

Equipes Notre-Dame
Teams



Newsletter for the GB Regions

Teams of Our Lady 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

September 2008, October 2008, November 2008

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■ Newsletter Editors

Please send all contributions for the December 2008 - February 2009 edition by October 1st 2008, **preferably by e-mail**, to Antony & Janet Denman

Michael & Kay Vadon

Dear Friends,

This newsletter contains the first three of a four part study topic on the Charter, produced because the 60th anniversary seemed a good time to look again at the founding document of our movement.

We were very interested in the article in the last newsletter written by the Meighs, our own founding couple of the Teams in Britain. Harry and Clotilde are one of the few remaining couples that knew Fr Caffarel well. They attended an



international conference last December to mark the 60th anniversary of the Charter and in their article they spoke about a questionnaire which the participants had completed before the conference. They found that some of the replies “would have horrified and saddened Fr Caffarel”.

One finding was that the endeavours, and the sharing on the endeavours at the Team meeting, seem often to have been neglected. The endeavours are the backbone of Team life and the basis for our spiritual lives. This anniversary and the study topic on the Charter are an opportunity for us all to refresh our commitment and to be guided anew in the formula Fr Caffarel left us that has given rise to our extraordinary movement.

Magnificat!

Michael & Kay Vadon

Regional Couple for Central Britain

The Five Love Languages

One of the couples in our Little Chalfont Team, Jon and Roseann Rogers, mentioned in the course of our monthly meeting that they had found a certain book by Garry Chapman both interesting and useful on the subject of marriage. I looked it up on the internet and was persuaded to order it through Amazon. It being an American publication, this was the easiest way to obtain it.

The title? – **“The Five Love Languages”**.

It turned out to be easy reading and explained the five ways in which love can be expressed. I lent it recently to Dr. Jack Dominian, who thought it so good that he felt that it should be published here in the UK. So, in what way might it be helpful to Teams members?

There are, writes Gary Chapman, five principal ways in which we show our love to others – and he has written other books applying this to single people, children, teenagers and our relationship to God.

The first language of love is that of words of affirmation. “The tongue has the power of life and death.” Words of encouragement, kind words, words of forgiveness and reconciliation are all important in our loving relationships. Then there is the quality time given to one’s partner, and without actually using Teams’ terminology, he writes of the significance of the “sit-down”. Receiving gifts is a third way, and if this is your spouse’s primary love language, you can become a proficient gift giver and this is one of the easiest love languages to learn. Acts of service to one another and, finally, physical touch completes the picture. This includes holding hands, hugging, kissing, intercourse, etc., although the latter is only one dialect in the love language of touch.

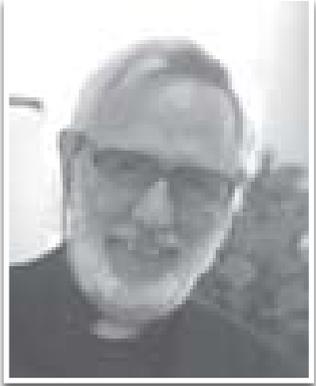
It is important to know what one’s own primary love language is and, usually, husband and wife will differ in this. It is even more important to know what one’s partner’s primary love language is and then be able to make an effort to fulfil it.

The book is full of examples from Gary Chapman’s experience of counselling married couples. He cites, for example, the case of the husband who spends most of his spare time playing football when his wife’s primary language is “quality time”, time she wants to just be with her husband. He needs to realise this and she, in her turn, perhaps needs to know that her husband needs, most of all, encouragement and affirmation.

The book concludes with a questionnaire for both husbands and wives to help them determine which their primary love language is. In short, then, I wholeheartedly recommend this series of books to Team members, both married couples, clergy, single people, widowed and young people. I would appreciate having some feed-back from those who may have already read Gary Chapman’s books, or from those who are encouraged to delve into them in the future. Just subsequent to writing this I am going to Goteborg in Sweden to officiate at a wedding of friends, and I think some of his ideas will undoubtedly show through in the homily.

Fr Ken Payne

Super Regional Chaplain



Surrey & Sussex Ramble

The Surrey & Sussex Sector organised a ramble in May near Witley. Here we are enjoying the outdoor church facilities for our liturgy stop. Music was provided by the birds with an accompaniment from a nearby field of lambs!

Jan & Ian Honeysett



Wessex Skittles & Social Evening



On Friday 27th June, the Wessex Sector held their annual summer social event in the form of a Skittles evening. Having had previous 'summer' events affected by rain, it was decided to have an indoor event this year and, true to form, the weather was not particularly good for this event but it didn't matter! Over forty people from seven different teams in Boscombe, Charminster, Christchurch, Southborne and Wimborne made the evening very enjoyable, with plenty of friendly rivalry and a good deal of

banter. The event was held in the Village Hall at Holt which is a small hamlet to the north of Wimborne in Dorset. The game of skittles is a popular and serious pastime amongst the locals but one can only wonder what they would have thought, if they had been present, of the various bowling techniques displayed during the evening! Probably John Rynne's 'backwards through the legs' was the most extreme example. John and Regina Farah's two boys did a sterling job all evening replacing the pins, despite picking up injuries from flying skittles. The Wimborne 3 team of the Andrews, Horsleys, Acres, Scotts and Watts provided cheesy baked potatoes, beans and salad and everyone brought lots of delicious puddings and their own drinks. The two rounds of 'conventional' skittles were very closely fought affairs and the evening ended with a game of 'killer', with Maggie Acres beating everyone and showing that there is no substitute for luck in this game! Many thanks to everyone who came along and made the evening so enjoyable.

Richard & Maggie Acres

Wimborne 3

**NORTHERN BRITAIN
GATHERING 2008**

**Saturday 1st November 2008
St Josephs RC Church Hall
Wetherby**

For further information
contact
Peter & Di Wordsworth

**CENTRAL BRITAIN
GATHERING 2008**

**Saturday 25th October 2008
St John's Parish Rooms
Banbury**

9.30am to 4pm
with mixed Team meetings in the evening

Main speaker:- Fr Daniel O'Leary
Fr O'Leary is a priest of the Leeds Diocese,
a regular writer in the 'Tablet' and is also
a very popular Retreat Giver.

For further information
contact Paul & Clare Callaghan

**SOUTHERN BRITAIN
GATHERING 2008**

**Saturday 11th October 2008
WIMBLEDON COLLEGE**

Speakers:- Peter & Pauline Lavery,
Sr Nilda Pettenuzzo
Teams Chaplian

For further information
contact Robert & Mary Jones

Teams Diary

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.

