



THE MYSTIQUE OF THE TEAMS OF OUR LADY

When we joined Teams of Our Lady when we were still very young, many things were presented to us as being "obligations" or "rules" proposed or imposed by the Movement. But, little by little, we realised that these were not "obligations", but dimensions of the mystique, necessary to travel our path of married spirituality, aiming at our sanctification as a couple.

In the Teams Movement, we understand mystique to be "the spirit that gives meaning to a proposal for life; it is the orientation that leads a normal life to become a search for communion with God".

In other words, mystique is the hidden meaning (the mystery which calls us to an intimate union with God). At the same time, it is the spirit which inspires, directs, impels, motivates and gives to the experience of participation in Teams, a very particular and distinctive meaning. It is an intentionality of faith which aims at communion with God, having the attitudes and the example of Jesus Christ as its leitmotif, its ideal and force. This is what couples who join END believe and try to make a reality on their path to perfection and holiness, through the experience of their conjugal spirituality.

The mystique of the Teams of Our Lady is based on its founding charism, and aims to develop the strength of this charism in the Church and in the world. The pillars on which the mystique of the Teams of Our Lady is founded and realised are the following: gathered in the name of Christ; mutual help; witness.

These mystical elements are necessary to constantly keep our movement alive, renewed and dynamic. They represent a way of inculturating the characteristics of the movement in the couples who join and adhere to its charism.

a) Gathered in the name of Christ: listening to the voice of God the Father

As Father Caffarel used to say, the key words in a team is "gathered in the name of Christ". It is this "couples-Christ" relationship - in the presence of a Spiritual Counsellor - which gives a Team its exceptional qualities: the Christian relationship; the communion of a spiritual life; Christian charity; a quality of love like the first Christian communities.¹ He stressed that: The ambition of our Movement is to establish within each team and in each home, this quality of human relationships: prayer in common, mutual help, community spirit, exchange of opinions, and so many other means put at your disposal to allow you an encounter, a union on the spiritual level "in the name of Christ", "in Christ".²

¹ See: Father Caffarel. "Laws of Team Life". Monthly Letter from Brazil - New Teams, no. 8, 1977, pp. 7-12.

² See Fr Caffarel. "Gathered in my name". Published in Henri Caffarel. Love and Grace. São Paulo: New Flag Editorial Productions, 2016, pp. 186-187.

"What a leap forward our teams would take if they all fully assimilated these aspects of the meeting! And if they lived them!"³

b) Mutual help: to make oneself neighbour

Mutual help is considered to be one of the fundamental pillars of the mystique of the Teams of Our Lady, since it represents a way of putting into practice in the daily life of couples, the new commandment of fraternal love proposed by Jesus Christ, whether they are at home or in their base team.

The needs and aspirations of couples are different according to their age and how long they have been married. The answers given by the Teams of Our Lady must take this reality into account.

c) Witness: service to God in the place where we live

Our Movement is convinced that other couples will feel called to Christ and to the sacrament of marriage, motivated by the example of Christian couples who truly love each other and who help each other mutually in the search for God, and in the service given to their brothers and sisters.

It is in this spirit that couples who seek to give authentic meaning to their married life will find, in the fraternity and mutual help of team members, an important source of support and encouragement.

As early as 1950, Father Caffarel warned⁴: "The fullness of the Christian life does not consist only of adoration, praise, asceticism, and trying to live an interior life. It also consists of service to God wherever he has placed us: in our home and family, our job, our civic involvements etc. In the same way, it follows that couples who come together to develop their spiritual life, far from looking for ways of escaping from the world, are endeavouring to learn to imitate Christ, by serving God fully in the world, in all aspects of their life".

Teams of Our Lady possesses an extremely rich and diversified mystique, which forms the whole - or the whole pedagogy and structure of the Movement. It gives Teams an organic character, making it something special and distinctive within our Catholic Church.

To accept the mystique of the Teams of Our Lady is to accept the vitality of the Holy Spirit, capable of always creating something new in the lives of couples, their families and their base teams, because of the inexhaustible treasure that the Gospel of Jesus Christ represents.

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³ Fr Caffarel. "Equipe, petite ecclesia." Editorial of the French Monthly Letter, No. 4, June 1973.

⁴ Fr Caffarel. "A Suspicious Word. French Monthly Letter, 1950. See: Henri Caffarel. Conjugal Spirituality: a word of suspicion. São Paulo: Nova Bandeira Produções Editoriais, publication under the responsibility of Super Region Brazil, 2016, p. 6.