



Peter Lavery - Deacon



Regional Newsletter

September 2005, October 2005, November 2005

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Newsletter Editors

Please send all contributions for the December 2005 - February 2006 edition by October 1st, **preferably by e-mail, to**

Antony & Janet Denman

If you require further copies of the Newsletter, or have changed your address, please contact your local Pre-Regional Couple - see addresses on the inside back cover.

From Our Home Region

Dear Friends

At this time of year our minds are on gatherings, both in this Region and internationally in Lourdes next September. This year as you know the Pre-Regional Gatherings are in Womersley Seminary, Cheltenham and Darlington. The common theme is "Making time for God and each other".

We hope you will "give yourselves the time" to come, at least one couple from each team. If you have a clash of dates, or fancy a weekend away, why not consider attending a gathering in another area - you would be very welcome. In any case if you want to go to a gathering make contact now, there may still be a place for you!



Soon we will be asked to make firm bookings for the Lourdes International Gathering next September. In the next newsletter you will see the first three of eight special monthly study topics which pave the way to Lourdes; the theme is "Who do people say I am?". We hope your Team will enjoy using these topics for your Sit-downs and team discussions (and it would be great to hear your impressions as you go through the year). This is like "armchair travel"! Whether you go to Lourdes or not you will be there in spirit.

We send you all our love. God Bless.

Love from

Peter & Mary

Q Why do we say Amen and not Awomen?

Father Gerard Writes

When is the worst time to make a New Year resolution?

In the New Year, of course! Those earnest decisions to try to be stronger, better, fitter, healthier, ... and all the rest, are almost invariably doomed before ever we make them! Winter gloom is rarely the atmosphere in which to succeed. On 1st January it can be enough to resolve just to be polite and pleasant until the festivities are over and normal life is resumed. More than that is probably more than mortal man, or woman, can cope with.

Now, the ideal time for new ideas can be when you are lying on a sandy summer beach with time and space to have a real review of life; or sitting by the pool with a generous g & t, some pleasant nibbles and not a phone or door bell to be heard. You can both look back and forward all at once. You can choose what you want to leave behind, what you would like to start over again, and what you can do to make the best of God's phenomenal gift to you of your life and your self.

Then September comes, and with it the opportunities to put your intentions into practice. The new school and academic year, a new job, or just a new you after the holidays, can all be fruitful occasions for change. How many of us in the autumn already take up a course, join a group, or volunteer in a new way in the parish, the Team or wherever you share your gifts? And we do that because this has for generations proven to be a fertile time for just such an approach.

It so happens that now I have been given a new role: Director of Vocations for my Diocese of Portsmouth. I have already had a few months hand over time to discover what a vast task it is, and to see how rich it is in opportunity. My brief extends to the nature of every vocation: in other words, how good a match is there between what we are called to do and to be, and what we actually are, and do? How well do you carry out the definite service which Cardinal Newman reminded us God has for each one of us? After all, if **you** don't do what you are called to do nobody else can.

If, as Teams members, your major vocation is to married life how well versed are you in the skills and arts (and, dare I say, endeavours) involved in living that vocation to the full? How much do you make it happen rather than just letting it happen? Are you an active agent in your marriage or are you in danger of becoming a victim of it? The ideals of Teams are intentionally high and that is because they have been proven to work: so maybe now is the time for the renewed effort in the sit-down, the shared prayer, the rule of life and any other ways that ensure you really work at your most precious gift.

Father Gerard Writes

As I begin on this new stage in my own vocation I am also asking that Teams members really pray with me for new vocations to the priesthood and the religious life. Underpinning all vocations work there has to be prayer. Jesus often went away quietly to spend time with his Father. We certainly need to do likewise. I know several priests who remember times of Eucharistic Adoration that were significant in their process of discernment of vocation.

I have already been both surprised and encouraged at the number and quality of people who want to know more about priesthood. Likely candidates are sure to feel heartened and encouraged if they are assured of the prayers of many other people. So too will the seminarians who are trying so hard to discern God's will for them. Maybe every now and then in a Teams meeting we could pray for two intentions:

1. For all those who are discerning whether or not they have a vocation to priesthood, and, more fundamentally still,
2. That we will always ask for God's grace to match our lives to the call that God gives to us.

Father Gerard Flynn

A New Addition



**Julie and Eddy English, ex-sector couple for the West,
had a baby girl, Ruby Frances on 10/6/05.
All is well and they report they can thoroughly
recommend becoming parents again!**

News From Central Britain



Dear Friends,

Our time as pre-Regional Couple for Central Britain is coming to an end. It is incredible to think that nearly four years have elapsed since we were asked to take on the role. Early in 2002, we agreed with the other prospective pre-Regional Couples, Chris & Frankie Lane and Alan & Jane Whittaker, that each of us would retire in sequence so that in future only one couple would retire each year. In this way continuity would be maintained and new pre-Regional Couples would have experienced couples around to support them.

As things turned out, Alan & Jane Whittaker retired last year (to be replaced by Peter & Di Wordsworth) and last autumn, in view of our family circumstances, we prevailed upon Chris & Frankie to let us retire this coming October. So this is our last letter as pre-Regional Couple.

We are delighted that Mike & Kay Vadon, from Ealing 3 team have agreed to become the first Central Britain Regional Couple. We will hand over to them at the Central Gathering in Cheltenham on 1st October. We are sure you will give them your support and encouragement; we know that Central Britain will be in capable hands.

Looking back, it is clear that Central Britain has begun to gel. The West London and West Sectors have come to terms with the loss of Teams when their old Sectors were split between the three GB pre-Regions. Both have created new teams. As have South Midlands and North Thames. Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of this expansion is that three of these teams have been created around unattached Teams couples that had themselves been out of Teams for a number of years. In South Midlands unattached couples from two other defunct teams have also found new homes with existing teams.

