Spiritual Councillor for GB Teams Central Region.
This short article introduces him.*

Ordination Day

by Fr Gerald Kelly

Simon Penhalagan is one of the longer-term members of Sion Community, having been with us for sixteen years. For the last six of these years Simon has been a student at St Mary's College, Oscott, training for the priesthood. On

28th June 2008 we gathered in Northampton Cathedral around Bishop Peter Doyle to witness and share in the great occasion of Simon's ordination. The day was marked by a great spirit of joy and celebration as Simon became the first member of Sion Community to be ordained priest.

For Simon's parents, the celebrations would have a very personal poignancy as Simon was received into the presbyterate of the Northampton diocese in the permanence of Holy Orders. When Jesus announced to his parents that from now on he must be about his Father's business, it was the cause of deep pondering on the part of Mary his mother, and the beginning of a new life for Jesus; the one time quiet carpenter-son was embarking on a life that would lead to him being claimed by his disciples as public property. In priesthood, Simon's calling is to a new availability to all, in the service of God's people.

An ordination will always have a significance that goes beyond the call of the bishop to the individual ordinand. The background and context of Simon's calling is that of community life and mission with Sion Community. In Simon's ordination we experience ourselves to be drawn more closely together and raised up to a new place of genuine pride in what the Lord has done for us and among us. We feel that we can all share in the privilege and blessing of being called and chosen as we pledge our support for Simon in his future life and ministry as a priest.

Simon, as a Core Member of Sion Community, and as a priest of the Northampton diocese is now marking out a new way of how vocation might be discovered and realised. Simon brings not only a particular charism to the Northampton presbyterate but also his ordination signifies and seals a developing partnership between Sion Community and the Diocese. Simon now relates Sion Community to the institutional Church in a way that can open for us new opportunities for mission within the diocesan structure.

Priesthood is a wonderful sacrament of both leadership and service, of sharing in the joys and sorrows of Christ and his people. We pray that our enthusiastic display of support on Simon's ordination day will deepen and mature into a commitment to Simon in the years to come. May the Lord bless Simon as he himself is used to bless us through his priestly service in Sion Community and in the diocese of Northampton.



May 2011

Together Towards Brasilia

In the previous article, we talked about the deeper significance of pilgrimages and the meaning of our international gatherings. Here we are going to spend some time on the first three meetings: Lourdes in 1954, Rome in 1959 and Lourdes in 1965.



It is important to talk about them because they form the first part of our Movement's history that could be defined as the *intuition phase*.

Father Caffarel had many qualities, but the one that characterizes him the most is that he was a man of intuition that resulted from a profound life of prayer and consequently, a great intimacy with God. He was a man of vision, who was capable of grasping the signs of the times.

When the Movement began its expansion towards other European countries, and more particularly, when it began to cross the Atlantic and settle in Brazil, Colombia, Canada, the US, Father Caffarel had the intuition that something had to be done to cultivate the international nature of the Movement without losing its unity.

"Gatherings must communicate the most perfect sense of unity, because on the spiritual plane there are no frontiers...", he said. "You have experienced the sense of unity throughout these days spent in Rome. We have used this occasion to mix nationalities in your teams precisely so that this fraternal feeling amongst couples may become apparent," he explained to couples at the pilgrimage.

In order to accentuate the unity of the Movement, he insisted that the leading team be made up of a priest and of couples from different countries and that international gatherings be held to allow for the sharing of experiences and research.

Stemming from this intuition, big international gatherings began and their occurrence gave a certain rhythm to the Movement. The original tiny grain was now able to blossom to its full potential.

But there is something else in Father Caffarel's intuition. He insisted that "a gathering is always an occasion and opportunity to stop and take time. To take the time to think, reflect and discriminate."

Indeed it is fundamental, for movements as well as for couples, to take the time at certain moments to reflect on their vocation. For the Teams, these special moments are the international gatherings, times when we try to understand more fully the vocation of our Movement and its mission within the Church. Novelties are not introduced into the Movement, but rather we seek to deepen what we discovered at gatherings of previous years.

So, as we move forward from the initial intuition of what an international gathering should be, what its spirit and goals are, we seek to build on those aspects which were special to each of the three first gatherings, aspects that help us perceive the hand of God who is behind the destiny of our Movement.

1st International Gathering at Lourdes, June 5-7 1954 ***850 team members present***

This gathering was instigated to ensure the unity of the Movement that already had an international dimension, right from the beginning. Please note the 'coincidences dictated by the Holy Spirit'.

The gathering was initially meant to be in 1953, but elections in France moved the date up to the following year. This was a happy coincidence, since the Pope declared 1954 to be a Marian year, celebrating the centenary of the Immaculate Conception dogma.

Father Caffarel had already placed the Movement under the protection of Mary in the 1947 Charter and believed that it was not possible to praise Mary without knowing her more deeply. He suggested therefore that all teams study his booklet on Our Lady that year.

Father Caffarel wrote that the highpoint was the consecration of the Movement to Our Lady. One understands that the Movement was not dedicated to Our Lady by chance, but that we have been led directly to Mary's maternal arms and that is why we can always count on her intercession.

No Brazilian team member was present that year in Lourdes, but a pilgrimage was organized simultaneously in June 1954 to the Sanctuary of the Aparecida, Brazil, as a means of participating in spirit with this first International gathering.

2nd International Gathering at Rome, May 1-8 1959 ***1,000 couples present***

Why Rome? Because it marks the centre of the Church. The idea behind inviting the team members to come to Rome was for them to discover an undervalued even neglected Church. And even today, we could say, perhaps, that we still know rather little about our Church.

Father Caffarel told us about a time in his youth, when he was still a student. He and his friends went walking in the Pyrenees Mountains. When they arrived at the summit, they read a passage from the Gospels and started talking about their love of Christ. The priest, who was with them listened, but seemed not to agree with them. So they asked for his

opinion and he said, "If you want to understand the solidity of your inner life, ask yourself how deep is your love for the Church! You can love Christ for purely human reasons, because

he is an attractive man. With the Church, it is not the same thing. To love the Church is a conclusive sign of grace within the soul, but you probably cannot understand that now. Maybe you will later on."



Mass in St Peter's Square

The perception that the Movement would not last if it claimed to move ahead in parallel with the Church was another fundamental intuition. The proposed reflection was very serious and Father Caffarel's recommendations to pilgrims were incisive. "No cameras, no money, no buying of souvenirs. And complete silence in the bus to and from the various meetings in the churches or at the Coliseum." And they obeyed him - - to the Italian bus drivers' great surprise!

At this gathering Father Caffarel gave one talk, 'The Vocation and Itinerary of the Teams of Our Lady', that we believe to be extraordinary in its perceptiveness. It is one of his most important pieces that help understand the essentials of our Movement. Over and above a historical retrospective and an analysis of the situation of the time, Father Caffarel envisaged various perspectives for the Movement in the years to come.

At this gathering, he provoked thought about our Movement: is it a movement for Christian initiation in marriage or is it a movement for Christian improvement? And his conclusion was that "Teams ought to be simultaneously initiators and improvers. It is really important that couples, once they have been prepared and initiated, then turn deliberately towards evangelical perfection, taking up their cross and giving in freely to the demands of love, moving gradually toward the total gift of themselves."

During this gathering, there was a private audience with Pope John XXIII, who gave a speech that is considered to be the first 'official' recognition of our Movement. This was also the first time that a pontiff recognized a movement of conjugal spirituality based on a small group of couples.

A few Brazilian couples were present that day and Nancy and Pedro Moncau were in charge of presenting the Pope with a gift of two albums and a casket. The albums displayed photos of team members' children to show the Holy Father the important sense of family in the Movement. The casket indicated the value of shared solidarity and the fraternal financial and mutual aid so important to our Movement.



Fr Caffarel with Pope John XXIII

3rd International Gathering at Lourdes, June 5-7 1965 7,000 team members present

This goal of this gathering was to incite more progress, more cohesion, a more intense team life and a more active sense of charity in the teams.

The precise objective was "to make sure that the Movement and each couple live a more evangelical life" and that this sentence from the Charter "to make the Gospel the Charter of their couple" be experienced and lived as such.

Father Caffarel used to say, "During these three days that you are going to spend at Lourdes, you cannot do any better than love one another. That is enough." But he added, "On condition, however, that it be as Christ loves you."

Father Caffarel's primary concern was to lead couples to true Christian love, that is, entirely imbued with charity.

News From The International Leading Team

The intuition according to which the vocation of the Teams of Our Lady Movement is to build fraternal charity between spouses, between parents and children, between couples and towards all Christians, was proven with evidence. We must insist and repeat to couples that there is no salvation for love or for the family unity, outside of Christ's charity. And they will receive in abundance this charity, which originates in God's heart, through the channels of their sacrament, if they wish for it and ask for it with steadfast faith.

This pilgrimage took place against the backdrop of Vatican II, a Council at which Father Caffarel efficiently participated. It was the first time a mass was concelebrated by all the Spiritual Counsellors at a large international Teams of Our Lady gathering.

To complete this phase that we called the Intuition Phase, we should point out that the idea of large gatherings brought forth positive results. Indeed, it was during these years, mid 50s to mid 60s, that such gatherings took shape and their goals were defined. The following characteristics are common to them all:

- It is an opportunity for the whole Movement to study a topic, at least a year before the gathering, in order to prepare for it.
- It is a time to remember the life of the Movement with prayers, liturgical celebrations...
- It is a way to train and form team members through talks, debates, conferences...
- It is a moment that we spend together fraternally, that permits the sharing of experiences which seal our unity and friendship.
- It is a time when the spirit of pilgrimage is deepened, with couples seeking God.

And if we believe ourselves to be those very couples seeking God, then Brasilia is expecting us!