Sep	7	South Midlands Picnic & Mass Thornton College, 2pm	Paul & Janet Deboo
Oct	11	Southern Regional Gathering Wimbledon College	Robert & Mary Jones
Oct	20-23	St Non's Retreat Fr Patrick Auger leading the retreat	Cathy & David Andrews
Oct	25	Central Regional Gathering St John's Parish Rooms, Banbury	Paul & Clare Callaghan
Nov	1	Northern Regional Gathering St Josephs, Wetherby	Peter & Di Wordsworth
Nov	22	Surrey & Sussex Birthday Mass, Weybridge	Jan & Ian Honeysett
Dec	7	London South East Birthday Mass, Norbury 5pm	Mike & Rosemary Cox
Dec	7	South Midlands Birthday Mass Christ the King, Milton Keynes 3pm	Paul & Janet Deboo
Oct	8-10	Transatlantic Super-Regional Gathering Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick	

Translators Wanted

Are you a native Portuguese, Spanish, Italian or French speaker? We need people who can translate Teams documents into English. Together with our Teams colleagues in USA and Australia we have agreed that we will translate all documents from their original language rather than the 'official' French version.

The aim is to spread the translating load and to improve the quality of the English in Teams documents. We have a particular problem between now and Christmas as in January 2009 there will be a meeting in Rome of Regional Couples from around the world. All documents need to be in five languages.

If you think you could help (or you know someone who could) please be in touch. We have example documents in various languages that people can look at.

Paul & Helena

. . . . that others might have more

We **are living through difficult times.** The prices of staple foods are suddenly rising. Energy costs are leaping upwards affecting our ability to heat our homes and fill the tanks of our cars. As ever, these trends affect the poorest most.

The media are full of these problems with journalists vying with one another to wallow in doom and gloom. What has this got to do with the Teams? There are real and important issues here that need to be viewed from a moral standpoint, not just from the standpoint of economics and politics. Journalists and politicians tend to ignore moral issues so let us look at these issues from a moral point of view.

In recent years food has been plentiful and, to us, cheap. There have been some in the world without enough to eat but it has not been because there has been a shortage of food, but because some people have not had money to buy it. Suddenly this has changed. The demand for food has risen firstly because the global population keeps rising, and because many millions, particularly in China and India, have risen out of poverty and can now afford meat, which in turn means feeding more food crops to animals. Finally, global warming fears have made bio fuels fashionable, and in some countries food crops are being diverted to make subsidised bio ethanol. The balance between supply and demand has reached a tipping point and world prices for staples such as maize, rice and wheat have doubled or tripled¹ in the last year.

To some of us these price rises are an irritation, to others a real difficulty. But to the poor in many less developed countries they are a catastrophe moving them from hardship to actual starvation and death.

Something similar, though not identical, is happening with the price of energy, principally oil. This affects us, and some of the world's poorest, although many of them cook on wood fires.

How should we react to these changes? In a country like ours we have grown used to a high and improving standard of living. Many regard it as an entitlement. Can we demand that if prices rise by x% we are entitled to a pay rise of at least x% to compensate? No; we are not entitled to a high standard of living but to a just share of the earth's bounty. We must be prepared to take less to make room for the poor to live.

Gordon Brown was quite right to enjoin us not to waste food. Don't overbuy. Resist the bogof (buy one, get one free). Use up leftovers. Return to the frugal habits of our parents or grandparents during and after the Second World War. Put on a pullover instead of turning up the central heating. And remember to increase your giving to those like Cafod or Oxfam who help the poor.

¹ Source: International Rice Research Institute

In the long run, however, only increased supply will solve the problem. High prices will encourage farmers worldwide to plant more. Governments must encourage greater production, not obstruct it, as some are currently doing, for instance, with export bans. The European Union must stop paying farmers not to grow food ("set-aside"). All proven modern techniques, including where are appropriate, GM crop varieties, should be pressed into service and we as voters should support this.

Food production can respond quite quickly to higher prices but with energy supply there is no quick answer. We are going to have to move away from reliance on oil not so much because it has run out but because so much of the supply is controlled by governments in places like Iran, Nigeria and Venezuela which may not be reliable. There are many possible substitutes but none, apart from nuclear power, is yet proven. Technologists will solve the problem eventually but it will take decades.

In the meantime, as with food, we must learn to do with less and not compete aggressively with the poor for scarce resources. We will learn to make fuel for our cars from vegetable matter, but please, not from food crops.

Elsewhere in this newsletter we are reminded of Fr Caffarel's injunction to Christian asceticism. In the Teams this will be expressed as unselfishness to a spouse. We also have a duty to be unselfish to the poor.

Michael & Kay Vadon

Regional Couple for Central Britain

THE LIVESIMPLY PRAYER

Compassionate and loving God,
you created the world for us all to share,
a world of beauty and plenty.

Create in us a desire to live simply,
so that our lives may reflect your generosity.

Creator God, you gave us responsibility for the earth,
a world of riches and delight.

Create in us a desire to live sustainably,
so that those who follow after us may enjoy the fruits of your creation.

God of peace and justice, you give us the capacity to change,
to bring about a world that mirrors your wisdom.

Create in us a desire to act in solidarity,
so that the pillars of injustice crumble
and those now crushed are set free.

Amen.

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Further Thoughts On Humanae Vitae

The article on Humanae Vitae in the June to August 2008 issue of this newsletter has prompted a response from Gill and David Meyer.

As members of Teams for a number of years, including being part of a sector team and sector couple, we have been proud to be part of an organisation which we believe to have been in the forefront of lay participation in the church and we have been encouraged, as a couple, to fully realise our vocation as married Christians, to love one another, to love God and to love our neighbour.

The logical place for us to begin is as a couple. So, how do we love one another? Communication and listening to each other has been most important. We pray together and discuss our faith. We have been helped by Teams endeavours, especially the Sit Down. Our three children have brought us joy and challenges and have kept our feet on the ground. Vatican II reformed the theology of marriage, admitting that intercourse unites the couple, so that the two may be one flesh. If every act of intercourse in our marriage had to be 'open to life' we would not have risked having intercourse for the past thirty years or more. However, we do not believe that, once we had our family, that is, the number of children we considered we were able to cope with properly, the procreative purpose is all that there is.

