

# Teams Newsletter

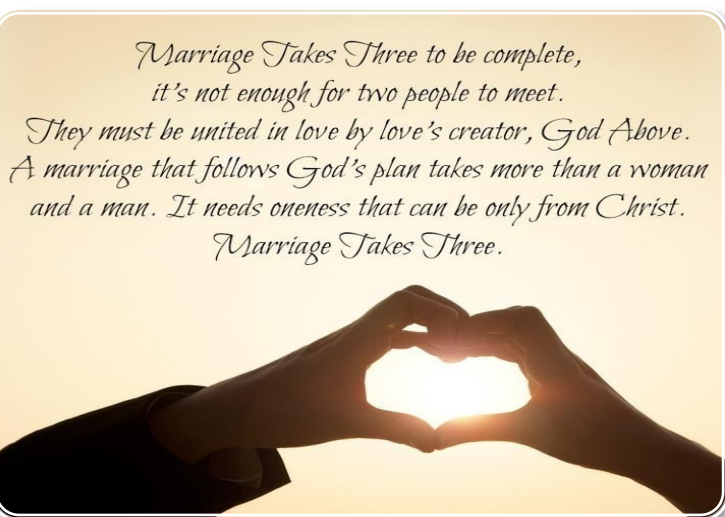
for the GB Regions.  
July, August, September 2021



Equipes Notre Dame - Teams  
Teams of Our Lady

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## Need more Newsletters?

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## Tell us about your team news

Send us a photo and a few lines about your team, any interesting study topics or news. Please send all photos & articles for the Oct-Dec 2021 edition to us by

**1st September** to: [editors@teamsgb.org.uk](mailto:editors@teamsgb.org.uk)

# Regional Gatherings

*We look forward to welcoming you at our*

*Gatherings this Autumn*

## The Christian Couple, A Renovating Leaven of Family and Society

Our theme is based around the Encyclical Laudato Si':  
On Care for Our Common Home.

It invites us to celebrate God's world and reflect upon the ways in which we, as Christian Teams couples, renew and change this world in which we live.

<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>25 September</b>	Key-note Speaker: Fr. Eamonn Mulcahy  Via Zoom and (hopefully) at Saint Edwards CofE Church, York
<b>Southern Region</b>	<b>2 October</b>	Key-note Speakers: Pdraig and Ingrid, Teams Ireland Via Zoom
<b>Central Region</b>	<b>9 October</b>	Key-note Speakers: Bishop David Oakley and Fr Simon Penhaligon  Via Zoom and (hopefully) at Northampton Cathedral

If you are enjoying a country walk this summer, you might want to pause and pray at a stile:

According to Country Walking magazine, in Medieval times, stiles were one of the places couples could make their wedding vows. The stile symbolised both a threshold to a new life and the challenges their marriage would surmount.

**Paul & Sue Rowney**





# Regional Couple Letter

Dear friends in Teams,

We write this letter on the glorious feast of Pentecost, having just joined the celebration of the Teams of Our Lady International Pentecost Mass from Colombia, attended by about 800 people/couples from across the world. The miracle of modern communication demonstrates the nature of Teams as a truly worldwide movement.



It has been an extraordinary year, full of restrictions, anxiety and loss. Pentecost brings with it the hope of renewal and a new beginning. We hope that the pandemic is coming under control in this country with the vaccination programme but clearly uncertainties remain. We have all been changed in some way by the experience of the pandemic; we pray for those who have been bereaved, those who are ill and those who are isolated or anxious and for those who have had a particularly difficult year, whether through financial, employment or other reasons. Undoubtedly 'normal' life will be different, and we need to reflect on this and prayerfully, patiently and kindly plan and build for the future.

In the past year we learned to value the rare moments of real time with our family, our friends, our Teams, in fact every human contact is to be appreciated, even treasured. Technology is a wonderful gift enabling us to remain in contact and opening up the possibility of making new contacts where distance is no barrier, whilst at the same time, providing the environmental benefit of reducing travel. The mixed teams meetings are an example of this. However, we recognise that nothing can replace human face-to-face interaction. As we build for the future we hope that we can learn how to maintain the best of both worlds through a hybrid approach.

In our parish we have been blessed by daily masses, livestreamed, enabling us to participate in the mass almost every day, something we would not have done in ordinary times. As a result, personally we have reached a greater understanding of the mass, have a deeper appreciation of the liturgy, and have a fixed point for prayer each day, as part of a community. A great deal of our formation has also been delivered online. We are so grateful to our wonderful clergy, the parish team and volunteers for making this happen.

In lockdown we tried to walk on the North Downs nearly every day in all seasons, we have learned to appreciate the continuity of nature, the ever-

changing weather, the relentless progress of spring, albeit slow this year, and the sheer beauty of the world – the presence of God in creation.