International Leading Team (ERI)

A Simple Summary by Yvette Harrington

Background: The wording of the Mass currently used in the English-speaking world has been in use for more than 40 years. Many Catholics are unaware that these texts have been translated from Latin. However, the translations that have been used are not entirely accurate. A simple example of this is when the priest says at the beginning of the Mass: "The Lord be with you". Our current response is: "And also with you." However, the Latin wording is: "Et cum spiritu tuo" which translates to: "And with your spirit."

A new translation of the Mass was announced by Pope John Paul II in 2000 and in 2001, the Holy See issued the official instruction to begin the process for a new translation. Drafts of the new texts have been prepared, revised and corrected over the past nine years, and all the bishops in the countries where English is used in worship have been consulted.

The new translation will be introduced into parishes in England and Wales in September. A new lectionary will follow in about six years, no longer derived from the Jerusalem bible.

The reason for change: The current translation was flawed from the beginning because the bishops in the early 1970s (the time of the last change) were anxious to get the new missal to the people as quickly as possible. In doing this, the text they hastily approved was more of a paraphrase than a translation. Paraphrasing has its place but it is not good enough for sacred texts composed in Latin and Greek over many centuries for use in divine liturgy.

People will inevitably question whether or not we really need a new translation of the Mass. After all, we have happily been using the current translation for 40 years so is this one not good enough?

The answer is that "good enough" falls short of the language we should be using to describe our worship of God, especially as the current translation is not particularly good anyway. The time has come to change because what we are using is not only often inaccurate as a translation, but the style of English is rather dull, banal, and lacking in the dignity of language for worship.

The order of Mass remains the same – it is simply the translation that is subject to change. However, the new translation will offer the opportunity for us to develop our love for the Mass through a deeper and richer style of worship. The transition will not be easy for some people and careful catechesis and explanation will be required.

A summary of some of the changes: The majority of the changes are in the words that priests recite during the Mass and they will have to become accustomed to a new style in virtually every prayer they say. There are changes, too, in the words that the people say but care has been taken to keep these to a minimum. The first obvious change has already been pointed out: the response to “the Lord be with you” will be “and with your spirit”.

Overall, there are numerous changes – many of them barely noticeable – and it would be impossible to list them all here concisely. However, here is a summary of the new translation involving the words that the people say.

The Confiteor: In the “I confess” we will admit that we have “greatly” sinned, “through my fault, my own fault, my own most grievous fault”.

The Gloria: The new text of the Gloria restores untranslated phrases, and largely returns to an earlier translation. The new words of the Gloria open with: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of goodwill.” In the middle of the text (where we currently say “Lord God, heavenly King we will say: “We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly king, O God almighty Father”.

The Orate Fratres: In “Pray brothers and sisters . . .” we find a return to the Latin “my sacrifice and yours”, to restore the distinction between the two modes of offering Mass, that of the priest and that of the priestly people with him. The word “holy” has been restored to the response to qualify “Church”.

The Sanctus: The only change in the “Holy, holy...” is replacing “God of power and might” with a more literal “Lord God of hosts”.

The Invitation to Communion: Instead of the bland “This is the Lamb of God ... happy are those who are called to His supper”, the priest will say: “Behold the Lamb of God. Behold Him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb”. Our response will be closer to the words of the centurion in the Scriptures (Luke 7: 6-7): “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”

The Creed: There are also changes to both types of the Creed.

The following is a compilation of short paragraphs placed in Portsmouth Diocese Parish newsletters to introduce the new translation.

What New Translation?

The translation of the Mass which we currently use is going to change from the beginning of Advent. (Some dioceses are changing at the beginning of September). There will be plenty of opportunities provided for people to learn more about the new translation and become familiar with the changes. In some dioceses a number of day and evening sessions will be arranged for those who would like to find out more, as well as specific sessions for those involved in e.g. music. A variety of printed resources will be available, including the new responses for Mass. The coming of the new translation is a great opportunity for us all to learn more about the Mass and deepen our understanding of the liturgy and its meaning and relevance for us in our lives today.

What is the Roman Missal?

The Roman Missal is the book that contains all the prayers and instructions for the celebration of the Mass. Some of these prayers are spoken or sung by the whole congregation (e.g. the Gloria and the Creed), others by the priest alone (e.g. the Collect and the Eucharistic Prayer). The Missal is first written in Latin, and is then translated into other languages. This means that, while Mass is celebrated in many languages throughout the world, it is the same core Latin text that is being prayed by the Church.

Whose idea was it anyway?

Until the early 1960s, Mass was celebrated in Latin throughout the world. At the Second Vatican Council (1962-5), the bishops of the world agreed that Mass could be said in the language of the country in which it was being celebrated. This would enable people to understand more fully what was being said and help them to participate more fully. In 1970 Pope Paul VI agreed the official Latin text that would be used for the Mass, which was then translated into different languages. An English translation was made available as quickly as possible, but it was intended to be temporary. We have been using this 'temporary' translation for some 40 years! From Advent 2011, we will be using a new, more 'considered', translation.

Why do we need one?

The new translation of the Missal is necessary for a number of reasons. Firstly, the translation made in the early 1970s was done very quickly to enable people to use English at Mass. In the process, some of the richness of the original Latin prayers was, quite literally, 'lost in translation'. It became clear that a further translation was needed, which would keep the original words, meaning and style of the Latin as far as possible, and would 'bring out' the Biblical language and imagery in the prayers of the Mass.

Secondly, the new translation also means a new edition of the Missal which will include some texts added since the 1970s e.g. additional Eucharistic Prayers, some new Masses for the Blessed Virgin Mary and Masses for new Feasts of Saints added by the Church to the liturgical calendar.

Is the Mass changing?

The structure of the Mass is not changing, nor are the actions of the Mass. The readings at Mass, which are often printed in Sunday and Weekday Missals, are not changing at this time, nor are the hymns we sing. However, with the introduction of the new translation from September, we will notice changes in what we say at Mass. A significant number of the texts have changed, sometimes by a few words, sometimes by much more. We will have to relearn prayers we were used to praying from memory. Prayers said by the priest will also sound different. Musical settings which use the words of the Mass will change to reflect the new translation.

The style of language we will hear and pray may seem more formal to us, and perhaps more complex. However, the new translation is a wonderful opportunity for us to 'hear again' texts with which we have become familiar, and perhaps discover new richness and meaning in them.

The four presences of Christ

The Second Vatican Council (1962-5) reminded us of our ancient faith: Christ is always present in his church, especially in its liturgical celebrations. So, each time we come to Mass we experience the presence of Christ in four different ways:

- Christ is present in the congregation – the people gathered together;
- Christ is present in the person of the priest;
- Christ is present in the Scriptures that we listen to during Mass;
- Christ is present in the bread & wine when it becomes Christ's Body & Blood.

The more we are able to understand and join in the Mass, the more we will come to love it. The new translation will help us to do that because the words we will now use will say more clearly what our faith is teaching us.

Biblical influences

As we use the new translation we will perhaps notice more biblical connections than we have been used to. The texts of the Mass are precious to us, partly because they were inspired by the Bible. These words have come down to us over the centuries, and most of the words we speak at Mass are rooted in the Bible. When we gather for Mass, we are praying with words that have been given to us by our ancestors, who knew the Bible well and prayed it well. The new translation of the Missal tries to make the connections between the Bible and the Mass clearer than they are now.

'And with your spirit'

One of the first things we will notice with the new translation is that, when the priest says 'The Lord be with you', we now say 'And with your spirit'. This is much closer to the original Latin 'et cum spiritu tuo', and is found in e.g. German, Italian, French and Spanish. It is a very biblical response: St Paul concludes four of his letters with a very similar expression e.g. 2 Tim 4:22 'The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.' (see also Galatians 6:18, Philippians 4:23, Philemon 25). For nearly 2000 years, Christians have been greeting each other, 'The Lord be with you', 'and with your spirit.' So the new translation will bring unity to this response in all the languages of the world - and with all previous Christian generations.

'The Word of the Lord'

At the end of the readings and the Gospel at Mass, we are used to hearing 'This is the Word of the Lord'; 'This is the Gospel of the Lord'. In the new translation, the words 'This is' are now left out and we will hear 'The Word of the Lord' and 'The Gospel of the Lord'. One of the reasons is that the Latin does not include 'This is'. But there is more to it than that. If the priest or deacon lifts the book and says 'This is', it can suggest that he is talking about the book itself. In fact, he is talking about the Word of God - which is alive and active. The words at the end of the readings are announcing a great event. They are telling us that God has spoken; that Christ is present. We respond 'Thanks be to God', or 'Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ' which is our acknowledgement that what we have heard is, indeed, the Word of God.

The Gloria and the Creed

While some of the words in the Gloria and the Creed will change, others stay the same, so we will have to be careful that we don't slip into the old texts! The first lines of the Gloria itself echo the angels' message to the shepherds, announcing the birth of Christ (Luke 2:14). Because of these changes, new music is being written so that we will be able to sing the new translation, too. When it comes to the Creed we will notice the first change immediately - 'I believe', not, 'We believe'. We have become used to praying the Creed all together as a parish. However, when we say 'we believe' it could suggest that between us all we believe everything being said. It is not clear that we all believe everything that is being said. To say 'I believe' makes it quite clear that each one of us believes everything we are saying.

The Mystery of Faith

For Catholics, a 'mystery' is not a puzzle that cannot be solved. It is a truth that is so deep that we know we'll never be able to get to the bottom of it; a truth we'll never completely be able understand. One example of this is our belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. We believe that Christ is truly present but we can't wholly explain it. The priest

New Translation of the Roman Missal

shows us the host and then the chalice. Then he genuflects and says 'The mystery of faith'. We continue with one of three responses. These are all different from the ones we have been used to and they come directly from the New Testament. So when the priest says 'The mystery of faith' he is inviting us to welcome this Real Presence of Christ. We then make our response, which we address to Christ.