We think that the ban on contraception within marriage is doing extreme harm to the credibility of the church, and, far more seriously, has caused terrible distress to many women. Many couples are alienated from the church community, which should be the very place in which to find support. Intense pain is suffered by thousands of women who, for various reasons cannot bear a further pregnancy. Natural family planning, for many reasons, does not work in every situation. Sexual intercourse is intrinsic to marriage.

'Have you not read that the creator made them male and female. This is why a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife, and the two become one flesh. They are no longer two, therefore, but one flesh. So then, what God has united, human beings must not divide.' Matt.19:3-6

This is often quoted in order to ban divorce, but is it not also about the unique relationship between the couple, in which they sustain one another, being no longer two, but one flesh? Is using contraception the greatest sin there is, or are we seeing sin where there is none?

Next, how do we love our neighbour and who is our neighbour? We believe that we communicate the love of God mostly through our actions and we think that whether or not we use contraception is of little interest to most folk! What is important is the way in which we make ourselves available to others, including our children and those in poverty, need or sickness. We need to support our young people by demonstrating our fidelity and love for each other, giving them a positive view of marriage and the importance of commitment.

Through our love for each other and through the love and care we give to our family, our friends and to those we are able to help in any way, we show our love of God. 'In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.' Matt. 25:40

Gillian & David Meyer

Thames Ditton

Encouraging Endeavours

While visiting Teams in our Region we have sometimes shared with them an idea we implemented in our own Team some years ago.

At each meeting, after sharing on Endeavours, we all went home full of new resolve to try harder in the coming month. At the next meeting we would often find ourselves back to square one, only to resolve to double our efforts next month. "The road to hell is paved with good intentions" it is said, so we came up with the suggestion that, "maybe, the road to heaven was paved with good ideas."

This particular idea, from one Team member, was to make our mutual support more obvious so the concept of "prayer partners" was born. After our sharing on Endeavours at the meeting each couple and our chaplain, take a small square of paper and write their names on it. Underneath they write which particular Endeavour they have chosen to target with special effort in the coming month; beneath that, they write a prayer intention of current concern for themselves, family or friends. The papers are folded, placed in a basket and each couple and the chaplain then draw one out. Whosever's names are on that piece of paper, become their prayer partner till the next meeting and they pray for them each day.

We have found a three-fold benefit from this:

- a) Praying for another couple or our chaplain brings to mind the whole Team.
- b) Praying for someone else's Endeavour reminds us of our own.
- c) Everyone praying daily for each other is a source of great encouragement.

In addition we sometimes find ourselves sending a card or an email or making a phone call to ask how Jack's asthma is or whether Aunt Margaret's operation went ok. This always leads on to a brief sharing on the "Endeavour of the month" and the promise of ongoing prayers. If someone in the Team has a really serious intention (for instance one of our Team-members was widowed recently) the whole Team makes that their prayer intention for the month.

As it says in the adverts "It's simple, quick and cheap". Why not try it in your Team?

Robert & Mary Jones

Fareham 1 (& Southern Regional Couple)



To Live Out Our Membership Of Teams As A Service Of Couples To Couples



Father Epis begins his letter by commenting on variances between guidance from official hierarchy and the difficulties of Teams couples living a Christian life in the modern world. As a spiritual counsellor he is required to respond when Teams couples query the content or relevance of study topics. He continues :-

Obedience to the Church and to the Magisterium does not exempt us from the duty of studying people's search for truth today.

We read in the Letter from Lourdes that "the orientation **To be a couple in the church and in the world today**, given at St James of Compostela, invites us to take part in the Church's work of evangelisation through its movements, its parishes, its dioceses, etc... We must look together for new methods for teams and team members to become more active within the Church".

We live in times of profound changes. Our faith, together with how we feel as Christians, affects us deeply. Our ways of acting and thinking within our parish communities have changed a lot. In spite of this, we do not seem to have understood where we are heading, where this historical evolution is leading us.

Father Caffarel felt this change coming and stressed how necessary it was to understand the situation of teams in which there were Christians of different levels of faith.

Father Epis then reflects on the difficulty of choosing study topic material which is relevant and understandable to Teams around the world where there are Christians at different stages of their journey in faith. He continues :-

It is true that it is not possible to think of study topics that can be studied in the same way in all countries. But it is also true that we cannot think in terms of simplistic solutions that do not give a taste for the Gospel, for research or for the good of people. It is not sufficient to do a study topic simply to fulfil an 'endeavour'. We must choose study topics that introduce us to the ways of the world of today. The Lourdes letter does not only urge us to do something, but to "participate in the work of evangelisation as part of our commitment to the Church... Together, we must look for new ways for teams and team members to be more active in the Church."

From Father Epis

Our treasure is wrapped up in complicated ideas and cumbersome institutions that hold it imprisoned. Is it possible to rethink and re-express the Christian faith in such a way that it becomes understandable to the people of our time?

It is possible to do so if we learn from Jesus of Nazareth, from the way he acted as a man. How does Jesus speak to us about God? – through his humanity.

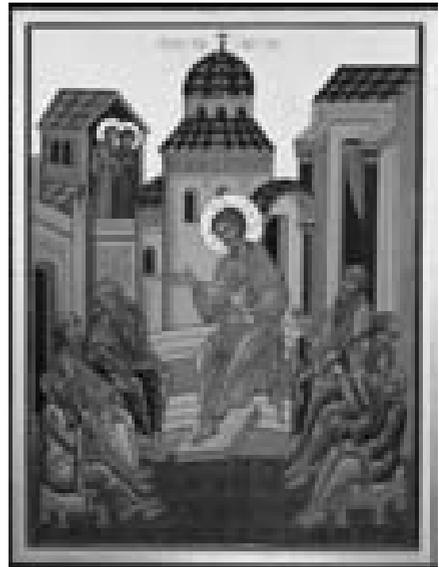
How are we to live out our commitment in the Church ? How must We witness to God? The Church is made up, in the first place, of the baptised who journey through history. It is this People, spread throughout the world and forming communities who follow the way of Jesus Christ and who, living among other human beings, adopt the way of life of Jesus. It is a dramatic choice:

- to fight against evil and sin and against the perverse message that speaks of power and domination and
- to listen to the “wise” Word that offers to give us life and to put us at the service of our brothers and sisters, even to washing their feet.