Perhaps our last request as pre-Regional Couple is to encourage all teams to maintain contact with couples and chaplains who drop out of Teams (often these days due to relocating with work). Please pass their details on to us, or our successors, as each GB pre-Region does maintain a directory of unattached couples. They are written to and receive copies of the Newsletter. We also try to ensure that these people have the chance to join in any social or expansion activity that

News From Central Britain

happens in their locality. Clearly not everyone wants to maintain contact with Teams, but the majority seem to and recent experience has shown that, given the opportunity, many of these couples and chaplains jump at the chance to join a new team. Anyway, our term of office is almost up.

We are delighted that the interim phase of splitting GB into three pre-Regions has been a success and that we can all look forward to becoming part of a fully-fledged Super-Region. We wish Mike and Kay every success with their new responsibility; they have our full support.

Yours in Teams

Paul & Helena

Bowling Honour



Pat Ostler, from Banbury 2 Team, is a keen and successful bowls player with Bloxham Bowls Club. We congratulate her on becoming National President of the English Women's Bowling Association in May 2005. During her year in office she expects to visit many clubs across the country from Cornwall to Northumberland. In true Teams' spirit, husband Rod will be accompanying her on her travels – and doing most of the driving.

News From Southern Britain

Dear Friends in Teams,

Perhaps we should start by wishing you all a Happy New (Teams) Year! We hope and pray that you have all had a good summer with at least some time to be able to take a well earned break. Our own summer has been fairly busy with the arrival of a new Granddaughter born to our son and the wedding of our daughter.

It is always uplifting to gather with our families (many of whom we may only see on rare occasions) for such an event.

The same feeling is true of gathering together with our 'Teams' family. We were delighted to receive an invitation to join the Thames Valley sector for a BBQ at Douai Abbey. The event was arranged by one of the Reading teams on the Saturday night of their retreat at the abbey. There was a great family atmosphere with wide range of ages. The weather was fantastic and we even managed a 'sing-song' outside, ably accompanied by Alan Goncalves on his portable keyboard.

On the subject of gathering with our Teams

'family', perhaps this is an ideal link to give the Southern Regional Gathering a plug. The animating team have done a great job on the organisation of the event but they are desperately in need of something that only you can provide – YOURSELVES! It doesn't matter how good the organisation is, if there are no delegates attending, the event will not be a success. Of course, that's not going



to happen because we know that many of you have already booked your place. However, there are still some that haven't. It would be fantastic to have a representative from every one of our teams present to celebrate the formal launch of the Southern Region. So if your team hasn't

yet booked a place, now is perhaps the time to chivvy them along – and of course you don't have to limit yourselves to just one couple if more would like to attend and share the experience.



The Gathering is on October 15th at Wonersh and promises to be a great day. Fr Jonathan How, chaplain to St Edmonds, Godalming team, has agreed to be the speaker leading the morning session. We will also be joined by Bishop Keiran Conroy of Arundel & Brighton.

News From Southern Britain

We look forward to meeting with as many of you as possible in the coming months – either at the Gathering or at your sector events if we can manage to visit.

Wishing you every blessing

Chris & Frankie



Here we are with our new grand-daughter Roberta



You will find enclosed a
“Newsletter Questionnaire”

Can you please take a few minutes as an individual, couple or team to fill in your answers.

Your feedback is important.

It will help us to shape the content of future newsletters and ensure they continue to be of benefit to the teams and the Teams Movement.

Please send your replies by post or email to
Antony & Janet Denman

Book Now!

Complete the enclosed Lourdes 2006 Booking Form and return it with your payment/deposit to:

Tom & Maureen Hoban



Father Fitzgerald R.I.P.

In the early 70's Beckenham 1 were trying to find a new chaplain, and it was suggested that we might ask the Holy Ghost Fathers in Bickley if any of their priests would be interested in the Teams of Our Lady.

The Principal thought that Father Gerry Fitzgerald might be prepared to see what it was all about and so Father Gerry - a former student of Blackrock College in Dublin and one-time parish priest in St Helen's in Lancashire - joined us.

He admitted that he was not completely convinced that devoting time each month to a small group - we were six couples at the time - was making the best use of his very limited spare time, but then he came to the Team Gathering in Rome in 1976.

The Pope addressed the Team Chaplains and stressed how important it was to encourage married couples which is what Teams is all about.

Father Gerry, who had been impressed by the Team couples from all over the world, realised that he had an important role and became a most enthusiastic Team man.

After a number of years with us he returned to Rome to continue his work as a Holy Ghost Father. Father Gerry's departure left a big gap in Team life in Beckenham and we were delighted when, after a few years, he returned to take up his old role. Although he was by this time semi-retired within the Order he was still remarkably active, celebrating the 60th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood in 1996 and maintaining close links with his brother and extended family in his native Dublin.

Father Gerry was a wise and sensitive priest whose perceptive insights into the human condition both on an individual level, as well as on a much wider scale, made him much sought after as a counsellor and spiritual adviser. Inevitably, declining health meant he had to withdraw from Teams' life but almost to the end at the age of 97 he maintained an active interest in Team members and their activities.

Beckenham 1 at Bickley



Front - Carmel Watt, Father Fitzgerald, Aileen Dunning
Back - Andrew Watt, Berenice (RIP) & John Goodwill
and Don Dunning

Aileen and Don Dunning, Andrew and Carmel Watt, Beckenham 1

News From Northern Britain

Dear Friends,

We recently went to a performance of the musical, **Jesus Christ Superstar**, at the Sunderland Empire. This was the first time we had ever seen it and we both came away very moved. Seeing a **visual** representation of our faith on stage was for us, very inspiring.

Another memorable time was experienced by Di recently, when she took her elderly Mum to Lourdes on the diocesan pilgrimage. Her Mum is a practising Anglican yet Di felt, having been to Lourdes several times, that her Mum would really enjoy it. As departure date got nearer, so Di became slightly more anxious about being responsible for her Mum all week. However, all worries soon went, as on arriving at the airport, the very first people Di saw, were an ex-Teams couple, and she discovered that they were staying at the same hotel. Over the coming week in Lourdes, Di and her Mum continued to bump into Teams people and shared some very special times together, the highlight being praying the Stations of the Cross together. This was another rewarding **visual**, (as well as **aural**) faith experience. It was also particularly special, as it was an occasion shared across faiths as well as with Teams friends. Everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy a successful pilgrimage and Di and her Mum look back on it with very fond memories.