'Lord I am not worthy'

As the priest invites us to receive Holy Communion, he will say 'Behold', rather than 'This is', 'the Lamb of God'. 'Behold' means 'to look at' and is our invitation to adore Christ who we are about to receive in Holy Communion. We are used to saying 'Lord I am not worthy to receive you' ... This will change to: 'Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed'. This is almost exactly what the Roman Centurion said when he came and begged Jesus to heal his servant (see Mt 8:8, Lk 7:6). When Jesus says he will come to the Centurion's house, the man knows that Jesus doesn't need to do that, that just his word will be enough. The Centurion says: 'Lord I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word and my servant will be healed'. Our new reply changes only one word of the Centurion's speech – 'my servant will be healed' becomes 'my soul will be healed'.

More information is available, including all the people's new wording:

<http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/missal/>

<http://www.missal.org.uk>

<http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Missal/Text/index.shtml>



“Can you not watch an hour with me?” (Mt 26: 40)



In May 1959, very concerned at the difficulties affecting Christian marriage, Father Caffarel, the founder of the Teams of Our Lady, called for volunteers to form a great chain of prayers to intercede for marriage and the family. This need is greater than ever today in view of the many ways marriage is undermined at present.

People who wish to become Intercessors are asked to pray for one hour a month at a specific time and on a specific day of their choice and, if possible, to do so during the night (Father Caffarel believed in the special value of night prayer). Intercessors spend their monthly hour of prayer in whatever way they chose. There are two alternatives to the one hour of prayer.

They are:

1. Committing oneself to fast one day a month on a specific day,
2. Offering the daily trials and sufferings of one's life in union with Christ, for the intentions that the Intercessors are asked to pray for.

A quarterly letter links all Intercessors throughout the world and contains a list of specific intentions to be prayed for.

Intercessors today

Although the Intercessors were started by the Teams of Our Lady and are coordinated from their International Secretariat in Paris, many non-Teams persons have joined their ranks over the years. There are at present 50 Intercessors in Great Britain including a number of priests and religious.

Intercessors participate as individuals or as a couple and some may choose to link up with other Intercessors in their locality to pray their hour of intercession as a group, in each others' homes at an agreed time and date each month.

Harry & Clotilde Meigh



50th Anniversary of Father Caffarel's Call for Volunteers

Paris, Church of Saint Rosalie

25 September 2010

Intercession

By Father Paul-Dominique Marcovits, o.p.

"I am worried about the spiritual nourishment of our Teams. I think that in today's world they need an extra supply of prayer. Indeed, solidarity, vitality and the strength to expand are all nourished in prayer and this holds true both for the Movement and for individuals. Therefore I make an urgent call for volunteers: my dream is to have a continuous succession of couples that pray every night between midnight and six in the morning. I suggest that these volunteers sign up to pray for one hour a night once a month, husband and wife together if at all possible. I am totally convinced that the Movement needs this and will immensely benefit from it." We know these words by heart, for they are from 'We are looking for volunteers', Father Henri Caffarel's editorial in the Monthly Letter of the Equipes Notre-Dame from March 1960, fifty years ago.

The 'intercessors'—a name given by Marie and Louis d'Amonville—have contributed to the vitality of the Teams for fifty years now. They are like the hidden centre of the Movement, so that the grace of God can spread to couples' lives and more generally to the Church and in the world. The intercessors therefore serve couples who live and experience the baptismal grace that is nourished by the sacraments of confirmation and, most eminently, the Eucharist...The baptismal grace restored by the sacraments of healing, the sacrament of pardon or reconciliation and that of the sick...Baptismal grace finally, specified either by the sacrament of holy orders or else by the sacrament of marriage. These two sacraments are in the service of communion in the Church and are 'social' sacraments, because they are ordered for the salvation of others. The intercessors therefore serve the spiritual vitality of the Teams, the vitality that is expressed principally through the sacramental life, since we are teams of married couples and priest spiritual counselors. This vitality unfurls through time. For couples, there is the time when they get married, then their widowhood, or the waiting time, and finally the time of eternity, the time of the accomplishment of love. The intercessors accompany all this unfurling of the spouses' Christian life. That is their mission. This mission extends and progressively includes the lives of all men and women in the world. God always opens his children's heart to the dimension of his love.

The following comprises three parts:

- I. The Trinitarian Structure of Intercession;
- II. The Object of the Request;
- III. Intercession in communion with all the saints.

I. The Trinitarian Structure of Intercession

1. ***Jesus is the only intercessor.*** In heaven, and seated at the right hand of God, he is 'our defender **' (Easter Preface). "He is able to save completely, those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them." (Hebrews 7,25) He became man and allowed humanity to be beside God. Certainly, he is not the first intercessor. A long line of intercessors preceded him: Abraham interceding for Sodom and Gomorrah, Moses interceding for the people with the stiff neck, David or prophets like Ezekiel, "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none." (22,30) The grandeur and poverty of the Intercessors! Jesus assumed our humanity, that of the sinners and saints. He followed on from the great figures of prayer, but more than them and in a more definitive manner, Jesus intercedes for us in front of the Father. Because of 'the kinship between the two parts' (St Irenaeus' expression), totally God and totally man, Jesus assumes all our intercessions and presents them to the Father. He is the unique intercessor, the only mediator between God and men.

2. Jesus not only assumes our prayers and presents our requests to God; ***he wants us to intercede 'in his name'.*** "Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete." (John 16, 24) 'In his name' means that we put ourselves in his place. Now we can speak directly to God and say 'Our Father'. Our prayer is Christ's and Christ's prayer is ours. It is the fulfillment of incarnation because Jesus prays in us and we in him. God is truly our Father. Consequently, 'in his name' means that we enter into Christ's desire. Praying in him, we are moved to want what he wants. And what does he want? "That all are One!" (John 17, 21) Jesus wants all men's happiness and that happiness is to live with God, the source of love and liberty. To have "access to the Father", to use St Paul's lovely expression (Ephesians 2, 18), is the summit of joy, 'complete joy'. 'In his name', this expression used by Jesus, shows the ultimate goal of all Christian life: prayer leads us to discover the summit of all revelation—"The Father himself loves you". (John 16, 27) And so it follows that every one's life on this earth can be built in peace and harmony, they can get through struggles and difficult moments and above all, they can enter into the eternity of God. "The Father himself loves you": in order to fully understand and rejoice in this expression, we will need the whole of eternity!

3. ***The Holy Spirit bears and supports us.*** Jesus is the only intercessor; he introduces us into his prayer for the salvation of the world... Nothing would be possible without the Holy Spirit. The Spirit 'applies', a traditional word used by the Church Fathers and often re-used by Blessed Cardinal J-H Newman, the Holy Spirit 'applies', like a seal, the life of Christ in us. We become Christians...alive and living because of Christ. The Spirit does not come to take Jesus' place in heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father. On the contrary, he comes so that our Lord Jesus may find his place in us and us in him. "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit (...)", says St Paul (Romans 8, 16). We enter into the very life of God. We enter into that circular movement of love of the Father

for the Son, of the Son for the Father in communion with the Holy Spirit. The Father, who loves the Son, loves us and rejoices in investing us with his love. The Son, who assumes all that we are through love for us, leads us through his death and resurrection toward the Father. The Holy Spirit surrounds this whole mystery with the dynamic nature of his love, his life, and his joy. God's joy is thus to make his home in us. As Intercessors we are first baptized 'in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit'. We live in God, at the heart of God's love...yes we do, us poor sinners! As Intercessors we are in a rush—that comes from the compassion received—for all to receive God's love, so that at last, everyone realizes that they are expected and wanted by God! This rush, this desire, this missionary zeal, all these are the fruits that the Holy Spirit has spread across the world.

II. The Object of the Request

1. ***There is no limit to our demands.*** We can ask for everything, anything: to be successful in an exam...to find a parking space in town...to see a loved one healed...to see our country at peace...to find a lost piece of paper. Everything can be important! God is not interested only in the grand things of life, but also in the details! Why? Because he loves us! When we love some one, everything that touches them, touches us... No need to sort and prioritise. Since the Lord loves us, we can talk to him about everything. Intercession therefore derives its strength not so much from what is being requested as from the fact that God loves us and that we love him. Through, with, in love, you can ask for anything.

2. ***You must not 'ask with too much shyness and hesitation'.*** This expression in inverted commas comes from the great English saint and chancellor to King Henry VIII, who was martyred because of his fidelity to the pope, Thomas More. More's daughter asked him for some money... 'You ask me with too much timidity and hesitation...' He gave her exactly what she had asked for. 'I would have gladly added something, but if I love giving, I also love very much that my darling daughter asks me nicely, as she well knows how. So hurry up and spend this money, for I am sure that you will spend it wisely. The sooner you come back looking for more, the more I will be happy.' Father Caffarel cited this magnificent letter in his book (*Présence à Dieu, Cent lettres sur la prière, Parole & Silence*, Paris, 2000, p. 46-7) in order to show the joy we can give God when we intercede with him. The Intercessor's attitude is therefore one where all timidity and hesitation are banished. You need to ask with faith! 'If you believe...'