Christians are Servants of Salvation

The first duty of the Church and of Christians is to recognise and bear witness to God’s action in humanity. Christians are not the Keepers of the way of salvation (which is the love of neighbour), but the Servants of salvation. Before claiming to proclaim the good news, they must receive this good news where it is to be found, where it manifests itself in human history: that is to say, where it witnesses to the love of God. Meditating on the Word and Gospel that Jesus has entrusted to us makes it possible for us to discern the action of God in the daily life of human beings. Above all, Christians must not feel that they are bearers

of a preset meaning of life, but discoverers and servants of a new meaning that arises – like the Kingdom of God – where we least expect it. The Church gives thanks for this: the worship it celebrates is a thanksgiving for the work of God accomplished in the world and a well from which springs the humanising of humanity. Such is the true “glory of God”.



The second duty of the Church is to bring together in one union the dispersed children of God. The Church is the sign or sacrament of the coming together of all humanity in God. Each person in this gathering – and therefore especially the weak and deprived – is valued because of their dignity and of their uniqueness thanks to their link to and relationship with others. Christians are people of peace, concord, dialogue, solidarity and charity.

The third duty is for our communities to become wellsprings of humanity, communities working together and transforming the humanity of our society by the light of the Gospel.

He continues:-

In our secularised society, we are preoccupied with maintaining our identity, our distinctiveness. It is not by presenting ourselves as a people apart that Christians will bear witness to the Gospel; but by living in the world in full solidarity with the human activity of every individual. Also, Christians will be identified if their behaviour, inspired by the message they bear, show signs of “a little bit more humanity”.

“It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognise you as my disciple” (Jn 13: 35). This secret is to be found in married love.

Father Angelo Epis

Spiritual Counsellor, International Leading Team

Editors' Note.

The full unedited letter is available on the website- <http://www.teamsofourlady.org.uk>

A Community of the Church Open to the World

At the conclusion of the Gathering in Lourdes in 2006, all Teams couples were invited to become messengers of the Movement "...to the four corners of the world." The general orientation outlined for the following years and given to us at that time was "Teams, communities of couples, reflecting the love of Christ". As we progress along the pathway to which this orientation leads us, it is appropriate to review our role as a team community and our preparedness, both as couples and as a team, to be truly open to the world.

That the team is a community is, by definition, obvious. That the Teams are a community of the Church is also well documented including both the Charter of the Teams in 1947 and the Decree of Recognition from the Pontifical Council for the Laity in 2002. That the team is open to the world might, we suggest, be the subject of greater scrutiny.

In his June 1948 editorial Fr Caffarel challenged the Teams with the question "Are Teams cosy sitting rooms?" Sixty years later we may well ask this question again. While many teams members today are actively involved in a variety of fields within both Church and society, just as they were in 1948, the challenge posed by Fr Caffarel was "... may couples in each team ask themselves whether it is possible to go further still in commitments and giving of self."



We are all fortunate that through our team involvement we have a greater awareness of the concept of "spirituality of the couple" and are not limited solely to individual spiritual growth, even though this is an important aspect for our personal and couple growth. The "couple" is formed of two distinct personalities, each capable of self expression but when coming together as

"couple" they are capable of much greater wisdom. Within the team, each couple brings their own individual and shared experience. By sharing these experiences with the other members of the team they create within the group a deeper understanding and acceptance and so build the dynamic of their team.

The Team - A Community of the Church

This is the charism of Teams that we need to demonstrate to the world. We are not a secret society, or as Fr Caffarel reflected “cosy sitting rooms”, we are in effect the basis of Christian society, of family and of the Church. For this reason we should be prepared to reach out in witness and in service with a spirit of mission to other couples. We should be mindful of the words of Pope John Paul II who, when addressing the topic of missionary spirituality in his 1990 encyclical “Redemptoris missio”, observed that “The universal call to holiness is closely linked to the universal call to mission. Every member of the faithful is called to holiness and to mission.” (Chapter VIII, 90)

The Guide to the Teams when referring to “mission” states:

“Couples are called to be the leaven of renewal, not only in the Church, but also in the world and to show by their witness that:

- ☺ marriage is at the service of love,
- ☺ marriage is at the service of happiness,
- ☺ marriage is at the service of holiness.”

“Innumerable couples will be grateful to you for the help that you bring to them; in fact, most couples today are in need of help”

(Pope Paul VI to the Teams of Our Lady – 1976)

One of the important endeavours for our life in Teams is the “Rule of Life”. This calls us to pursue a way of life that brings us closer to God and is in effect a pathway to holiness. Can it also include a call to go out from our comfort zone? When was the last time that you spoke to other couples outside the Teams Movement and were witness to the existence of the movement and the benefits of life in Teams? When did you last invite other couples to share with you the journey of Teams? We should never find ourselves in the situation of a couple that we once heard about who, when the topic of Teams was mentioned, sighed and replied: “Yes we would have liked to have joined Teams but were never invited.”

“The contemporary society has a particular need of the witness of couples who persevere in their marriage, as an eloquent Sign of our human condition and of God’s constant love (even if it is sometimes a difficult sign to display)”

Pope John Paul II, Agenda for the Third Millennium

Therefore the call for us is to bear witness that marriage is a source of love, happiness and holiness as well as of human fulfilment. We need to challenge ourselves to be “missionaries” for Teams to other couples and within society. What we have received through our teams involvement is a gift that should be shared not hoarded and kept to ourselves. In particular it is a gift that we need to share with younger couples as they embark on their married life together. It is a gift that not only allows couples to grow together in spirituality and mutual

The Team - A Community of the Church

support but importantly enables them to live fully their sacramental marriage. We should also seek to develop the skills we have learnt in promoting the joy of marriage to society in general.

In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI addressing a group of young people who had been taking part in a "Youth Mission" to Rome organised by the Archdiocese of Madrid said: "Do not cease to cultivate your own personal encounter with Christ, to keep him ever at the centre of your heart, since in this way your life will be converted into a mission; you will let Christ who lives in you shine forth." Perhaps we, as team members, could take these thoughts to heart both individually and as a couple as we reach out to others.

For us to be truly open to the world as witnesses of Teams we must each be prepared to take responsibility. It is not enough to say "that is for others to do". We should take responsibility, with our fellow members and within the Church, to be witnesses to the power of the couple as the basis of family.