And now back down to earth with two reminders! Firstly to put the day, Saturday October 29th 05, in your diaries. This is when all Teams in the North gather together for a **relaxed and informal** day, at an excellent conference centre near Darlington. Secondly, please can all newly elected Responsible Couples please contact your sector couple (details in the back of this newsletter) to tell them you have been chosen. Thank you to all of you who take on responsibility in Teams.

For those with children or grandchildren or those who work in schools and colleges, we wish you a happy and fruitful start to the forthcoming new academic year.

Yours in Teams



Di & Peter Wordsworth

Peter Lavery - Deacon

Ordination of Peter Lavery



On 11th June 2005, Peter was ordained a permanent deacon at St Mary's Catholic Cathedral, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, by Bishop Kevin Dunn. This was the culmination of five years training and preparation. Father Michael Whalen, Diaconate Director for the Hexham & Newcastle Diocese, noted of Peter, and the 3 others ordained with him, " Their commitment to the Church, Diocese and the community is unswerving. They will, I am sure, become great assets. Deacons first and foremost, are servants of all – especially to those in need. They work to achieve this themselves and by helping others to give generous service. They are, in effect, catalysts – supporting and growing the involvement of others."

Peter, and wife Pauline, are well-known in Teams circles. They are members of Birtley 1, and have served as Sector Couple for North East. The ordination is a natural extension of Peter's commitment to Christ and the Teams ethos, as he has become Diocesan Coordinator for Marriage and Family Life. We wish him well in his new vocation – that he will be a catalyst for many.

Teams Diary

Aug	14	West Picnic	Anna & Walid Cotta
Sep	2-4	North East Annual Retreat Ministeracres	David & Eileen Hopper
Sep	4	South Midlands Picnic Thornton Convent 2pm	Paul & Clare Callaghan
Sep	4	London South East Picnic Toni & Anna Kowal, Purley	Rosemary & Mike Cox
Sep	8	London South West R.C.s, Stoddart's home	John & Hilary Stoddart
Sep	17	Solent R.C.s, O'Beirne's home	Paul & Annette O'Beirne
Oct	1	Central Gathering Cheltenham	Paul & Helena McCloskey
Oct	10-13	West Retreat. St Non's, West Wales	David & Cathy Andrews
Oct	15	Southern Gathering Wonersh	Chris & Frankie Lane
Oct	29	Northern Gathering Eaglescliffe, Darlington	Peter & Di Wordsworth
Nov	11	London South West Memorial Mass, Tolworth	John & Hilary Stoddart
Dec	4	London South East Party Holy Rosary, Hayes, Bromley	Rosemary & Mike Cox
Dec	8	London South West Advent Reflection & Teams Birthday	John & Hilary Stoddart
Dec	9	North East & North Tyne Birthday Celebration, Ponteland	Angela & Steve Helm
Dec	9	Solent Advent Meditation TBA - provisional	Paul & Annette O'Beirne
Mar	30 to	Lent Silent Retreat	Harry & Clotilde Meigh
Apr	2	St Peter's Grange, Prinknash	
Sept	16-21	International Gathering Lourdes, France	Are you planning & saving?
June	29 to	Regional Gathering	Weekend Gathering at Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick
July	1		

Notes For Responsible Couples

Responsible Couple . . . “Why us? We’re not experts”

We’ve all had that moment. The finger stops - it is pointing at us. For many people in Teams being chosen for the first time as Responsible Couple for your own team is a daunting experience. Why us? We’re not experts. Recognising that a problem shared is a problem halved, we reproduce here the thoughts of newly appointed Responsible Couples who came together for a training day in the South Midlands sector a few years ago.

. . .

The Role

In attempting to define the Role of the Responsible Couple, everyone came up with:

- Facilitator
- Time-Keeper
- Co-ordinator
- Liaiser
- Supporter
- Empowerer
- Organiser
- News Giver
- Focal Point
- Researcher
- Balance Maintainer
- Problem Solver

. . .

The Challenges

The Couples were then asked about their Issues and Challenges:

- Level of skill necessary to do the job
- Keeping going when personally challenged in Faith
- Balance: Team v Family v Couple v Work
- Encouraging couples to support each other when the RC needs support too!
- Expansion? When and How?

. . .

The Hopes

- Continuation of the team after what happened last year
- Finding a Spiritual Adviser
- More support for each other
- More aware of each other’s needs
- Overcoming trauma
- Become more open in prayer
- Now want to consolidate the team, make it more welcoming
- Let other couples in

Notes For Responsible Couples

- More supportive of Children
- Find study topics that will Fire us
- Increase the safety net of teams
- Personal growth working as a couple
- Facilitate Spiritual growth of the team
- To enjoy it
- Integrate the Spiritual Adviser more (i.e. don't assume they are mind readers and know what is expected)
- Promote dispensing of Faith
- Support when you have real doubts/fears re Faith
- Get to know one another away from Teams
- Integrate everyone to become closer/more trusting

• • •

The Fears

- Are we being too Flexible?
- Trying to keep to schedule
- Getting everything done, whilst respecting opinions
- Keeping the Big Picture in view
- Giving support to individuals may undermine the team
- Commitment (i.e. not neglecting the family)
- Team needs v my agenda
- Getting through all the bits of the agenda to give everything its true weight without riding roughshod over needs of individuals
- Pooling - People find this hard
- Fear of trying things that may not work/were tried in the past
- Fear of upsetting people/people leaving etc.
- Finding a style that suits everyone in the team.

It is obvious from the above how diverse the role of the R.C. is and each couple who undertakes it has their own strengths and weaknesses. Perhaps we can all resolve to give our own Responsible Couple all the support they need and remember them in our prayers.