3. ***Are there requests that are specific to the Intercessors in the Teams of Our Lady Movement?*** There is one request to make for every Christian who intercedes with God for the world and that is 'to be filled by you, Lord', to become God's presence for the world. This does not mean a dazzling, sparkling presence, for with God everything happens discretely. Invisibly even. But that which is invisible to man is the

very reality of God. Invisibly we become sources of light. We are indeed sinners and we know our weaknesses and our failures. But God was made man and he lives with us now. He wants to shine on earth through us, with us. The first request will be, 'Lord, be everything in me!' But that is not all. As Intercessors within the Teams of Our Lady Movement, we pray for couples, those who are in the Movement and those throughout the entire world. 'May the priests and couples be faithful...' This is the essential purpose of the Intercessors as imagined by Father Caffarel. In his book, he described a Hindu saintly man in the following terms that should also apply to us, 'His lion-like presence banished from our doors the wolf of misfortune'. (Présence à Dieu, p. 157-8) Intercession means becoming God's presence, means driving misfortune away from couples through our prayers. Intercession means 'May your children throughout the world discover the joy you give and may they live in respect, dignity, joy and peace.' ***Every prayer always becomes a universal prayer.***

III. Intercession in communion with all the saints.

1. ***An intercessor or a couple who intercedes, whether it is by day or by night...is never alone.*** The French poet, Paul Claudel used to say, 'Around the altar, I see all the saints with their haloes that bang and clink'. In silence and solitude, all the saints are there and they pray and intercede with us. We intercede to ask that God's will be done.... The saints join us in that prayer which is inspired by the Holy Spirit and carried to the Father by the Son. All prayer is a doorway into the Trinitarian way of life, but also into the great movement of supplication of the heavenly and earthly Church. We bear the burden of being an Intercessor, but the saints encourage us... We are amongst them. We are in their midst as if we were amongst our brothers and sisters of this earth. 'In their midst' is a very expressive phrase. We are not above others, proud and condescending intercessors. Nor are we below others, crushed by our mistakes and faults. Nor are we beside others with a prayer that knows nothing of their lives... No, we are in the midst of men. We carry and support them. We understand them and love them. We are brothers. When Mary says that 'all generations will call me blessed' what she really means is that, in the midst of men, I receive the Son of God and I give him up!

2. ***An intercessor is a watchman because intercession means waiting.*** Waiting for God's reply, his ear and his presence. Waiting is inherent in intercession. Faith is awakening and seeks to find or see the hand of God, his will or his love in people or events. Judgment and wisdom come after a long wait, a painful crossing of the desert. The prophets were always waiting. They watch and look with faith because the Lord shows himself to those who believe. In the Church, monks and consecrated lay people are eminently people who await the Kingdom of God and the happiness of men. In the Church, in another manner, widows and widowers are also burdened with waiting, for they were married before and they now live 'between two periods of their lives'. They

await the completion of their love with their spouse in the eternity of heaven. They expect and wait to live with and in God, source of love. As such, widows and widowers can pray in a special and specific way in the Teams movement for couples, because they know—through the absence of their spouse - that the marriage route leads right to God's presence. Their intercession is to ask for the accomplishment of the incarnation of God's love in couples until the fulfillment of Life. The communion of saints is a source of hope. We are waiting... Lord, do not delay!

3. For the Team intercessors, ***intercession, fasting and the offering up of one's daily life are all harmoniously intertwined.*** Fasting makes you face the essential things while the offering up gives meaning to all life. There again, we are linked one to the other. We live one for the other. We fast and we offer up for the glory of God and the salvation of the world... We intercede and so we understand immediately that fasting and the offering up of ourselves are necessary for him, for her, for that particular couple so that they can be at peace again, for the poor to be respected etc... Fasting and offering up are concrete examples of charity towards particular and specific people.

Fifty years of fidelity! Fifty years of grace that has been received and given! Thanks to Father Caffarel whose call of March 1960 has been heard. Many thanks to him! Thanks also to the Intercessors! It is in heaven that we will discover what we owe them. The Teams Movement would not be what it is, if it did not have, in its midst, this source of prayer.

Fr Henry Chiwaya of Zomba - Malawi

In May this year Fr Henry Chiwaya travelled from his home parish in Zomba, Malawi, to Britain and to Ireland. This was a private visit but since Fr Henry is Team Chaplain to the Zomba Teams it was a great opportunity to welcome him and provide teams hospitality.

Peter and Anna Chandler were involved right at the start of Teams in Malawi – their article about Teams in *The Tablet* was read by a Malawian priest who liked the idea of Teams and made contact. There are now two sectors in Malawi and they have initiated Teams in Zambia their neighbouring country. It was a delight to host a lunch for Fr Henry, Peter and Anna and also Paul and Helena McCloskey. Paul and Helena visited Malawi during their time as Super Regional Couple (Transatlantic, which includes Malawi believe it or not!)

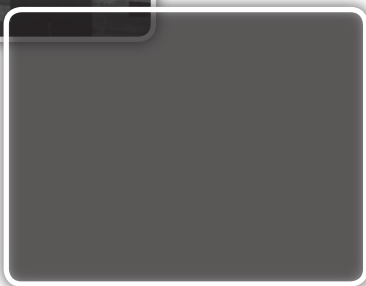
Paul and Helena picked up Fr Henry at the airport and introduced him to their Team in Cheltenham and then travelled to Fareham to deliver him to us for three days. We were delighted to introduce our team at a social event and then the next day to show Fr Henry Chichester with its beautiful cathedral and medieval shopping area, and to explore some of the coastal villages around Chichester Harbour and the South Coast bordering The Solent. Fr Henry had never experienced cold (it was a typical British Summer day, blowing Force 6 but sunny) so needed one of David's winter sailing jackets. We also took Fr Henry to our Cathedral choir practices (both of us sing there) and to a short introduction to the New Translation of the Mass provided by the Portsmouth Diocese (Paul Inwood and Nicky Stevens). This new translation, which is described elsewhere in the Newsletter, will also apply in Malawi.

Antony and Janet Denman then joined us for lunch and picked up Fr Henry to continue his stay in Northampton where he concelebrated Mass at the cathedral. Antony and Janet ventured to London with Fr Henry just after the Barcelona – Manchester United match and found London had been taken over by Catalonians. Pity as Fr Henry supports Man U.

Then Fr Henry flew to Belfast to stay with an acquaintance who worked in Zomba, returning via Antony and Janet to Heathrow for his flight home.

We felt privileged to have the opportunity to meet Fr Henry and we very much enjoyed his company whilst with us.

David & Avril (Editors)



Preparatory Study Topic for the International Gathering in Brasilia

“Go, and do the Same Yourself”

(Luke 10 : 37)



Very dear friends,

We present the study theme that the International Leading Team (ERI) has written in preparation for the XI International Gathering of Equipes Notre-Dame in Brasilia. As always on the occasion of the International Gatherings, the Movement invites all Team members to choose the same study theme in a spirit of unity and sharing, of fraternity, of pilgrimage towards the common objective which will unite us all together in Brasilia.

Before you start, we would like to give a few notes on the background to this study.

This theme of study has been prepared by all the members of the International Leading Team, so that it will really be the fruit of the internationality of the movement. If on the one hand this choice leads to a diversity of style and language in the different chapters, on the other hand it promotes the expression of several ways of thinking, writing, of living the faith, according to the different cultures.

However all the chapters follow the same format which, coming from a Gospel text, invites us to:-

- **Listen and Reflect** - Above all to listen attentively to the word of God, a listening which will allow a realisation of further reflection.
- **See** - not to stop at the limits of our own reality. Whether it be beautiful or not, good or bad, happy or sad, but rather to enlarge our own outlook and to put it within the reality of the word and of current history.
- **Evaluate** - it is not a question of expressing judgement from the height of a rostrum, but of observing in order to understand, learn and know. Then to take on a more active commitment in life and consider the interplay between our faith and our life.

- **Act** - our faith demands that we do not remain passive spectators of the reality that surrounds us. Our Movement is defined as “a Movement of formation not of action but for active people” and our God is a God who became man. What can we do to enliven our faith and other team members ?
- **Share** – in the sit-down and the Team meeting, the movement offers us an opportunity for serious and deep reflexion as a couple and as a team. At the end of each chapter we are invited to consider the questions posed, which can lead us on to a deeper sharing on the topics.

That is the route proposed in each chapter, allowing all those who tackle this study topic to approach it in the spirit of the Gathering and of living these times as a time of grace. First of all you will find the Gospel text which will be the theme of the next Gathering; a text which tells us the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 30-37).

We invite you to read it each time, at the beginning or at the end of the team meeting, to enter little by little into the spirit of the reflection which awaits us in Brasilia and which will ask us to reply with hope and courage to the exhortation: Dare to Evangelise!

In this introduction, you will find a deeper explanation of the image that we have chosen as the cover of this study topic. The choice of this representation is not a simple response to an artistic or aesthetic criterion, but rather in a desire to give you an image which can remain in the intimacy of your heart, capable of reminding you that each day of our lives we have as a friend a God who goes before us and who walks with us on our journey.

The Lord blesses us on this way. May He be for all of us a guide & travelling companion.

Carlo & Maria-Carla Volpini

The International Leading Couple.

The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10. 30-37)

In answer Jesus said, 'A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of bandits; they stripped him, beat him and then made off, leaving him half-dead. Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite who came to the place, saw him, and passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan traveller who came on him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him onto his own mount and took him to an inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper and said, "Look after him, and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have." Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the bandits' hands?' He replied, 'The one who showed pity towards him.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do the same yourself.'

1



This bas relief at the end of the 11th century known as Christ with the disciples at Emmaus is in the Abbey of Santo Domingo de Silos in Spain.

The Abbey of Santo Domingo de Silos is an ancient foundation, perhaps dating from 919 AD, which was restored by the Cluny Benedictines at the end of the eleventh century. Four large panels were sculptured in bas-relief on the four corner pillars of the lower Cloisters around 1100 AD: one of them represents Christ with the disciples at Emmaus.