"The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest" (Lk 10: 2)

In conclusion, as we contemplate how each of us, as individuals and couples, can go out into the world to effectively share the charism of Teams, let us reflect on the words of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, one of the patron saints of the missions: "We do not know what the future holds - but we know who holds it."

Jan & Peter Ralton



Syria, a country of ecumenism

The presence of Teams in Syria is proof that our movement is universal and opened to all societies and cultures. It is like the Church taking the message of Christ to the whole world.

By the end of 2007, the Region of Syria had 5 Sectors, 50 teams, 275 couples and 42 Spiritual Counsellors of different rites.

In Syria, we experience ecumenism quite naturally. There are Catholic Churches of six different rites: Greek Melkite, Maronite,

Armenian, Syrian, Chaldean and Latin. They all celebrate the same mass with slightly different words and sometimes using the language of its origin (Syrian, Armenian, etc.)

In addition, there are Orthodox Churches of different rites: Greek Byzantine, Syrian, and Armenian and some Protestants. The expansion of Teams both in Catholic and Orthodox communities and the presence of members of all Churches in our teams, plays its part in consolidating ecumenism in Syria and in the Middle East. For example, the teams of the Alep Sector celebrate mass together on the first Sunday of the month in a different parish each month. This opens the movement to all parishes and is an indirect way of providing information on what Teams live out in practice.

Recently, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Charter of Equipes Notre-Dame, we celebrated mass in the Catholic Syrian Church at which the celebrant was a priest of the Latin rite. It was celebrated in the presence of 12 priests of different rites. The choir on that occasion was organised by a Protestant team member and led by an Armenian Orthodox. The offertory hymn was in Armenian and the other hymns in Arabic.

Our teams meet twice a month, always with its Spiritual Counsellor. The first meeting is what we call the "official meeting" which is run according to the Charter (meal, pooling of news etc. prayer, sharing on endeavours, study topic). The second meeting is a social meeting during which we improve our friendly relationships, sharing on different subjects: social, intellectual or religious.

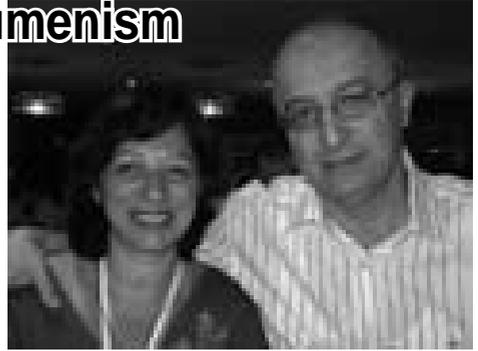
For us in Syria, these different communities are at once a source of riches, originality and openness. In this context, the Church considers that Christ has entrusted to it a specific mission to be "the yeast in the dough", the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world". It is determined to pursue this mission in faithfulness to Christ and to the Gospel. It wants to be always the Church of Hope, "the hope that does not disappoint" and the "Church of witness" to a charity that knows no limits. It also wants to keep its role as a lighthouse within the Arab and Muslim world, carrying out fully its religious, cultural, social and economic mission.

Our Church accepts therefore this situation positively and its intents to carry out its specific mission within the Universal Church.

Finally, we believe that Equipes Notre-Dame in our countries carry out the same mission as the Church and have the same objectives for the future.

Farès & Carole Kassabji

Syrian Regional Couple



"Ascesis"

(May-June 1972 editorial)



Note: In his 1970 Rome conference 'In the face of atheism', Father Caffarell said: "It is unthinkable that, in a movement of spirituality like Equipes Notre-Dame, couples should not be initiated to that science of spiritual progress that is Christian ascesis". Adding: "almost everything remains to be done concerning an ascesis proper to married Christians".

If you know how to love, you know what ascesis is. Those who practise love, of necessity, practise ascesis; for ascesis is not some arbitrary demand of an austere preacher, but a well and truly fundamental requirement of love. There are no medals without a reverse side, no coins without 'heads and tails'. Love and ascesis are the two faces of the same reality.

I shall never progress in the love of another person if I do not mortify my love of self if it persists in being selfish and in trying to have its own way. Indeed, I cannot simultaneously give and take away, have a deep-rooted attitude of self-giving and satisfy my yearnings, be committed and free to do as I please, be focused on myself and on someone else.

Admittedly, love and selfishness do cohabit in my heart; but it is not a peaceful coexistence. They don't get on together; they are at loggerheads; they are openly or insidiously in conflict unless they enter into a formal agreement to share my heart, my life. But that is a fool's bargain: each will try, in an underhand way, to exterminate the other. Love and selfishness each want to be in control.

Beware, however! Having read what I wrote, don't rush into speculations. Enter rather into your inner self, as I do myself writing to you. Consider and watch carefully the movements of your heart. Devote yourself, if only for one day, to a ruthless examination – I would not say "of conscience", since this expression irritates – but "of the heart". Come the evening, study the graph of your "electrocardiogram".

"there is no true love in the heart that says: "that's enough"

You love your wife/your husband and you wish to love him/her ever more (for there is no true love in the heart that says: "that's enough" and does not desire to love always more and better). Yet, you notice that many things in you put a brake, impede, slow up the impetus of your love. It may be, when you talk to each other, the need not

to give in, to be always right. It may be, when the phone rings, the secret hope that the other will get up and answer it before you. It may be the demon of silence that prevents you revealing the best of yourself, during conjugal prayer for example. Or it may be a talkative demon that makes you talk about yourself while your spouse is quietly increasingly distressed at never being listened to. And what about the signs of impatience, is it love of the other that provokes them? Throughout the day, which way does your compass needle point: to the happiness and the good of the other or to yourself? And in your sexual relationship...?

It would be interesting for you to question yourselves also about your relationship with your children. How many reproaches are dictated by wounded vanity rather than by genuine tenderness! But I'll stop here; the scope is too vast...

Have I succeeded in showing you that all love entails a demand for asceticism understood as a concern, a courageous, loyal, intelligent, methodical, persevering effort at mortifying selfishness that is endlessly, openly or insidiously, an obstacle to love and in cultivating in yourselves all that will help you to achieve a greater love?

And if human love requires asceticism, how much more does love of God!

Introduction

The Charter, the founding text of our movement, is 60 years old. Some couples may never have seen the Charter, so it is a good time for us to revisit it and refresh ourselves and our Team and our married life by considering its precepts. Bear in mind, however, that this document was written in another time using perhaps unfamiliar expressions, when Equipes Notre Dame was a small movement in France. Today it is a worldwide movement of ten thousand teams in countries with widely varying cultures.