We agreed to take on the role of Regional Couple from January 2021 at the height of the 2nd lockdown, and are now six months into the role. We were, and still are, on a very steep learning curve. As a result of this we became much more aware of the huge effort that many couples make to running the movement. We now more than ever appreciate the role of people who are working so hard to maintain and foster Teams as a local, national and international organisation; this requires serious commitment and dedication.

We have been pleased to get to know our sector couples and learn about the Teams in our patch, and look forward to face-to-face meetings in due course. We have been heartened by the expressions of support that we have received from so many couples in Teams.

What else are we learning? – Practical things like making videos and using Mailchimp and WeTransfer. We're not yet proficient but better than we were.

We are looking forward to the regional gatherings in the autumn, where the topic will be "The Christian Couple - the Leaven of Renewal for the Family and Society". These events will give us the opportunity for reflection on "building back better" in a way that's sustainable.

Every blessing for the future.

***Yvonne & Peter Newman***

Regional Couple, Southern GB

### **GIFT AID**

May is the month when we remind Teams members about making their subscription to the movement. The bank statement shows lots of contributions paid in May or on 1 June. Can we take the opportunity to remind you about Gift Aid? Many have already signed Gift Aid Declarations, but we always think that it is useful to remind others about the value of Gift Aiding. If you are new Teams members, particularly, please take do sign a Gift Aid Declaration if you are eligible; you have to be UK tax payers. Remember that the Declaration has to come to the national Treasurers, not your bank, so that we can record the detail; it is sufficient to send a scanned copy by e-mailed to us at [GBTreasurers@TeamsGB.org.uk](mailto:GBTreasurers@TeamsGB.org.uk),

**Dominique & Chris Thompson**, GB Treasurers

# Remembering Jim Pratt

On May the 21st we attended Jim Pratt's funeral. Mass was celebrated by Mgr. Faley, who spoke so well about Jim's life and dedication to the Teams Of our Lady.

It was an emotional moment for us. We had known Jim for 60 years and been members of the same Team for 55 of them. Having lived in Newcastle and Exeter, the family had moved back to the North East. They started going to Backworth Church the year before we did. Both Jim and Theresa, already involved in Parish activities, and very caring towards others, were raising the family up in the same way.



Their friendliness, approachability and communication skills gave them a welcoming aura. This writing is in the plural because Jim and Theresa, within their close wedded relationship, spirituality and shared activities, are impossible to separate. It was this closeness, spirituality and enthusiasm that created in them the will to share, expand and deepen their conjugal and family faith, which led them to search for a prayer or discussion group.



This eventually pointed them to follow the information about the Teams of Our Lady, that were starting to spread in the area. After contacting various couples, an information meeting with Peggy and John Corrigan, who had knowledge of the movement, was arranged. Two Teams were eventually formed. Our Team, Backworth 1 had the first meeting with John and Peggy as 'Pilot couple' and our Parish Priest, Fr. Noel O'Connor Donelan as our spiritual councillor who remained with us for 27 year till he retired and never missed our meetings.

It was through Jim's leadership and foresight and Theresa's help, support and contagious enthusiasm that the Teams of our Lady were established in Backworth and eventually, by word of mouth and pulpit talks, began to flourish in the North East and in Scotland.

Jim often travelled to Ireland because of his work, so he was asked to liaise with Dublin 1 Team. Eventually, he and Theresa also became liaison couple for Dublin 2 and 3, making many friends at the same time. Subsequently they were asked to form a Sector in our area, which they did successfully and in 1981 they took on more responsibility by accepting the role of regional couple. As usual, their team work helped them to succeed in this difficult task.

Later, Jim's job took him to Hertfordshire. With their friendliness and interpersonal skills they soon settled, and even joined a Team. At this point, they were contacted regarding the start of new Teams in Trinidad and Tobago. They accepted to pilot them by letter. No ZOOM, those days! Later, an anonymous donor kindly posted them 2 free tickets for flights to Trinidad, so they could meet the Teams they had piloted by correspondence!

Luckily for us and for the rest of the Team, Jim's job brought him back to the North East. To celebrate their return, Fr. Donelan suggested that we should have the first meeting in the Presbytery. It was a great reunion. It felt as if we had never been separated!

Jim was always ready to help, within the church, the Saint Vincent De Paul, in the community, or anyone who needed a helping hand. It is said that if you need help you should ask a busy person. You didn't even have to ask Jim: he offered his help before it was asked, in spite of the fact that with six children and all the travelling he had to do with his job, the schedule must have been tight. Theresa used to say that when Jim came home on a Thursday evening, her chores were halved. He took part in the running of the home and even

made bread sometimes! With Jim's job taking him away from home from Monday till Thursday he usually spent his evenings reading, thus increasing his knowledge and widening his horizons. He liked to share this with our Team and we benefited from some of this knowledge, wisdom and well researched explanations.