The simplicity and austerity of the scene amazes anyone who directs their gaze towards the celebrated bas-relief. The verse in the Gospel telling of the two travellers on the Road to Emmaus But they pressed him to stay with them saying, "It is nearly evening and the day is almost over." (Luke 24: 29): is interpreted in a masterly way, and no decoration, no detail comes to disturb the unity

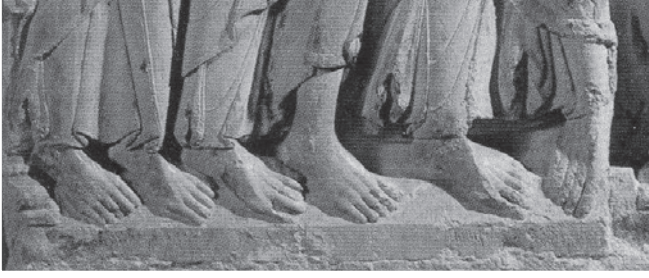
of the scene. Today, as then, as always, we can repeat in all confidence, "Stay with us, because evening approaches."

The three people occupy all the space : the one in the centre raises his right hand to show that already the day is fading. In front of him Jesus turns his head backward when he seems to forge ahead. The third person has a book in his hand: an explicit reference to the Scriptures through which Jesus helps the disciples to re-read the significance of his passion. One must have fresh in one's mind the fact that the journey of the two disciples to Emmaus culminates in the Breaking of Bread ending with their return



journey to the community and the announcement of the Resurrection: it is a matter then of a powerful theological synthesis contained in this bas-relief.

¹ All the text relating to this bas-relief can be found in the artistic commentary of Father A. Scattolini in the Supplement No 9, May 2010 of the Journal *Evangelizzare*, published by Dehoniani of Bolgna.



The detail of the feet leads us back to the first scene: whereas the first step of Christ makes its way towards us because we are among those whom He wishes to meet today. The feet of the two others are perfectly aligned, close to one another suggesting the walk that is necessary for us to embark upon in following the Lord. Jesus indeed is the Way. It is He who always goes before us on the routes of the world. The Risen Christ still walks today in the complex and often crooked pathways of our society and of our culture. There are also today on our journeys and in our workplaces, people who are looking for and who carry within themselves, desires and hesitations, sadness and hope.

We, as disciples, are called today to meet such expectations, continually putting ourselves behind the Master, the great Pilgrim who marks our footsteps and sends us out as travelling companions along known and familiar paths, but also on new and unexplored routes in our modern world.

STUDY TOPIC in preparation for the International Gathering 2012

Chapter 1: Prayer

"Jesus went onto the mountain to pray; and he spent the whole night in prayer to God"

(Luke 6:12; NJB)

LISTEN & REFLECT

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke (6: 12-19)

Now it happened in those days that he went onto the mountain to pray; and he spent the whole night in prayer to God. When day came he summoned his disciples and picked out twelve of them; he called them 'apostles': Simon whom he called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot who became a traitor.

He then came down with them and stopped at a piece of level ground where there was a large gathering of his disciples, with a great crowd of people from all parts of Judaea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon who had come to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. People tormented by unclean spirits were also cured, and everyone in the crowd was trying to touch him because power came out of him that cured them all.

In most religions mountains are the places where heaven and earth meet, and where people meet God. They are especially places where the divine is present and shows itself (theophany). Mountaintops, so often hidden in the clouds, are places of mystery.

Mountains have a special place in the life of Jesus. He often goes up a mountain to pray to his Father (Matthew 14, Luke 6 and 9). For Matthew especially, the ministry of Jesus is framed by two events involving mountains. At the beginning of his public life, Satan offers Jesus power over the whole world (Matthew 4). At the end of it Jesus confers on his disciples the powers which he has received from his Father, in Matthew 28: *"Meanwhile the eleven disciples set out to Galilee, the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some had hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the holy spirit, and teach them to observe all the commandments I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'*" Between these two events, he climbs a mountain in order to teach the crowd and his disciples (Matthew 5): *"Seeing the crowds, he went on to the mountain. And when he was seated his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them."*

It is on a mountain that the Transfiguration took place. *"Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There in their presence he was transfigured."* (Matthew 17).

For Luke, "going up" to Jerusalem represents the triumphal way to the crucifixion – the climb to "the Mount of Olives". There he is hailed as a king, as he arrives mounted on a donkey, and the people spread their garments in his path (Luke 19). Soon afterwards, as

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if to demonstrate the inconstancy of the crowd, he climbs the Mount of Olives again, but this time to be crucified.

We in our turn are invited to go up to the mountain of the Lord. The mountaineer or mountain walker knows how hard the climb will be, but he is already focused on the summit. He knows that he must cut down the weight he carries as much as possible and that his rations must be light but high in energy. And he knows that he will need a guide he can trust.

It is the same when we start to pray. We know it will be difficult but contemplating the living God, however imperfectly, fills us with happiness. What can we leave behind, in order to lighten our load? Certainly not our fellow humans — that would not be Christian prayer. Each one of us must discover what weighs him down, what impedes his progress. The food for our journey is of course the communion bread of the Eucharist, but it is also the nourishment we obtain from communion with our fellows, because all prayer has a communal aspect. And ultimately our companion and guide is Christ himself. *“And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.”* (Matthew 28: 20).

SEE

‘After 36 years in the priesthood it is becoming clearer and clearer to me why so many couples are morally and physically sick — why so many do not achieve the harmony unity and happiness which they hoped for — why Christians are so deeply divided, both in theory and in practice. It is because people do not understand how important prayer is. When individuals or societies do not tie themselves to God through prayer, they are at the mercy of the forces of discord. Lack of time or inspiration, the demands of work or of the apostolate are all put forward as excuses. What nonsense! What would you think of a mother who says she has no time to eat because her two children are sick and she is overwhelmed by household chores...?’

Is praying any less important than eating? In other words, by not praying we risk serious damage to our moral and spiritual health. On the other hand the person who prays finds mental equilibrium, happiness and the power of love. I am in no doubt that prayer is just as vital for you the laity as for us priests. I am not talking about quick spoken morning or night prayers, but about what is known as meditation — the lifting up of the mind and heart to God.

I know so many Christians, members of the Équipes Notre Dame, who every day, in spite of the heavy demands of work family and the apostolate, devote a quarter of an hour, half an hour or even more to prayer. I can tell you that these people experience a daily renewal in their whole Christian life — in their moral and physical well-being, their married life and in all their various activities. And to my great delight I know that through this daily exercise some of them attain that continuous prayer which St Paul, echoing Jesus, recommends: *“pray constantly; and for all things give thanks; this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.”* (1 Thessalonians 5, 17-18)

You should find an additional incentive to pray in thought of all those couples throughout

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the world who are unhappy, sick at heart or depressed, lacking the graces with which you, as members of the Équipes Notre Dame, are so richly endowed. You can help some of them directly, but so many others — so very many — can only be reached by your prayers. You may protest that it is for Carmelites and Trappist monks to pray. True, but for a start there are not very many of them, and in the realm of prayer, as in the apostolate, it is primarily for like to help like.

I cannot believe that a couple who do not feel a responsibility to their fellows have a very deep Christian faith — if they do not feel the need to pray for couples who are unaware of God's plan for love and marriage nor consider that there are couples somewhere in the world whose spiritual well-being has been given into their charge.

We often talk about “grown-up Christians”. Grown-up Christians and grown-up couples are those who willingly feel and know that they are responsible for their fellows. They are those who have realised that they have a vacation to pray for others, and accept it willingly in the same way as they do the duties of their apostolate.

In these times of marital and family breakdown, when so many married people, whether consciously or not, mock God's plan for marriage, it is important that Christian couples should come together, united before God. Knowing that individually they are powerless to achieve the renewal of marriage on a global scale, they must adopt a life of prayer and intercession, asking God to do what they cannot do without his help.

If the Équipes Notre Dame, spread over some 35 different countries, do not constitute such a power of intercession, they play false to one of the primary reasons for their existence. They would become nothing more than groups of privileged people. And history teaches us that one day a tide will come and sweep away those who unite to defend and foster a privileged position.

Some of you are so well aware of all this that you have been asking for contemplative prayer to be made obligatory for all couples in the Movement, not just those in positions of responsibility. I do not think it is necessary to impose additional obligations. But what I do know is that if after two or three years in a team the couples of the Équipes Notre Dame do not make a place for prayer and their lives of their own accord, then they have not understood much about Christian life or their spiritual responsibilities.

Perhaps you will protest that it is not easy to pray. Prayer is both a science and an art. Someone who wants to learn to touch type will spend weeks practising. Someone who can play Beethoven sonatas will have tortured his next-door neighbours for years. You have to learn to pray — and you never finish learning.

I hope that in the coming year, helped by your teams, each one of you will learn to pray better — in other words, to love God better.' (H. CAFFAREL, “Veillez et Priez”, Lettre mensuelle END 1/1966.)

EVALUATE

' My secret is exceedingly simple. I pray. Through prayer I become united in love with Christ. I know that to pray to him is to love him. In reality there is only one true prayer, one meaningful prayer: Christ himself. Only one voice goes up from the surface of the

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Earth: the voice of Christ. Perfect prayer is not composed of a multitude of words, but of a fervent longing which lifts the heart to Jesus.

Enjoy praying. Cultivate a need to pray all day long. Prayer enlarges the heart until it is big enough to receive God's gift, which is himself. Ask, seek, and your heart will grow until it can welcome him and keep him as your own.

God speaks in the silence of the heart. If you come before God in silence and in prayer, he will speak to you. Then you will understand how insignificant you are. It is only when you come to understand your own nothingness, your emptiness, that God can fill you with himself. The souls of those who excel in prayer are very silent places.