In the words of Cardinal Newman "To live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often". So in addition to the Charter, there are some later additions to the "obligations" and there are "The Statutes". Following each section we add and, as appropriate, enlarge upon later additions to the Charter.

We have divided the text of the Charter into four sections so that each forms the basis for a monthly study topic over the next four months. We encourage couples to read each section prior to the next Team meeting and then consider together the questions at the end of each section. These can then be the subject of the exchange of views at the Team meeting.

The Charter

Part One of Four

Why Equipes Notre Dame (The Teams Of Our Lady)?

We live in an age of contrasts. On the one hand, divorces, adultery, free love and 'neo-malthusianism'¹ are widespread: on the other hand, a growing number of couples aspire to a thoroughly Christian life. Some of these have founded the Teams of Our Lady.

- *They aspire to carry out fully their baptismal commitments*
- *They want to live for Christ, with Christ, through Christ*
- *They give themselves to him unreservedly*
- *They intend to serve him unquestioningly*
- *They acknowledge him as leader and Lord of their home*
- *They make his Gospel the charter of their family*

¹Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834), an English economist, advocated population control

- *They want their love, sanctified by the sacrament of marriage, to be*
 - *a praise to God*
 - *a witness to people clearly proving that Christ has saved love*
 - *and a reparation for the many sins committed against marriage*
- *They intend to be missionaries of Christ everywhere*
- *Devoted to the Church, they want to be always ready to respond to the calls of their bishop and of their priests*
- *They want to be competent in their work*
- *They want to turn all their activities into a collaboration in the work of God and a service to humanity*
 - *Aware of their weakness and of the limits to their strength, if not of their good intentions*
 - *because they experience daily how difficult it is to live as Christians in a pagan world*
 - *and because they have unshakeable faith in the power of fraternal mutual help*
 - *they have decided to form a "team."*

Teams are not nursery schools for respectable adults but 'commando squads', made up of volunteers. No one is forced to join, nor to remain in it, but whoever belongs to it must play the game honestly.

Meaning Of The Word 'Team'

The word 'team' preferred to any other, implies the idea of a precise objective, pursued actively and in common. The Teams place themselves under the patronage of Our Lady. In so doing, they emphasise their will to serve her and affirm that there is no better guide to God than the Mother of God.

Spirit of The Movement

Mutual Help

- 1 *There can be no Christian life without a living faith. There can be no living and growing faith without study. In practice, most married Christians give up all efforts at study and meditation, for want of knowing their importance, for want also of time, guidance and training. As a result, their faith remains weak and vulnerable; their knowledge of God's ways*

and of the Church's teaching superficial and fragmentary. They have little knowledge of the ways to union with God. They have but little notion of the realities of family life: marriage, love, fatherhood, the upbringing of children, etc. As a result, they have little religious vitality and a very limited range of influence. The couples of Teams want to react against this. And so, they endeavour to deepen their religious knowledge and to discover the demands of Christ, in order to conform their life to them. It is together, as a team, that they pursue this effort.

- 2 *It is not enough to know God and his teaching, there must be personal encounter with him. To study, one must add prayer. Just as we help one another to study in the Teams of Our Lady, so we help one another to pray. We pray with one another; we pray for one another. "Again, I say to you, that if two of you consent upon earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father who is in heaven. For where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them" (Mt. 18: 19-20). Strengthened by the Lord's promise, Teams couples strive to remember the presence of Christ among them and pray together joyfully and confidently.*
- 3 *Is it not unrealistic to claim to help one's friends to lead a spiritual life, if one does not first help them to overcome their worries and difficulties? This is why the couples of the Teams of Our Lady practice mutual help generously, as much materially as spiritually, obeying Saint Paul's great precept: "Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal 6: 2). They try to satisfy the four demands of brotherly love: to give, to receive (more difficult than giving), to ask (even more difficult) and to know how to refuse (there can be no asking with simplicity, where there is not the simplicity to refuse a service requested, if it cannot be rendered without too much difficulty). Mutual help should provide the legitimate security that so many others expect from money.*

Witness

The Acts of the Apostles (4: 32) tell us that the early Christians "were of one heart and one soul". Seeing them, the pagans were surprised: "See, how they love one another!" and admiration often led to conversion. Has brotherly love, in this twentieth century, lost the power of influence and attraction that it had in the early days of the Church? The Teams of Our Lady think that, today as then, non-believers will be won over to Christ if they see Christian couples truly loving one another and helping one another in seeking God and in serving their brothers and sisters. And so brotherly love, going beyond mutual help, becomes a witness.

Later Developments

In Britain the Teams have for many years been uncomfortable with the name "Teams of Our Lady" because it is widely misunderstood by non-members. Twenty years ago there was an effort to find a new name with suggestions such as "Marriage United" (football anyone?) which came to nothing. In 2007 the GB regional couples decided the best change to make was back to the French "Equipes Notre Dame" followed by "Teams". This usage of French is already used in a number of non-French speaking countries such as Australia and Germany.

Questions

1. The introduction describes an age of contrasts; adultery and divorce etc contrasted with couples aspiring to a thoroughly Christian life. How are things different today, 60 years later? Are they better or worse and how do they affect our married life?
2. What efforts do we make to develop our practice of prayer? How far has membership of a team helped us to make these efforts?
3. What efforts have we made to nourish our faith through study?
4. What mutual help have we given in our Team? What should we have given?
5. Is our Team a nursery school, a commando squad or if something in between, then what?

Prayers For September

from the Mass for 26th Sunday of the Year, Year A

Meditation Philippians 2: 1-5

If our life in Christ means anything to you, if love can persuade at all, or the Spirit that we have in common, or any tenderness and sympathy, then be united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind. That is the one thing which would make me completely happy. There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interests first but everybody thinks of other people's interests instead. In your minds you must be the same as Jesus Christ.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 24 **"Remember your mercy, Lord."**

- 1 Lord, make me know your ways.
Lord, teach me your paths.
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:
for you are God my saviour

- 2 Remember your mercy, Lord,
and the love you have shown from of old.
Do not remember the sins of my youth.
In your love remember me,
because of your goodness, O Lord.

- 3 The Lord is good and upright.
He shows the path to those who stray,
he guides the humble in the right path;
he teaches his way to the poor.