Jim was constantly enriching his faith. He joined "Workers in the vineyard of God", attended retreats at Minsteracres and spent quiet days there after Theresa died. He worked in the Diocese on different committees. He organised outings for Team families and sometimes social evenings for Team couples. He even took part in one of the gigs at the Catholic Club!

While Theresa was alive, they usually joined the Team's pilgrimages and gatherings. It was at one of these gatherings in Rome during their 25th wedding anniversary year, that they met the Holy Father and had their photo taken with him. They were so happy, and the photo took pride of place in their home.

In 2005 Jim and Theresa felt that they would like to go on a Pilgrimage to Lourdes, but said that they no longer had the stamina to follow a rather rigorous timetable. They suggested that it would be nice to go as a Team and have a more relaxed schedule. This could possibly be the last Pilgrimage together. We thought about it and discussed it. It was a good idea. Jim organized it. We have happy memories of it all, and it consolidated the spiritual closeness of our Team.

Jim was more interested in the present and future than the past. He did say that he had done his National Service, and for a time he was stationed in Israel. What he often talked about was 'The Blind Veterans Association' that took care of him after his eyesight began to deteriorate in the last years. They frequently took him to Llandudno where he enjoyed the care, the company, and the learning of renewed skills and artifacts for the visually impaired.

He looked forward to those days and he couldn't praise them enough. He thanked God for his family and the love, the time, care and support he received from them. After Theresa died, some of his vitality seemed to have left him. Part of him had gone with her. His health slowly started to deteriorate, requiring some hospital admissions.

He found it difficult to walk and his eyesight was failing. For such an active person, who did a lot of reading and used the computer regularly, this was a tragedy. One could sense his frustration, but at the same time he accepted everything as the will of God and his faith never faltered, even when his eldest daughter was ill for quite a long time and when she died in January this year. However, he was getting more and more tired, but he often repeated that he was thankful for everything:

"I have had a good life, I have a good family, but now I am ready to go when God wants to call me to join Theresa."

Dear Jim, we are thinking of you, in the arms of God with Theresa and Judith. Thanks for the lovely memories, your friendship, and the gift you gave us of the Teams of Our Lady. We hope and pray that this legacy will not be lost, but that it will continue to increase and multiply for many generations to come.

Requiescat in pace

**Jim and Maria Mason**



**Backworth Team**

# Readings and Prayers for July

## **Ephesians 4:1-6**

### **One Body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God**

I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all.

## **Psalm 144(145):10-11,15-18**

*You open wide your hand, O Lord, and grant our desires.*

All your creatures shall thank you, O Lord,  
and your friends shall repeat their blessing.  
They shall speak of the glory of your reign  
and declare your might, O God.

The eyes of all creatures look to you  
and you give them their food in due time.  
You open wide your hand,  
grant the desires of all who live.

The Lord is just in all his ways  
and loving in all his deeds.  
He is close to all who call him,  
who call on him from their hearts.

## **Concluding prayer**

Lord, thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit to inspire and guide us. As we review the year as a Team help us to listen with love and to grow in unity as members of your family. Amen.



# Reflection for July

When I read the verses from St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians I was immediately struck by Paul's care of, and exhortations to, his friends in Ephesus. Many clergy and lay folk have the privilege of going into prisons to minister to those who like Paul have been locked away.

At our local prisons here in East Anglia, we have wonderful lay and clergy chaplains in part or full-time positions. If they are not priests themselves, then they invite local clergy to come into the prison to celebrate Mass and other sacraments and chat and encourage them.

My brother in law is a 'visitor' and listens to prisoners when asked especially when they have no family to speak to.

These last months during the pandemic have been particularly difficult for the prisoners and prison staff, including the chaplains. Prisoners have been locked down in their cells for long periods. No Masses have been celebrated. No family visits have been allowed, although prisoners can request a 'purple visit', when once a month a tablet is brought to them and they can communicate on a video call.

Like St Paul, many prisoners miss their families enormously and it's important that they try to maintain a strong family closeness with them, despite all the difficulties.

We too have experienced being prisoners in our own homes during the lockdowns. How important social media has been for maintaining communication with our family and friends and have become experts in Zoom and other media. Some have experienced loneliness and even mental illness. For others, many have found more time for prayer and closeness with Jesus, and experienced that 'peace that binds us together'.

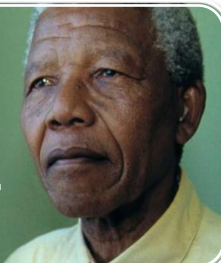
My prayer is the psalmist's both for prisoners and for us all that we be aware that God 'is close to all who call him, who call on him from their hearts.'