Silence shows us a different aspect of things. The soul can only be reached through silence. It is not what we say but what God says that is important — what he says to us and what he says through us. In this kind of silence he will listen to us. In this kind of silence he will speak to our souls, and we will hear his voice.

Before you speak, remember that you must listen and that it is only then, from the very bottom of a receptive heart, that you can speak and God can hear you.

To be alone with him, not in our books our thoughts or our memories, but in perfect abnegation; to stand in his presence in silence, empty, still, waiting.

True prayer is union with God, a union as life-giving as that of the grapes and the grapevine in the image which Jesus uses in St John's Gospel. We need prayer. We need this union to bear fruit. That fruit is the work of our hands.

To be fruitful prayer must come from our hearts and must be able to touch the heart of God.' (Mother Teresa. "There is no greater love". Lattes 1997.)

ACT

'I know from experience that if I do not begin my day by reading a passage of the Gospel, I am lost. I read the passage and I start with a simple prayer and a reflection on what I have read. I study the text and I take hold of one little phrase. It may be something as simple as "hope succeeds". I write it in red ink in my notebook. As a result I keep coming across it all through the day.

Prayer is the centre, the heart and the strength of our faith. For us Christians, prayer is far more than the repetition of a set of words. Prayer is what we do on waking in the morning — on rising from our beds.

Some of my acquaintances get up an hour earlier in order to pray or to go to church. I admire them. Making an effort to meet Christ every morning is a wonderful thing to do. St Vincent De Paul once said "give me a man of prayer — he will be a superb man of action."

Without prayer we merely exist. When people ask me how I survive, with such a difficult job as the support of my young people, I reply that I enjoy 60 days of silence every year, including a five-day retreat in Algeria. It is from this that I draw my strength. It is the heart and centre of my life.

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When I was at the seminary our masters used to say to us young colts (for such we were): "If you are not first and foremost men of prayer, you will be mere men of action". They were trying to tell us that if our actions, our deliberations and even the help we gave one another were not grounded in prayer, then we were not putting our hearts into it. By contrast the man of prayer is given strength by the time devoted to praying.

Without prayer we merely exist. Prayer is at the heart of every apostolate. It is a special moment which you will only experience if it has become as necessary to you as your morning cup of coffee. This coffee will keep you awake throughout the day and will give you a strength beyond your dreams.

An impulse of the heart. About half an hour is just right. After that I am set up for the day. All I do is say to the Lord "Now, take possession of me".

Hang on to your daily prayer. Let it come naturally. Shadows are seductive and draw us in. It takes willpower to put them aside and to pray one's rosary.

For myself, I like to pray while driving. (There's nothing against it in the Highway Code.) I turn off the music or the radio (not an easy thing to do as there is so much of interest to listen to). Then I say the rosary and I tune in to a new savour, a very high frequency transmission and I am inspired....

Mind you, I'm not saying that I experience great revelations every time I pray. Prayer rarely brings illumination. No, I just hang in there, and then I am suffused with a great happiness. It is my date with God. I cannot do without it.

You will find strength and a secret joy through your morning prayer. Maybe you will keep it up for a few days and then abandon it, but I think that you will very soon feel the lack of it. It is a grace which is difficult to attain. Ask God for the grace of prayer, and once you have it, never let it go! (Père G. GILBERT, *Rallumez le feu.*). Fr Guy Gilbert devoted his life to the rehabilitation of young offenders.

SHARE:

How do we react to what we have read in this chapter?

Questions for discussion by couples

1. We suggest you discuss between yourselves the current state of your relationship with the Lord – what stage are we at individually? How can we help each other to move forward in this relationship?
2. Talk to each other about how you pray – when, where and for how long? What aids do you use? How do you deal with distractions?

Questions for the team meeting

3. What thoughts did we have on reading this chapter, and what memories did it evoke? What have we gained from it?
4. What new horizons has it opened up for us? What still remains to be done?

STUDY TOPIC in preparation for the International Gathering 2012

Chapter 2: Marriage, the work of God

"The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out ahead of him."

(Luke 10:1; NJB)

LISTEN & REFLECT

The Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke (Luke 10: 1-6)

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out ahead of him in pairs, to all the towns and places he himself would be visiting. And he said to them, 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to do his harvesting. Start off now, but look, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Take no purse with you, no haversack, no sandals. Salute no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, let your first words be, "Peace to this house!" And if a man of peace lives there, your peace will go and rest on him; if not, it will come back to you.'

To understand the dynamic of conjugal love, we need to plunge into this marvellous school which is love and be attentive to our feelings. As a couple, we receive a new life and we are called continually to grow in this life. It is through conjugal spirituality that we develop the life that God has granted to us in order to construct this masterpiece. The wisdom of God, the gift that each one of us has within ourselves, affects the life of every couple!

A challenge is therefore given to the couples of the Teams: how to understand, and interpret the signs of the times, so complex are the human situations of couples, which will always bear the signs of grace! Conjugal love, far from being in competition with the love of God, can bring this divine love to completion, enriched and fortified by human love.

SEE

In adhering freely to this proposition which comes from God, we become men and women of salvation and happiness for others. We are this sign of an incarnate love. However, there are no models of marriage: the model is created in the gratuitousness of relations. We are man and woman in everything and for everything. It is as such that we have our place in the world.

God created the human being, man and woman complementary, and this complementarity must be continually renewed, in the respect for and the desire of a deep acquaintance, which leads us to the practice of a more enlightened sexuality. It is necessary therefore to understand the language of the body, the senses, the language which leads us to the rituals of love, without prejudice to age and all its limitations. Man is made for woman and woman is made for man, in such a way that both can constitute a unity and live their communion in Christ while at the same time being a reflection of the Love of God.

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When one discovers that the great way to love is by self-sacrifice, the way is to love, to love to the end, in order to destroy egoism and achieve the fullness of love. The life of the couple implies a stable path, continuous, in the pursuit of holiness, both of them developing the gifts that God has given to each one.

Again at Chantilly, Father Caffarel said: "Christ gives two ways to those who wish to aim at perfection: love and self-sacrifice."

Love = The gift of self. Self-sacrifice = Forgetting oneself. Charity includes and contains all the reality of the love between a man and a woman. Charity is the axis around which turn all the efforts of the couple to lead their conjugal life to the full, and, finally, to be able to contribute to the construction of the masterpiece of God.

We, as couples in Teams, understand perfectly what Pope Benedict XVI says in his Encyclical 'Deus Caritas Est', when he speaks of this reality which is at the same time human and divine that is conjugal love: "In reality, Eros and Agape – love ascending and love descending never allow a complete separation of one from the other."

The sexual union carries within itself the sign of the great mystery of creation and of redemption. While creating a place of meeting, of enrichment, of sharing, of commitment and of fidelity, man and woman bind themselves together in a perfect union which refers us back to the Eucharist.

"With the Equipes Notre-Dame, one asserts in the Church that sexuality is a factor of sanctification on condition that it is accepted responsibly and evangelised, the pleasure is a holy reality, in the plan of God." (Notes of Father Caffarel)

EVALUATE

The path in the life of the couple is not a level path. There are many who sit at the edge of the path and others turn round and go back. When the path is long, one fixes some "goals" which can help to determine the pace, to foresee obstacles and to fix the time for rest. To rush through these stages without knowing clearly the goal towards which one journeys, is travelling for the sake of travelling. Seneca said: "There is no favourable wind for one who does not know where he is going."

Jesus took the irrevocable decision to go to Jerusalem. And he went there....The disciples followed him and felt the need for conversion. When one lives the Gospel, one accepts being sent to announce it.

Let us begin by considering what is important in life, because it is marked out for us by our decisions. Life is the result of the decisions we take along the way. St. Augustine said: "Today in my life what vibrates, and what makes me who I am, it is my decisions." It is our decisions that make us who we are.

It is important to understand that we are called, not only by the Movement but also by the Church, to become witnesses and disciples of the sacrament of Marriage in the world. "The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out ahead of him in pairs,

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to all the towns and places he himself would be visiting.” (Luke 10:1) The group is large, it is not only the twelve apostles. How will Jesus be able to help so many? No one can be excluded! God loves everyone.

The questions that were raised then have to be repeated today. What is salvation and for whom is it intended? Salvation is to remain in life, salvation is for everyone. “Remain in me, as I in you.” (John 15:4) From the beginning of his ministry, Jesus set in train the accomplishment of the plan of salvation that the Father had given him as his mission. The path is long and gradual, but every stage brings opportunities and commitments which necessitate a conversion. The signs of God’s project are to be found in easy situations but also in obstacles.

Father Caffarel wrote in his book (*Aux Carrefours de l’Amour*): “It is not to an easy going life that I invite you. Simply I hope that you will not keep your bow stretched from morning to night, that you will not be continually occupied doing, and doing more, and doing better. It is necessary that the in spiritual life of the Christian, particularly at the time of prayer, there is an equilibrium between doing and letting God act, loving and letting oneself be loved, doing and being, being and offering, to be surrendered to God’s action.”

ACT

“Make God known, proclaim his Love, this is the first aspect of the apostolic mission of the couple.” (H. Caffarel, *L’Anneau d’Or*: “Proclamer l’Amour Divin”)

To be a disciple of Jesus Christ demands a clear and definite option. We are called by Love and attracted by Love – called to holiness. Our vocation in the world today is to help other couples, to do everything to reduce suffering, to prevent in as far as it is possible, the suffering of innocents, to soften the pain, to help overcome psychic suffering. The fact that we are announcing our faith will not be able to diminish the deep respect that we must have for others and their choices.