Thanks to Nick St John from Bicester I who ran the original day, and prepared these notes.

International Leading Team

Why an International Gathering of Teams?

Dear friends,

Is it really necessary to ask ourselves again the reasons for a large international gathering of Teams? For team members who have taken part in a previous gathering, the answer is obvious. Why not ask them ?

We asked a couple to join the last Lourdes gathering, and they replied, “I don’t like big groups; I hate crowds; in fact, I am agoraphobic! But also, why such an expense?” But we insisted; “You must go. We need you to take on the spiritual animation of team members in the train that will bring them to Lourdes, because we must, with a heavy heart, abandon the idea of taking part in the gathering ourselves since I must rest during my pregnancy”. And they set out reluctantly; they told us. Since then, they have not missed a single gathering and they themselves organise pilgrimages and retreats!

A tradition

It has become a tradition. Every six years, an international gathering for all team members throughout the world takes place in Rome, Lourdes, Fatima, Santiago de Compostela...

Each time there is the same enthusiasm of many couples who, coming from all continents, have left their cosy homes, some their children, some their job, others some commitments, perhaps a sick relative. Many left with a heavy heart, our friends told us. They return full of joy, thanking God for the team members they met, these brothers and sisters who did not even speak their language, but with whom they felt so close, exchanging as best they could from heart to heart, with signs or with a few hesitating words in the others’ language. We who have a deaf and dumb son-in-law, we can say from our own experience that when we really want to communicate, there is always a way to do it!

A great international family

Don’t we all belong to a single great family? From Santiago in Chile to Sidney via Sao Paulo, Warsaw or Beirut or Yaounde, couples are experiencing the same charisms of Teams, with the same intensity, the same joys, the same difficulties, the same hardships. And yet each individual reacts to these according to their particular culture, their particular characteristics, their particular inventiveness... What a gift when an African breeze brings us the testimony of a Togolese couple telling us that a husband and wife who wear matching clothes do so as a sign of their oneness, of their married faithfulness! There was also a spiritual counsellor who told us, as we walked along, how his team and the witness of the mutual faithfulness of its couples, helped him to rediscover his faithfulness to his priesthood following a lapse.

International Leading Team

A family that shares a common spiritual heritage

That is what a great gathering of Teams is; but it is also much more: It is sharing a strong feeling of belonging to a large family whose members (around 100,000 throughout the world) share the same spiritual heritage handed down from the few couples that met around Father Caffarel more than 50 years ago; a heritage further enriched over the years.

- It is a family in which different ages mix and complement each other,
- a Christian family in which the members help and support one another,
- a family which, like all families, is liable to wilt, to break up if it does not meet together from time to time to celebrate together, to give thanks together and just to be together!

A time of fellowship and solidarity

A great gathering is also a great moment of fellowship and solidarity. Thus a portion of the participation cost goes to a solidarity fund to help those for whom financial support within their own country is difficult, if not impossible.

A lay movement at the service of the People of God

A great gathering is also a way of making Teams visible as a Christian lay movement, part of the great family of the People of God on a journey that is the Church. It openly proclaims its mission within the Church, Good News for Christian couples wishing to live out fully their sacrament of marriage and to help one another to do so.

Spiritual food and renewal

A great international gathering seeks also to provide spiritual food through conferences of quality as well as a renewal of our enthusiasm for team life through sharing the life of a 'mixed team'.

A personal call...

A great international gathering is even more than that; but to discover it, one must take part in it, since each one of us will draw his or her particular graces from it, as the Lord dispenses them to each one individually and personally. He calls us; we only have to say 'yes', to break the moorings of our certainties, to open our hearts to God's unpredictability and to let him deal with us as he wills. Everything else is extra...

So let us here and now begin our journey.

We greet you all warmly and look forward to meeting you in Lourdes in around a year's time.

Priscilla and Jean-Louis SIMONIS



Getting to know Christ ever better in the Church

In my previous notes, I suggested some ways of getting to know Christ, starting especially from the New Testament. We must also follow the development of peoples' understanding of who Jesus was over time through their cultures up to our own cultures.

During the early centuries, debates were often passionate. These debates made it possible for the Church's Tradition to be defined, especially through the Councils that were called upon to settle difficulties the Greeks experienced in accepting a heritage based on Hebrew tradition. It seemed difficult for the Greeks to accept that the Son of God could be incarnated within the limits of a humanity like ours, transcending all aspects of our human condition. Arius' temptation was to consider Christ as a "secondary god", a lesser being. This was an error. The Council of Nicea (in 325) reacted and affirmed that Jesus of Nazareth is identical to the eternal Word of the Father, the Son *consubstantial* with the Father.

Later, the Council of Ephesus (in 431) declared that the Word of God personally willed to be born of a woman. This, the Fathers confirmed by honouring the Virgin Mary with the title of 'Mother of God'. However, our forbears went on arguing. The Council of Chalcedon (in 451) marked a major stage forward. Summing up its findings considerably, let us note the following: the Council declared that Christ is one and the same person in two natures. It went on to specify that the divine nature is not to be fused with the human nature; but in the person of Christ, there is no division between his authentic humanity and the divinity of Son of God. The full presence of God in the humanity of Jesus makes him truly our Saviour and the one who makes it possible for us to share in the divine life.

What I have mentioned in only a few lines constitutes the constantly reaffirmed basis of our faith in the living Christ, present in our lives. But, as we skip over the centuries, we realise that new difficulties have arisen.

From Father Fleischmann

Today, with the sense of sin weakening, many no longer see the necessity to be saved. To be saved would be inconsistent with the autonomy of the individual who claims to be sole judge of his/her actions. Others have great difficulty in accepting that Christ can be the only mediator of salvation for a humanity that experiences so many diverse spiritual experiences between one continent and another.