Concluding Prayer

Father, help us to consider others, and put others interests before our own. May we be a true witness for You. Help us to hurry toward the eternal life you promise and come to share the joys of your kingdom. **Amen**

A Commentary by Fr Robin White on the text for meditation can be found on the
Teams of Our Lady Website <http://www.teamsofourlady.org.uk>

The Charter

Part Two of Four

Discipline of The Movement

For the spirit of Teams to be alive and lasting, there has to be a rule. Spirit and rule, like body and soul, cannot be separated: the spirit must be the soul of the rule; the rule must support and protect the spirit. The rule must be sufficiently light not to inhibit the personality and mission of each couple, but strong enough to protect against slackness.

The Team

A team is composed of four to seven couples. One of these couples is its leader. It is important not to exceed this number, beyond which an intimate atmosphere is difficult to achieve and loses in quality.

The Monthly Meeting

Friendship suffers from prolonged separation; it needs regular meetings. This is why the team meets at least once a month. Attendance at the monthly meeting is obligatory¹. The plan of the meeting is as follows:

A Meal Together - It is very desirable to begin the monthly meeting with a meal together at the home of one or other of the couples in turn (as far as possible, of course). Man has not yet invented anything better than a meal to bring people together and create bonds of friendship. Is it not at mealtime that the family comes together? Is it not the Eucharistic meal that gathers together the children of God? The Acts of the Apostles tell us that the early Christians "broke bread from house to house and took their meal with gladness and simplicity of heart" (Acts 2: 46)

Praying Together - Praying together is the outstanding way of meeting others in depth, of acquiring a common spirit and of growing aware of the presence of Christ among his own. But it only achieves this, if it is sufficiently prolonged to help people to put aside their worries and create silence. At least a quarter of an hour is devoted to praying together before the Exchange of Views.

¹It goes without saying that, in case of serious difficulties, one can be excused from this obligation as from others.

Immediately before the prayer, the couples share their intentions. If they are to be truly adopted by all, they must be presented with sufficient details and must be seen to be close to the heart of those who express them.

Then the current intentions of the great Catholic family are evoked so that they can also be prayed for (for example: persecuted Christians, a mission in difficulty, a particular apostolic venture, recruitment to the priesthood, etc.)

For this prayer together to swell the hearts and make them beat to the rhythm of the Church, it will include psalms, collects and hymns from the breviary and from the missal. These are given in the Letter of the Teams of Our Lady. Another part of the prayer consists in each member expressing aloud their thoughts and feelings inspired by the passage from Scripture given in the Letter. A time of silence must also be allowed so that each member may have a more intimate and personal contact with God.

General Sharing² & Sharing On The Obligations³ - A time must be set aside at monthly meetings (it can be during the meal) for a general sharing on matters of interest and concern affecting the family, a member's job, civic or Church involvements, successes or failures, discoveries, joys and sorrows.

After the prayer, a time is reserved to the 'sharing' on the obligations of the Charter. Each couple says quite frankly whether they have kept, during the preceding month, the obligations laid down in the Charter.

It goes without saying that there is an intimate and personal domain which it would be wrong to reveal under pretext of friendship. Members of Teams react against the unashamed openness - all too widespread today - of couples who do not hesitate to reveal to everybody the problems of their married life. Barring this one reservation, how truly in keeping with Evangelical charity it is to share in this way and to call, in all simplicity, on brotherly mutual help. How many couples are saved from mediocrity, or even from failure, the day they no longer have to struggle alone.

Exchange Of Views⁴ - Conversations not carried out in the presence of God are liable to be superficial. Ideas are bandied about and hearts refuse to be open to truths that call for transformation. Team members endeavour to be absolutely loyal: every truth that is better grasped must become part of one's life. Exchanges of views are fruitful only if they are prepared. The spouses must reflect together on the study topic and send, a few days before the meeting, their comments in writing to the couple chosen to lead the next exchange of views. This obligation of a time of reflection together each month has proved very fruitful to them.

²This 'General Sharing' is wider than the sharing of news. It is called 'Wise en commun' in the French text of the Charter and is a reference to Acts 4: 32 "They had everything in common"

³The word Obligation is now translated as Endeavour

⁴This 'Exchange of views' is not a discussion or debate, but a sharing of thoughts on the study topic

Study Topic For October

Mutual help in study demands that the exchange of views be prepared by all. Preparation in this case is even more necessary than for material mutual help in which people would have qualms about receiving without giving to others. The topics for study are not left to the free choice of teams. They are provided by the Leading Team - not out of arbitrary authoritarianism - but in order to help couples to acquire as complete a concept of Christian thinking as possible, and to initiate them to an authentic married and family spirituality.

The first three years are devoted to fundamental topics: love, marriage, married spirituality.

After these three years, teams can choose from several series of subjects for which study outlines, questionnaires and references are provided⁵. It goes without saying that teams can organise extra meetings, either for additional exchanges of views or, quite simply, to deepen friendship.

Questions

1. Are we meeting regularly? If not, what is getting in the way? What can we do about it?
2. Does our praying together meet the aspirations of the Charter? Do we share our intentions?
3. Do we share regularly and openly on the endeavours?
4. Is our "Exchange of Views" (discussion on the study topic) debate or a sharing of thoughts? How do we ensure that we are "open to truths that call for transformation"?

⁵Following Father Caffarel's conference "The teams of Our lady in the face of atheism", given during the 1970 Rome Gathering, study topics have been "based on the Word of God, the basis of all spiritual life"

Prayers For October

from the Mass for the 30th Sunday of the Year, Year C

Meditation 1 Thessalonians 1: 5-10

You observed the sort of life we lived when we were with you, which was for your instruction, and you were led to become imitators of us, and of the Lord; and it was with the joy of the Holy Spirit that you took to the gospel, in spite of the great opposition all round you. This has made you the great example to all believers in Macedonia and Achaia since it was from you that the word of the Lord started to spread – and not only throughout Macedonia and Achaia, for the news of your faith in God has spread everywhere. We do not need to tell other people about it : other people tell us how we started the work among you, how you broke with idolatry when you converted to God and became servants of the real, living God; and how you are now waiting for Jesus, his Son, whom he raised from the dead, to come from heaven to save us from the retribution which is coming.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 17

“I love you, Lord, my strength.”

- 1 I love you, Lord, my strength,
my rock, my fortress, my saviour.
My God is the rock where I take refuge;
my shield, my mighty help, my stronghold.
The Lord is worthy of all praise:
when I call I am saved from my foes.