The response to the meaning of life and death, to the mystery of suffering, to insuperable loneliness, to the desire for happiness, always sought and never attained, to the disillusion of love, to the difficulty in understanding the dimension of eternity and of fidelity, only the Gospel can give it as a proposition of life. Only a God who personally enters into history, by becoming man and taking upon himself the aim of his mission, accepting the suffering, can heal the world. Jesus saved the world as a “Lamb” and not as a wolf. Gentleness and love are agents of transformation. The choices of the methods to accomplish the mission conformed to the image of the Lamb. Equip ourselves lightly: “no money, no bag, no sandals.” Let us set out, stimulated simply by the strength of Joy, fortified by Confidence and driven by the Hope which comes to us from the Holy Spirit.

Change ourselves in order to change

The response is demanding.

If we are authentic, we are drawn towards the centre of the scene and become leaders on the journey. The faith announced is an experience of life, since the Christ whom we announce is He whom we love and seek. It is urgent to initiate the mission that we have received... To set out, to set out and renounce all security.

Humbly let us entrust ourselves to the protection of the Shepherd, and then to set out will seem to us to be the response to this mission, because we know that God is able to act through our poverty and our work will be the work of the Holy Spirit. It is important to show today that the historic Jesus had in himself the capacity to give meaning to the life of man and the life of the couple of the 21st century, where God reveals himself in concrete life, in history, in the person of Jesus who lives and is incarnated in every person.

Father Caffarel said in Brazil, in 1972: "The Church, our great, our dear Catholic Church, will not only be saved to the extent that the shapeless mass of Christians become coherent teams around Christ and animated by his Spirit."

Constanza and Alberto Alvarado, on the occasion of the International Gathering of Couples with Responsibility in Rome, in 2009, in calling to service the couples in Equipes Notre-Dame, said: "The institutions are made in order to support, defend and make effective their position at the heart of society, and in this case the Church. It is for them to defend their ideas, and lead the changes required, so that their ideas may triumph and be lasting."

To us, the Teams of Our Lady – the new family of disciples – we are asked to change the course of the world. That is the mission of Equipes Notre-Dame today. Let us profit from the manifestation of the glory of God and of his love, in the vocation of human love, in order to understand that, in the signs of the times, there is always the sign of the grace of his love. The Lord wishes to be our companion on the journey, because it is He who sends us.

Let us go out animated by the Spirit and take Our Lady with us. She will repeat to you without ceasing. "Do whatever He tells you." (John 2:5)

SHARE:

How do we react to what we have read in this chapter?

Questions for discussion by couples

We pray, above all, together, to create an ambiance of welcome and openness. After a little time in silence, we should exchange our ideas on the following questions:

1. In what situations do we feel that we are taking "decisions" which will enable us to do "important things" and to live our vocation of Christian couples?
2. Can we affirm that our project of marriage is really that of both spouses and not of only one? How have we developed in this aspect of our "life of mission"?
3. St. Paul said: "Change yourselves by renewing your spirit." What endeavour, however small, are we going to try to renew this month, in order to demonstrate better our love to our spouse and to others?

Questions for the Team Meeting

“Conjugal love, far from competing with love of God, is a path to Him.”

4. Are we persuaded of this? What are the particularities of this path, and more especially of our own path?
5. Let us ask ourselves about the function of love in our couple.
6. Let us reflect on the vocation of human love in the plan of God.
7. Let us reflect on the “sacred value” of our physical union. What dominates? Sensuality? Or the gift of self?
8. “Do not let yourselves be confused by temptations, difficulties, or challenges which come in your way, because with the strength of Christ, you can, and therefore you must achieve great things.” What temptations, what difficulties do you meet? How do the sacrament of marriage and the teaching of the Church help us to overcome these?
9. Is our marriage a “masterpiece” for us? What are its effects on us, on those around us? What link are we making with Christ, with the sacrament?

STUDY TOPIC in preparation for the International Gathering 2012

Chapter 3: Daily Spirituality

"Great crowds accompanied him on his way and he turned and spoke to them.

'Anyone who comes to me....'" (Luke 14:25-26a; NJB)

LISTEN & REFLECT

The Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke (Luke 14: 25-33)

Great crowds accompanied him on his way and he turned and spoke to them. "Anyone who comes to me without hating father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, cannot be my disciple. No one who does not carry his cross and come after me can be my disciple.

And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, anyone who saw it would start making fun of him and saying, 'Here is someone who started to build and was unable to finish.'

Or again, what king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other advancing against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace. So in the same way, none of you can be my disciple without giving up all he owns."

Some commentators believe that in the language of the Old Testament, the comparison is not usual. Jesus speaks to a people accustomed to the language of his time. The point is not to compare the love of God to the love of men, but to warn that loving our lives does not take precedent over loving God. To God we cannot offer too much love.

These large crowds are formed by all those who have been called in the past, by us today when we hear the call of Jesus and also by all those who will come after us to follow Him. Jesus speaks here surely, and in a special way to those of us, who at first excited by the call, have abandoned their plans and committed to the Gospel, then backtracked and resumed a safe life, in accordance with the prevailing mentality in the world. Hearing these words of Jesus, we can guess at his desire to rely on disciples who engage with him wholeheartedly, taking it upon themselves to be his disciples in all circumstances, letting love take priority over any possessions, people willing to become builders of a new civilization of love. In short, this is to practice something we have in ourselves but that we often overlook: the ability to renounce, to say no to anything that prevents us from following Jesus and to fulfil the work he expects of us.

In one of the most famous editorials, published in 1945, our founder wrote: "God is the first loved, the first served." This editorial guidance strongly permeates the orientation of the Movement given to us all, members of the teams, and we quote this excerpt: "May God be for you the first sought, the first loved, the first served. Love each other: when love grows in your home, it grows in the Church of which it is the living cell. Love each

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other: 'Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est'. Be happy: the Lord expects this praise from you and the testimony of the people around you."

The charism of the Movement contains the "being" and "doing" or, if you prefer, the vocation and mission. Formed by couples who have received the grace of God's love in the day to day reality of life, the Lord invites us to discover the mysteries of married love. Made strong by community life as a group – that allows us to host and to experience Love, we are sent to raise the role of disciples in the Church and the world.

SEE

The word spirituality has different meanings. We can, firstly, associate it with the study of the science of faith and of divine things. But we often hear that someone has a great spirituality when we admire his wisdom when speaking on a religious subject. It is also said that spirituality is related to practical acts of piety, to obedience to religious precepts. All these aspects of the concept of spirituality can have their value. None of these things, however, define spirituality but the meaning is to be found in the actions, methods or ways, criteria or pedagogies that are influenced by the Holy Spirit.

This means that all of a Christian's actions and relationships must be infused with the breath of the Spirit of God, with all the vigour the soul and spirit is capable of, transforming routine activities into offerings of praise to our Creator. It is not for nothing that in the teachings of the Apostle Paul we hear in various epistles the insistence that we become spiritual people, so that we turn the common things of our day to day life into pleasing vessels to the Lord.

"Whether you eat or drink, do all for the glory of God."

Again at Chantilly, Father Caffarel said: "Christ gives two ways to those who wish to aim at perfection: love and self-sacrifice."

Being a Christian does not mean living in the stratosphere. It is precisely the realities essential to human life that must be indwelt with the presence of the Spirit. And it all begins within ourselves: to make our marriage, parenthood and sexuality Christian; to adopt a sober lifestyle, without the excesses of the habits of consumerism and a disposable culture; to commit to solidarity and to sharing with our neighbour; to reject conformity and to engage in the transformation of values in building the society in which we belong.

EVALUATE

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI sees relativism as the greatest evil of our time, because in this way of thinking and acting, anything goes; it despises the ethical principles and evangelical values which can guide human behaviour. The truth doesn't matter much, what is important is to achieve personal goals.

This relativism constantly hits the door of the families of team members in the form of many diverse trends of thought and action. It creeps in insidiously even in Christian circles, in the Church, groups and families.

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Added to this is the evil of the modern remnant of the centuries old Manichean philosophy, which seeks to separate the material and spiritual, body and soul, thus causing a real discrepancy between faith and life, the inconsistency between the values we profess and how we act.

We end up being satisfied with the obedience to the norms and the rules. "I am a good Christian, I do not miss the Sunday mass, I pay my tithe, I send the children to catechism. I feel good in the team, because I practice the endeavours, I never miss the meetings, I study my monthly theme, etc.

But outside of this environment, how do I act ? In the world of work, what is my level of solidarity with my colleagues ? In my business, my industry, is my profit the fruit of my greed for gain, my individualism ?

What is my interest in building a just and fraternal society ? Am I indifferent to poverty ? How many times have I come to the defence of a victim of injustice ? When was the last time I spoke on behalf of those who have no voice ?

In my social circles, at parties, in meetings with friends, have I been ashamed to defend the truth, afraid to proclaim the Gospel values, to confess my faith and my commitment to Jesus ?

Father Caffarel said that the world needs saints, "men and women all dedicated to Christ, inhabited by his love, driven by his Spirit. Workers, farmers, business leaders who are saints; artists and scientists who are saints, politicians that are saints." This will be the experience of spirituality embodied in the concrete realities of human existence, that will enable men and women to spot the signs of the times, seeing the world not with physical eyes, but with the eyes of the heart.

We must bring people closer to themselves, in the integration of body + soul + spirit, marvelling at God's plan for humanity and seeing the signs he sends. So it becomes possible to find the path to happiness and to call everyone to become builders of the civilization of love.

ACT

We are citizens of the world and of the Church. Teams have never thought to put their homes under a glass cover to prevent them from being contaminated by a society that has become pagan. To the contrary, we are planted, like yeast, which carries within it a gradual transformative power.