Let us not get lost. We must meditate on the faith that our fathers have expressed every Sunday in the Credo – common to all Christians – so as to understand its meaning better. Let us constantly return to Jesus' question: "*Who do you say I am?*"

We answer this question,

- on the basis of the faith that was passed on to us and
- within the dialogue between Scripture and people of the various languages of our time
- and, especially, within the experience of the communion of the Church, the Body of Christ (the spiritual sharing or 'sharing on the endeavours' is a favourable setting for this communion),
- in contemplating the living Person of the Risen Lord,
- in a heart to heart encounter with the Eucharist.

I leave it to Saint Paul to conclude these brief suggestions on how to know Jesus Christ: "*...God who has saved us and called us to be holy – not because of anything we ourselves had done – but for his own purpose and by his own grace. This grace had already been granted to us, in Christ Jesus, before the beginning of time, but it has been revealed only by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus. He has abolished death, and he has brought to light immortality and life through the Gospel, in whose service I have been made herald, apostle and teacher.*" (2 Tm 1: 9-11)

François Fleischmann

A Because we sing hymns and not hers!

The Satellite Teams

At the suggestion of the International Leading Team, the ‘Satellite Teams’ were created at the meeting of the International College in Dickinson in July 2001 for the purpose of reflecting in depth on the specific charisms of our Movement. The College approved the creation of these teams.

The development of the Movement in many countries in the world makes it necessary to compare the different ways of life and, in particular, the different ways the methods of Teams are practised in different places. This comparison, which can no longer be exclusively the province of the International Leading Team and of leading couples in the countries represented at the meeting of the College, has as its aim to promote the way of Teams and to guarantee unity without becoming uniform and sterile.

The Satellite Teams are intended to meet this need and, at the same time, to be a sign of our will to bring about a full communion between us and to maintain a true spirit of collegiality worldwide.

There are five Satellite Teams dealing with Communication, Training, Mission, Formative Way and Research and Reflection. They are composed of four to five couples plus a Spiritual Counsellor. Their members are drawn overall from 15 different countries.

With the exception of the Communication Team whose liaison is via the International Secretariat, liaison between these teams has been entrusted to us, Carlo and Maria Carla VOLPINI.

Each team has its programme of work and its specific objectives. Its member-couples meet once a year and, for the rest of the time, work with their computers and through e-mails. They draft documents which are then offered to the International Leading Team for consideration. The latter are the guarantors of the unity of the Movement.

We list below the Satellite Teams main activities, four years after their creation -

Communication Team

This team has worked on the identity of the Movement. In the first place, on the design of a new logo which will be common to all countries. The symbolism of this logo was approved by the Regional Couples of the whole world in Rome in January 2003. The official launch will take place in Lourdes in 2006.

It then worked on the Movement’s *Website* which has been completely transformed (www.equipes-notre-dame.com) and on the link between the various websites.

The team is also working on the *communication supports* to be set up

The Satellite Teams

internationally: presentation brochure, liaison bulletin etc. The team aims at making use of new techniques to make the Movement more visible and to offer all members of the Movement a form of presentation available to all.

Training Team

This team has produced a guide for *Sector Couples*. This document was given to all leading couples at the meeting of the College in Rio in July 2004. It should be welcomed by all as a fundamental reference document for the use of Sector Couples.

The team is currently working similarly on a folder for *Regional Couples* based on existing documents in the various countries.

Their most recent objective is to prepare a programme of formation for young couples.

Mission Team

This team has been reflecting on the subject: “*The couple on a mission*”. They have considered a variety of aspects: the mission of the couple, missionary couples and the family, mission in Teams, mission in the Church, mission in the world.

They still have to deal with the method of expansion and diffusion of the Movement. They must also consider the difficult subject of “*sacramental and non-sacramental marriage*”, using the contributions on this subject arising from the discussion at the next meeting of the College in July 2005.

The final folder on “*The couple on a mission*” will be very useful for the future since we, team members, are called to live out our faith and our involvement in the world and in history.

Formative Way Team

This team has worked on “*Piloting*”, after having carried out a survey among the Super-Regions and Regions of the world on four subjects: *The Pilot Couple, Information, Language and Insertion in the Movement*.

The team has designed some *data sheets* intended to be used in all countries of the world. They will contain an “obligatory” part which will explain the significance and value of each aspect of the Teams’ method, and a second “optional” part that can be adapted to the specific local traditions.

This team is currently working on a framework for *Training Sessions for “New Teams”*, intended to review all the fundamental points of Teams’ method and to introduce the new team to the life of the Movement.

The Satellite Teams

Research and Reflection Team

For almost a year, this team has worked on preparing a *survey*, suggested by ERI, among team members of the whole world so as to reveal the situation of the Movement at various levels. The cost of such a project proved to be too onerous and, at its meeting in Rome in 2003, the College did not think it opportune to pursue it.

The team then pursued another objective: the drafting of a study topic “*Christ, centre of the Christian’s life*”. This project is finished but has not been completely reviewed and translated.

This team has also started a work of reflection on the sacraments of *Reconciliation* and of the *Eucharist*. The understanding and place of these sacraments in the life of some team members in the world appear to need renewing.

Conclusion

The idea of creating these Satellite Teams was undoubtedly a wonderful intuition for various reasons:

- it strengthens the feeling of belonging to the Movement by developing the practice of collegial working,
- it encourages the participation of the couples of the Movement by calling on them to contribute their ideas and their work,
- it assists the International Leading Team in their constantly listening to all couples in Teams,
- it permits the spread of ideas and thoughts that give dynamism to the whole Movement,
- it helps couples who are serving the Movement to learn a method of working.

It is therefore important to keep this practice going. It truly reflects a way of working in a spirit of international collegiality which, nevertheless, calls for a lot of effort at all levels.

The idea is not for team members to be content with looking on and following from afar the work of Satellite Teams, but rather to get involved in this work and to express to these teams our wish that this prophetic activity of our Movement will not come to an end.

Carlo and Maria Carla VOLPINI
ITALY

Father Caffarel Speaks To Us



PHASE 2: THE WAR YEARS

From "Vocation and Itinerary of Teams"
1959 Rome Pilgrimage

The Birth of Teams had taken place in a climate of springtime joy: young couples, their newfound love, the grace of the sacrament

of marriage in its first outpouring.