- 2 Long life to the Lord, my rock!
Praised be the God who saves me.
He has given great victories to his king
and shown his love for his anointed.

Concluding Prayer

Almighty and ever-living God, strengthen our faith, hope, and love. May we do with loving hearts what you ask of us and come to share the life you promise. **Amen.**

A Commentary by Fr Robin White on the text for meditation can be found on the
Teams of Our Lady Website <http://www.teamssofarlady.org.uk>

The Charter

Part Three of Four

The Obligations Of Each Couple

Couples, as we have seen, come to Teams seeking help. This does not absolve them from making some efforts. It is to give direction and support to their efforts that the Teams ask their members to observe the following obligations:

- a) To set themselves a rule of life (the great diversity of couples does not allow the same rule to be proposed to all). Without a rule of life, the religious life of the spouses may easily be governed by the whim of the moment and become chaotic. This rule of life (it goes without saying, that each spouse has his/her own rule), consists in nothing else than determining the efforts that one intends to impose on oneself in order to respond better to the will of God.*
- b) It is not a question of multiplying one's obligations but to define them in order to strengthen the will and avoid drifting. Advice and guidance of a priest are desirable in order to guard against doing too much or too little. There is no obligation to reveal to one's team the rule adopted nor the manner it is observed. It must be noted, however, that some have benefited from extending mutual help thus far.*
- c) To pray together and with their children once a day, as far as possible, because the family, as such, owes worship to God and prayer together has great power.*
- d) To say the prayer of the Teams of Our Lady daily, in union with all the couples of the Movement.*
- e) To practice once a month the 'duty of sitting-down'. It is the occasion for each couple to review their life.*
- f) To study together as a couple the topic for study and send in their comments in writing before the meeting - and to attend the meeting.*
- g) To read the editorial of the Letter of the Teams*
- h) To make every year a residential retreat of at least 48 hours, husband and wife together as far as possible. Only one retreat is obligatory prior to the team's commitment.*

Study Topic For November

- i) *To give each year- by way of contribution - the fruits of one of their working days, in order to provide for the material needs and expansion of the movement to which they owe in part their spiritual enrichment.*
- j) *To contact and welcome, with a fraternal heart, couples from other teams, when the occasion arises.*

Later Developments

The following obligations were not part of the original Charter, but were added in May 1970

Each member of the Teams of Our Lady is also asked to observe the following obligations:

- to devote ten minutes a day to contemplative prayer;
- to have recourse to the Word of God with perseverance. Each member is free to determine the way he/she will do so in the course of the month;
- to study the meaning of Christian asceticism¹ and endeavour to make it part of their Christian married life.

Recourse to the Word of God is today well understood as part of the endeavours. The other two less so.

Contemplative Prayer

After introducing the new endeavour Fr Caffarel went on " at all levels of the movement a great effort of initiation into contemplative prayer will be made, so that it may be, what it already is for so many of you a daily encounter with the Lord. The Teams, a movement of Spirituality, will be a Movement of prayer."

A note on Christian asceticism

This is not a concept familiar to us. Broadly, we can interpret it as acting with discipline, Christian discipline. Discipline should be familiar to us in our attempts to follow the endeavours, which require us to discipline ourselves. Christian asceticism is directed towards Christian practice and also implies a certain modesty or self denial in our lifestyle, which in fact comes naturally to most of us. Indeed as we are urged to reduce our impact on the environment, this asceticism could even become fashionable. (For a more detailed discussion of Asceticism, please read Father Caffarel's letter in this newsletter.).

¹Strictly speaking the English word should be "asceticism" but "asceticism" is part of the heritage we receive from a movement originally French. See Fr Caffarel's article on asceticism on page 17 of this newsletter.

Questions

1. How often do we pray with our spouse and with our children? How do we get on with contemplative prayer?
2. Do we have a monthly sitting down? If not, why not and how could we overcome the obstacles?
3. How well do we prepare the study topic together each month?
4. Do we read each newsletter carefully?
5. Do we make an annual Team retreat? If so, how has it helped us? If not, what effect has this had on the life of our Team? Have we done a 48 hour retreat?
6. What are the factors which we should consider in deciding how we fulfil the commitment to give "the fruits of a working day each year" to support the movement?

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Holy Spirit

You are the Spirit of the Father and the Son blessed in Eternity.

You have been sent to us by Jesus to make us understand what He told us and to lead us towards the fullness of truth.

You are for us the Spirit of life, the Spirit of creation, the sanctifying Spirit.

It is You who renew all things.

We humbly ask You to enliven us and to make your home in us, in each and every one of us, in each of our couples and each of our teams

So that we may live the sacrament of marriage as a place of Love a path to Happiness and a way to Holiness.

Amen.

Meditation 1 Corinthians 9: 24-27

Do you not realise that, though all the runners in the stadium take part in the race, only one of them gets the prize ? Run like that – to win. Every athlete concentrates completely on training, and this is to win a wreath that will wither, whereas ours will never wither. So that is how I run, not without a clear goal: and how I box, not wasting blows in the air. I punish my body and bring it under control, to avoid any risk that, having acted as herald for others, I myself may be disqualified.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 50

“A pure heart create for me, O God.”

- 1 A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
Nor deprive me of your holy spirit

- 2 Give me again the joy of your help;
With a spirit of fervour sustain me,
that I may teach transgressors your ways
and sinners may return to you.

- 3 For in sacrifice you take no delight,
burnt offering from me you would refuse,
my sacrifice, a contrite spirit.
A humbled, contrite heart you will not spurn.

Concluding Prayer

Dear Lord, as members of Teams, we have the benefit of Endeavours which train our hearts and minds on you. Give us strength to use these tools to train ourselves in the greater service of your name. **Amen**

A Commentary by Fr Robin White on the text for meditation can be found on the
Teams of Our Lady Website <http://www.teamsofourlady.org.uk>

notice board

Gatherings

Northern
Saturday 1st November 2008

Central
Saturday 25th October 2008

Southern
Saturday 11th October 2008

Literature Couple

Gordon & Marie Wratten

St Non's Retreat



20th October 2008
to
23rd October 2008

Retreat will be led by Fr Patrick Auger (Chaplain to Cheltenham 2)
further details from
Cathy & David Andrews

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
our deeds determine us
. . . . just as much as we determine our deeds