We live in a world of solitude. Despite advances in communication technology over the Internet, the loneliness of men and women is surprising. We want to draw attention to the solitude of one who wants to be listened to, not in superficial conversations that do not penetrate. We talk about the loneliness of the man who wants to listen to the soul, the deeper anxieties, the desires of transcendent journey, which remain hidden from the person himself. There is the loneliness of many married couples who share the same roof, the same bed, unable to share their own life. This is the cause of frustrations... There is the loneliness of parents and children who do not speak to each other and who cannot even

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understand each other, because they do not spend time together. There is loneliness before the transcendent, because we only seek today the goods that money can offer. There is too much to do, too many worries, too many goods to accumulate. The man knows, deep within himself, that God is the one missing - this is the solitude of one who lacks true meaning to his life. Many acquisitions are made, enormous effort expended, nights spent sleeping badly, but nothing fills the void of human existence. Even when we think we have arrived the search continues. There is the loneliness of those who unintentionally do not have opportunity to fulfil their potential, who are relegated to the margins by social injustice.

Faced with this swirl of human loneliness, the Christian couple, seeker of God, apprentice of love and holiness, is called to plant seeds of hope. "When the human heart is recklessly open to the love of Christ, it irresistibly expands the dimensions of the Church and the world," said Father Caffarel, in his speech on May 4, 1959, at the International Gathering of Rome. The ideal of conjugal spirituality that he and our pioneer couples had dreamed of, has a missionary dimension facing towards the shortcomings of couples, families, citizens of the world.

Enlightened by love - charity, a couple should be a sign, a witness and a builder. A sign that God has not forgotten man. A witness to the happiness gained through faithfulness to your spouse, to the sacrament of marriage and to God's design for us. A builder of hope, that it is possible to find meaning in life, that the love of God can be known and taught in the most basic activities of man. It is time to wake up to the commitment and responsibility to transform the realities that shout in our ears. It is not reasonable to remain untouched. We cannot isolate ourselves in the comfort of our meetings in our protective and protected homes. There are crowds waiting for us who crave our love who need our charity.

We conclude with Father Caffarel's vision: "What tomorrows couldn't we hope for the Church if the luminous message of Christ on marriage reached to the four corners of the earth, converting many young couples, bringing many families to life in ever growing numbers, where God is loved by all and above everything".

SHARE:

How do we react to what we have read in this chapter?

Questions for discussion by couples

1. Where in my life is there a division between my actions and my faith?
2. Is the call to sainthood or holiness attractive, or Boring?

Questions for the Team Meeting

1. In analyzing with "the eyes of my heart" what is happening around me, at school, at work, at leisure time, in political and social life, what does it make me aware of ?
2. Is my behaviour the same in an ecclesiastical atmosphere (church for example) as well as in my daily realities? Why ?
3. What is your concrete plan of action in response to this discussion ?

Meditation A reading from the Gospel according to St Luke 6: 12 - 16

Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the zealot, and Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 4

“Lift up the light of your face on us, O Lord.”

- 1 When I call, answer me, O God of justice;
from anguish you released me, have mercy and hear me.
- 2 It is the Lord who grants favours to those whom he loves;
the Lord hears me whenever I call him.
- 3 “What can bring happiness?” many say.
Lift up the light of your face on us, O Lord
- 4 I will lie down in peace and sleep comes at once,
for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Concluding Prayer

Lord Jesus, you choose us and call us as you did the Apostles. May we be willing disciples, always trusting, with daily prayer, that you will lead us in the way we should go. **Amen**

Commentary For September

A friend told me the other day that in 1923 his grandfather went into the railway station in Cork and was struck by the three clocks that he noticed on the station wall – all telling different times! He was puzzled and asked the Station Master why the times were all different. ‘Well, it’s like this’, the Station Master replied. ‘What’s the point of having three clocks if they all tell the same time?’ The man missed the train!!

What is the point of God creating us if we are all the same? I think that we should give thanks for our individuality, culture and background. The fact that we are all different means that we can bring variety to the world. It could be easy to say, ‘I have nothing to contribute to society, I am not clever enough, too young or too old!’ Each and everyone of us has something that only you and I can do and give. If we fail to celebrate our uniqueness and our valuable contribution to the community, then we miss the train of life.

In St Luke’s gospel we hear of Jesus calling the oddest bunch of disciples to follow him. Why? Because they were all unique and different and they had something enormously important to contribute to the mission of Jesus Christ building up his Church – so do you.

Canon David Hopgood, Portsmouth Cathedral

Commentary For October

Giant turtles on the Galapagos Islands live for 200 years and beneath their thick, thick shells, they are pretty safe from anything the world can throw at them.

A few years ago, when the first tourists arrived, forest fires broke out and changed dramatically their traditional habitat. The smart turtles recognised something new had arrived, stuck their necks out, moved to safe areas and survived. The other turtles did what they had always done when danger threatened, retreated to their shells, waited for the threat to go away - and perished.

We all get very used to a particular way of doing things. Most of us hate change and most especially when it affects the routine or way we live our lives. But nothing ever stands still. God sent his son Jesus into our world that we might have the trust and courage to face change. In his Gospel, Luke recalls how Jesus sent his disciples out like lambs among wolves, carrying no purse or bag or sandals – they had to break their routine and go where they had never been before. These were smart men and women. Like the turtles, they survived! As Christians, the Lord calls us to reach beyond our comfort zones and not bury our heads in the sand.

Canon David Hopgood, Portsmouth Cathedral

Meditation A reading from the Gospel according to St Luke 10: 1 - 9

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, "the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send our labourers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you".

Responsorial Psalm 127

" O blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways."

- 1 O blessed are those who fear the Lord
and walk in his ways!
By the labour of your hands you shall eat.
You will be happy and prosper

- 2 Your wife like a fruitful vine
in the heart of your house;
your children like shoots of the olive
around your table.

- 3 Indeed thus shall be blessed
the man who fears the Lord.
May the Lord bless you from Zion
in a happy Jerusalem all the days of your life.

Concluding Prayer

Heavenly Father, help us in the midst of the world in which we live, to be a sign pointing to you, and may we show in our lives that living in love and service is more important than security and wealth. **Amen**

Prayers For November

Meditation A reading from the Gospel according to St Luke 14: 25 - 33

Now large crowds were travelling with him; and he turned and said to them, "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate its cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish." Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 22

"In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for ever and ever."

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit
- 2 He guides me along the right path, he is true to his name
If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort
- 3 You have prepared a banquet for me in the sight of my foes
My head you have anointed with oil;
- 4 Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever

Concluding Prayer

O Lord, it is often hard to detach ourselves from the business of our lives and the social round, so that we can focus on being better disciples and followers of your word. May our daily prayer renew our dedication and commitment to following where you lead. **Amen**

Giving up your possessions is a tall order – and in many ways completely impractical because we have to live. But we are reminded by Jesus of the importance of carefully working out what is important and what is not. “Which of us intending to build a tower does not first sit down and estimate its cost and see whether we have enough to complete it.” We live in a wonderful society, but we are sometimes conditioned to think that money can buy everything.

I was in a shop the other day and was fascinated with the range of beauty products available, such as the ‘odour of sanctity’ and the cosmetic called ‘Philosophy’. Then I found a moisturiser called ‘Hoop’ bottled in a jar! ‘Outer Beauty and Inner Grace’ were also bottled. Moving quickly to the men’s counter I found an aftershave called ‘Amen’, which complemented the women’s perfume ‘Amazing Grace’.

How strange to invoke religious images to sustain aspirations of wholeness - not by prayer but by perfume! We really think that we can stay young and retain our beauty by what we get out of a wish jar. Of course it may make us feel better - and there is nothing wrong with that. Believe it or not I found an after shave called ‘Miracle’! But the miracle of staying young is called peace, and is found not in a jar but with God and in one another. The other miracle that comes with finding this inner peace is that you will not only be better off financially, but will radiate a joy and contentment that cannot be found in a bottle and that many will be envious of!

So let us work out what is of importance and what will give us lasting joy.

Canon David Hopgood, Portsmouth Cathedral

notice board

Literature Couple

Gordon & Marie Wratten

N.B. Not responsible
for supply of Teams
Newsletters - please
contact your local
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(see foot of Contents
page)

International Gathering 21st to 26th July 2012

Bookings for the Gathering in Brasilia have now officially opened and it is time to firm up on your 'declarations of interest'. There are already over 6,000 people registered on the animating team database! Places are going fast, so if you intend to come there is a booking form on the Transatlantic super region website. Please return it with your 10% deposit as soon as possible.

Once your booking form has been received, your email address will go into a Google email discussion group so that all Transatlantic travellers can share ideas, ask questions etc.

Our website also contains examples of current prices for flights to various places in Brazil this July, which may give an indication of likely costs next year. It will be some months before exact flight timetables and prices become available for July 2012. The website will be updated as additional information comes to light.

We envisage that many of you will want to extend your trip either before or after the Gathering to see something of Latin America. We will do our best to answer queries, but we do not profess to be travel agents.

Useful Websites:

Transatlantic super region site: www.teams-transatlantic.org/en/

Official Brasilia site: www.brasilia2012.com.br

Paul & Helena McCloskey

Brasilia Bookings Coordinators

Team Prayer The Magnificat

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord
and my spirit exults in God my saviour;
because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid.
Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed,
for the Almighty has done great things for me.
Holy is His name, and His mercy reaches from age to age
for those who fear Him.
He has shown the power of His arm,
He has routed the proud of heart.
He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly.
The hungry He has filled with good things, the rich He sent empty away.
He has come to the help of Israel His servant, mindful of His mercy
- according to the promise He made to our ancestors,
of His mercy to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.

Our Lady of the Home, pray for us.

final thought or two

To love as Christ loves is to let our love be a
practical thing and not a sentimental thing.