The second phase began in Paris in 1940 in an atmosphere of disaster. But it was the same vital instinct that led couples to a priest, namely the need to save their love. They had heard of pre-war experiments - the one I have just described and several others - and they too wanted to set out on the same journey.

The life of these wartime groups was similar to that of the first group but took place in a more sober atmosphere. With time it grew and deepened.

Married spirituality

The children increased in numbers and grew up. Married life uncovered new riches and experienced unexpected trials; material difficulties and the dangers overshadowing the country threaten these families. Will their faith in God, in their married love, in life itself survive? It did survive. Our couples proved that the erosion of time does not corrode those who are opened to eternal values. Nevertheless, if their love - their love of God and mutual love - was to grow, couples must grow in their knowledge of God and of His designs. Did this mean that it was time for them to go beyond the doctrine of marriage and to broaden their search in other spheres? Yes and no. Once again, it is by deepening their knowledge of the doctrine of marriage that they would discover the other aspects of Catholic teaching. They understood in fact that one must not isolate marriage from the totality of that teaching, but rather to place it in the crossfire of the great doctrines: Trinitarian Life, Redemptive Incarnation, the Mystical Body, liturgical and sacramental life... In the light of these and of the great news they revealed to them, marriage was leading them to a better knowledge of the mysteries of Christianity.

Critics did not spare them: what is the point of spending so much time in study

Father Caffarel Speaks To Us

and meditation? Their very existence provided the answer: marriage and Christian truths, becoming better known, were lived out better by them.

Then emerged what was called “married and family spirituality” or “the spirituality of the married Christian”. These expressions became rapidly popular, even though they contained an ambiguity. They could be interpreted as: how can one live out the realities of married and family life in a Christian way? Or: how can one live out all the demands of the Christian life in the married state? As members of the Teams of Our Lady, you know that we have chosen this second interpretation.

How can one live out all the demands of the Christian life *in the married state*? It is the second part of this sentence that causes problems. Prayer, charity, self-denial, poverty, chastity, apostolate are incumbent on all Christians, whether married or not. It became however evident in our meetings that these virtues are not to be lived out by married Christians in the same way as they are by monks. Otherwise, they would soon be seen to be impracticable. For the mother obliged by her children to get up in the middle of the night, self-discipline does not consist in wearing a hair shirt. For the couple, evangelical poverty sometimes consists in accepting another child and chastity does not consist in refraining from sexual relations but in making proper use of them.

It was thrilling to seek the principles and rules of life on which the spirituality of a married Christian is based. And so it was during these sombre years that the review “L’Anneau d’Or” (the Golden Ring) was being prepared. Established in 1945, at the end of this wartime phase, it sought to make known to many couples the art of living marriage in a Christian way: its daily tasks and Christian home life. We had gradually worked it out in our meetings.

The bond of Christian love in a team

Another area where a deepening of Christian life manifested itself during these war years was that of friendship between couples. Helped by the joy of discoveries made together, friendship had arisen spontaneously in our first (pre-war) group. In the sombre climate of the war years, friendship discovered more deeply the demands of charity in Christ. Under some form or another, all couples experienced some trial. Material privation was not the most painful. The absence of the father, made prisoner or deported, was very painfully felt in many homes. Death had robbed others of the head of the family. In these circumstances, they understood that the essence of charity is mutual help: giving material and human comfort to brothers and sisters in Christ to help them to respond fully to the will of God and to carry out their human and Christian mission to the best of their ability. Those who experienced these years of

Father Caffarel Speaks To Us

intense fraternal charity have retained a certain nostalgia for them. As life becomes easier, mutual help often tends to decline.

How enlightening it was then for me to observe that, inviting husbands and wives to love each other better in their marriage and inviting couples to love one another within their team, did not encourage “isolationism”, as some feared it would - far from it! **When the human heart is rash enough to open itself to the love of Christ, this love enlarges the heart to the dimensions of the Church and of the world.** Indeed, to teach spouses to love each other better and couples to help one another is to initiate them to the love of all human beings, even of enemies. I have in mind the widow who asked me to celebrate mass for the airman who dropped the bomb that killed her husband. I remember these words written by one of you who had escaped from a concentration camp: “It was not in spite of my family responsibilities but precisely because I was a husband and father that I volunteered to take part in this conflict”. Many are the times I have seen men and women in our groups who, having discovered the needs and difficulties of members of their team, were led to become aware of the inhuman conditions of life in which millions of couples live (conditions that make the pursuit of the Christian ideal of marriage, if not impossible, at least very difficult). They were also led to understand their imperative duty to get involved in social activities.

The prayer of petition

Finally, on the subject of prayer, a deepening could be noted. It sprang spontaneously in the pre-war group, like praise in the face of beauty. Now, prayer was sought after for its own sake; it became indispensable. Who did not feel weak and vulnerable in the face of so worrying a future? We discovered then the humble prayer of petition. Those of you, who belonged to Teams in those distant years, have kept an unforgettable memory of those evenings totally spent in prayer – sometimes lasting all night! I can still remember the telephone call of a young wife, terribly distressed, telling me that her husband had just been arrested and deported. All the couples of her team were immediately informed and, that night, prayer never stopped in her home. Those who felt too tired would simply go to sleep for a while, the women in one room, the men in another. They parted company after mass, celebrated at six o'clock in a neighbouring church, leaving the wife and her children in peace and trust. These recollections do not fail to awake a certain shame for our lassitude today. **Perhaps, fewer dangers threaten us personally, but is our world in any less need of prayers?**

Henri Caffarel

Backworth 1

... on the road to Lourdes

December 1966 was the birthday of our team. We started out with 7 couples, all with young families, together with our parish priest as chaplain and all full of enthusiasm for Team Life. Now, 39 years later, we are still there but with only 3 couples and a widow. In that time 8 of our team have returned to God and our children have all grown into adults and turned us into grandparents but we are still going strong – if that little bit slower!

We were thinking how can we celebrate our 39 years of Teams and one inspired response was “Why don’t we go to Lourdes”. After all, where better to thank God for these past years than at the shrine of Our Lady. We decided that we would make a pilgrimage, as a team, following the path of St Bernadette. We appreciate that the Teams of Our Lady will be in Lourdes in 2006 and in no way would we try to pre-empt that. In the past, each of us has had the privilege of experiencing the spirit of the Movement at these large gatherings - Lourdes, Rome, Compostela – but what we needed was something more intimate and at a pace that suited our age where we could spend time together just as a small group. In truth, as much as we have loved what it is like to be part of the worldwide community gathering together in one place, we are beginning to feel our age as senior citizens and have less agility than in past years. (Perhaps I should only speak for myself here but I am sure that the others will agree.)

The die was cast and arrangements were made and on 5th June 2005 the 3 couples set out. We arrived in Lourdes on a beautiful sunny day and after a late lunch, our pilgrimage began in earnest as we approached the Domain to begin with prayers before the crowned statue of Our Lady. From then on it was a full but easy programme as we took part in all the major liturgies where each was a spiritual but also a highly emotional experience. Although we were there in Lourdes as a Team, we also had our own personal reasons for this journey and quiet moments of prayer and reflection helped to fulfil such needs. It was rewarding to be able to pray at the grotto for all the many people, family, friends, team members - past and present – that we had offered to take with us in spirit.

These were 5 wonderful days, enjoying each other’s company. It wasn’t all prayer and liturgies, there was a great deal of laughter and happiness that only true friends can experience. Although we have grown close to each other over the past 39 years, it was still a memorable time of discovery as we followed our joint pilgrimage in the love of Our Lady. Shall we do it again? Please God, if we are spared and we are still able, there may be other opportunities but this was a definite highlight and will always be a part of the many beautiful memories that each of us has of our lives in the Teams of Our Lady.

Jim Pratt

Are You Going?

Have YOU got the Gathering in Lourdes 2006 in your diary?

Gérard and Marie-Christine de ROBERTY and the International Leading Team have expressed the wish that there should be a fair representation of teams from throughout the world at the International Gathering, ideally a couple from every team.

Many of you will know and love Lourdes; some will have been to a Teams international event, some not. Lourdes has a wonderful atmosphere of spirituality, and is set in spectacular mountain scenery, and there's the French food too! The presence of thousands of team members adds to the uniqueness of this shrine.

Join us and you will meet Teams people from many different countries and walks of life, discovering a common bond through the sharing and prayer in the mixed team meetings. The relationship found in these groups is further enhanced by their coming together as one, for the conference talks and the special liturgies that celebrate our various cultures.

Not only is it time to think seriously about going yourself, but also of other people, in your team or in other teams, as they would enjoy it too. They may not yet be thinking that far ahead or they might hesitate because of the time commitment, the cost or feel uncertain about travelling. Perhaps we can help you to help them!

If they feel it's rather expensive, encourage them to realise the teams can help a bit. We can all contribute a little, month by month to send a couple, or have a small fund-raising event. If they do a lot for the Teams tell them you'd really like them to go. If they have never been to an international teams event, tell them what it's like. If they feel uncertain about travelling or are frail reassure them that they'll have company and support and good facilities in Lourdes if they are disabled.

So we are asking YOU now

1. to plan to go to Lourdes and encourage others to go.
2. to think about saving up as a team, even if you are unable to go yourself, so that you can support another couple or spiritual counsellor.
3. to have a small fund-raising event to help to raise money to give others from our region or another poorer region the opportunity to go to the gathering (a bring and buy, a Teams tea-towel to sell, a barn dance or bridge evening maybe).

Solidarity is an expression of the mutual support which is at the heart of the Teams of Our Lady. We must certainly look to help couples within our own region, as the cost of going to Lourdes from this country can be difficult, but we should keep in mind the members from distant countries and poorer circumstances for whom the cost will be enormous. Your generous fund raising can help both.

The Study Topics

An Introduction

Introducing the Study Theme for the Year Leading to the 2006 Lourdes Gathering

“Who do people say I am?”

On the Road to Discovering Christ

Jesus asked his disciples: “Who do people say I am?” The disciples did not seem to understand the question. Jesus insisted: “Who do you say I am?” The answer was simple and clear: “You are the Messiah”. And yet, more than 20 centuries after that day, the questions are still relevant for each one of us. To answer “You are the Messiah” is not enough, because our answer calls for a conversion in our lives and for us to really follow Christ.

The study theme presented over the next eight months, starting in December 2005, is aimed at reflecting on these questions, and our answer; and links to the themes of the Lourdes Gathering.

Who do people say I am? - Who is Jesus for most people in the world today? ... Many do not know him. .

Who do you say I am? – Although we have been baptized, do we really know Jesus ? Do we have a personal relationship with Him ?

You are Christ, the Son of God – That was Peter’s answer. But do we doubt ? Do we accept the challenge of finding more about Jesus ? What are we searching for – for ourselves and the world ?

Starting in the next issue, the meditation and prayer sequences over the next eight months will be linked to one aspect of the study theme, and all will be included in the next few issues of this Newsletter. We would encourage you to read the study text before the meeting, and perhaps discuss some aspects of the theme at a sit-down, before general discussion at the team meeting. Additional study material in the form of quotations will be found on the UK Teams website.

Prayers For September

from the Mass for the 23rd Sunday of Ordinary Time

Meditation Romans 13: 8-10

Avoid getting into debt, except the debt of mutual love. If you love your fellow men you have carried out your obligations. All the commandments : you shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and so on, are summed up in this single command: you must love your neighbour as yourself. Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour; that is why it is the answer to every one of the commandments.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 94: 1-2, 6-9

O that today you would listen to his voice!

Harden not your hearts.

1. Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;
hail the rock who saves us.
Let us come before him, giving thanks,
with songs let us hail the Lord.
2. Come in; let us bow and bend low;
Let us kneel before the God who made us
for he is our God and we
the people who belong to his pasture,
the flock that is led by his hand.
3. O that today you would listen to his voice !
“Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as on that day at Massah in the desert
when our fathers put me to the test;
when they tried me, though they saw my work.”

Concluding Prayer

God our Father, you have shown us what true love is. Help us to share that love with others. Help us to remember Paul's words that “Love is the one thing that cannot hurt our neighbours”, and practise this in our daily lives. **Amen**

A Commentary by Father John Maclean on the text for meditation can be found
on the Teams of Our Lady Website www.teamsofourlady.org.uk

Meditation

Kindness & Commitment

But the harvest of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control.

Galatians 5:22 (The New English Bible)

Can anyone be that perfect? The point is that they are gifts, freely conferred by the Spirit of Christ. We are at liberty to accept them or to refuse them, but they are vital components of life in the Spirit.

Kindness and generosity can, of course, come and go, as the mood takes us. But here it is not just a question of making gestures.

A chicken and a pig were taking a morning stroll together. After a while, the chicken said, "I'm hungry. Let's go home and have some bacon and eggs." "All very well for you," replied the pig. "In your case, that's just a gesture. For me, it's total commitment."

Total commitment means a change of heart, a turning around to see the world from a completely different angle. A brother of the Taizé community in France once offered me, as a gift for my Vietnamese daughter, an exquisite set of statuettes, given to him by a Vietnamese friend. "How can you bear to part with it?" I asked. His reply was simple. "Things must circulate," he said.

Lord, help us to realise that letting go of what we hold dear, and sharing it with others, is often the way to fullness of life.

Elizabeth Salter

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Prayers For October

from the Mass for the 40 Martyrs of England & Wales - October 25th

Meditation John 12: 24-26

Jesus said to his disciples: "I tell you most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life. If a man serves me, he must follow me, wherever I am, my servant will be there too. If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him."

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 15: 1-2, 5, 7, 8-11

You are my inheritance, O Lord

1. Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.
I say to the Lord: "You are my God".
O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;
it is you yourself who are my prize.
2. I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart.
I keep the Lord ever in my sight:
since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.
3. You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand happiness for ever.

Concluding Prayer

God of time, we thank you for the moments of sunrise and sunset, with their brilliant colours of promise. We thank you for the example of those who have gone before, who show that death is a new beginning with promise of a brand new harvest. May we know your presence now and in the coming months. **Amen**

A Commentary by Father John Maclean on the text for meditation can be found on the Teams of Our Lady Website www.teamsofourlady.org.uk

Prayers For November

from the Mass for the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica - November 9th

Meditation 1 Corinthians 3: 9-11, 16-17

You are God's building. By the grace God gave me, I succeeded as an architect and laid the foundations, on which someone else is doing the building. Everyone doing the building must work carefully. For the foundation, nobody can lay any other than the one which has already been laid, that is Jesus Christ.

Didn't you realise that you were God's temple and that the Spirit of God was living among you ? If anybody should destroy the temple of God, God will destroy him, because the temple of God is sacred; and you are that temple.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 45: 2-3, 5-6, 8-9

**The waters of a river give joy to God's city,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.**

1. God is for us a refuge and strength,
a helper close at hand, in time of distress:
so we shall not fear though the earth should rock,
though the mountains fall into the depths of the sea.
2. The waters of a river give joy to God's city,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
God is within, it cannot be shaken;
God will help it at the dawning of the day.
3. The Lord of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.
Come, consider the works of the Lord
the redoubtable deeds he has done on the earth.

Concluding Prayer

Lord, you called us to be your church, your living stones, guide us to build on the foundations carefully, so that all know we are filled with your Spirit, and your light shines from your church to brighten the world **Amen**

A Commentary by Father John Maclean on the text for meditation can be found
on the Teams of Our Lady Website www.teamsofourlady.org.uk

Prayer Corner

Please Pray For

All those in positions of responsibility in Teams, particularly for Mike and Kay Vadon as they prepare to take on the responsibility for Central Britain and for new Responsible Couples at the start of the Team year. - May all those with responsibility not be daunted by the task ahead, but find joy and fulfillment as they use their talents in the service of others.

All Chaplains in Teams - Lord, may the power of the Holy Spirit strengthen and support them in your service.

Teams in Pilot and new New Teams - Inspire in them an openness to hear your voice in those around them. Build up their trust in each other and help them grow in your love.

The leaders of our troubled and fragile world - May God give them wisdom in all decisions, courage in making changes and real compassion for those in their care.

Peace - God of peace, restore our broken world to the wholeness that only you can bring.

Justice - Ever-loving God, help us to be bold enough to put justice into practice. Make us care when people suffer and guide us with the spirit of solidarity and love.

Our families - Father, may our homes be places of love and acceptance. Open our minds to listen and learn from those around us. Give us grace to see them gently with your eyes.

Those who feel despair - God of the deepest depths; we cannot sink so low that your love is unable to reach us. May we know that our weaknesses are where your love begins, not ends.

Those who are sick - that they may feel your presence Lord through the uncertainty and pain.

Those who are bereaved - Be with them Lord when the days are dark, help us to support them. Give us the strength to share their darkness until the light comes.

Amen.

notice board

Lent 2006 Silent Retreat

Come and relax in a peaceful and prayerful atmosphere and let the presence of God "work" on you.

**Friday 30th March
to
Sunday 2nd April 2006
St Peter's Grange,
Prinknash Abbey**

"Only the experience of silence and of prayer offers the appropriate setting in which the truest, the most faithful and the most coherent knowledge of the mystery of Christ can mature and develop"

Pope John Paul II

The retreat will be given by a monk from the abbey

For further information & application phone:
Harry & Clotilde Meigh

Literature Stockist

John Goodwill

Announcement

Next Swanwick Conference
June 29 to July 1 2007

Teams International Gathering



16th - 21st September 2006

Note the date & start saving!

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
if you want the rainbow . . .
. . . you've got to put up with the rain