**Fr Chris Dobson**

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For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

— Nelson Mandela



# Readings and Prayers for August

## **1 John 3:18-24**

My children, our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active; only by this can we be certain that we are children of the truth and be able to quieten our conscience in his presence, whatever accusations it may raise against us, because God is greater than our conscience and he knows everything.

My dear people, if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience, we need not be afraid in God's presence, and whatever we ask him, we shall receive, because we keep his commandments and live the kind of life that he wants.

His commandments are these: that we believe in the name of his son Jesus Christ and that we love one another as he told us to. Whoever keeps his commandments lives in God and God lives in him. We know that he lives in us by the Spirit that he has given us.

## **Psalms 21(22):26-28,30-32**

*Alleluia!*

My vows I will pay before those who fear him.  
The poor shall eat and shall have their fill.  
They shall praise the Lord, those who seek him.  
May their hearts live for ever and ever!

All the earth shall remember and return to the Lord,  
all families of the nations worship before him;  
They shall worship him, all the mighty of the earth;  
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust.

And my soul shall live for him, my children serve him.  
They shall tell of the Lord to generations yet to come,  
declare his faithfulness to peoples yet unborn:  
'These things the Lord has done.'

## **Concluding prayer**

Lord, may your love in our lives bear fruit and be visible in what we do and say, giving glory to you and hope to others. Amen.

# Reflection for August

*This reflection was published in the last newsletter but is so fitting to this reading that we felt that we had to publish it again.*

## **The Commandment of Faith & Love**

*How would you characterise your love as a couple? Is it an emotion or a decision; an act of will or an irresistible magnetism? I would hope that you wouldn't feel the need to choose between these categories – though, by repute, there are stages of a relationship when the beloved is almost an obsession, filling up your days and nights, an electric presence even in their absence ... and there are times when it feels as though you hang on by your finger-tips to what was promised once and what you hope might one day return.*

*Our society gives plenty of evidence of favouring passion over promise and 'living in the moment' over the work of a lifetime. However, no couple can live solely by emotion (even if Pope Francis has commented wryly on those times in a marriage when the pots and pans go flying ...). Nor can a marriage thrive without some element of emotional connection. Indeed, if we take seriously the biblical teaching that in marriage "the two become one flesh" (Gen 2.24; Mk 10.7), then the language used by John to speak of the 'mutual indwelling' of God and the loving believer (1 Jn 3.24) also applies to the life of the couple: God dwells in your love, because that love itself dwells in God ... which is a claim worth contemplating.*

*But the call to unity isn't simply for the benefit of the couple or even of their offspring. The spouses' mutual trust and reliance form the basis on which a family can dare to look outwards to the needs of a neighbourhood and the building up of society. The First Letter of John again puts it well: "our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active ..." (1 Jn 3.18) It is a creativity that wants to make a difference. Christian married love (and, indeed, all authentic human love) seeks the Kingdom of God – reaches out beyond what is towards what could be.*

*Psalms 22 (21) also speaks about the effect on others of true fidelity. How shall any of us know when we have been true to our vows? When "the poor shall eat and shall have their fill."*

**Fr Rob Esdaile**

Our Lady of Lourdes, Thames Ditton



# Readings and Prayers for September

## **James 2:14-18**

### **If good works do not go with it, faith is quite dead**

Take the case, my brothers and sisters, of someone who has never done a single good act but claims that they have faith. Will that faith save them? If one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to them, 'I wish you well; keep yourself warm and eat plenty', without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that? Faith is like that: if good works do not go with it, it is quite dead.

This is the way to talk to people of that kind: 'You say you have faith and I have good deeds; I will prove to you that I have faith by showing you my good deeds – now you prove to me that you have faith without any good deeds to show.'

## **Responsorial Psalm**

### **Psalm 145(146):7-10**

*My soul, give praise to the Lord.*

It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever,  
who is just to those who are oppressed.  
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,  
the Lord, who sets prisoners free.

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,  
who raises up those who are bowed down.  
It is the Lord who loves the just,  
the Lord, who protects the stranger.

The Lord upholds the widow and orphan  
but thwarts the path of the wicked.  
The Lord will reign for ever,  
Zion's God, from age to age.

## **Concluding Prayer**

Lord, may our faith open our eyes and hearts to you and others. In a world of need help us to know when and how to act to bring your love and compassion to others. Amen.



# Reflection for September

*Each week at mass we are asked to make a profession of faith by reciting the creed, and it is quite easy to say the words. It is a well-known saying, and very true that 'actions speak louder than words.' The action does not need to be big or extravagant, even the smallest of gestures or acts of kindness can speak volumes and make a difference. If this is true in life in general, it surely also must be true of our faith life. Our Faith has to be more than just the words of the creed, it must be something alive and active. To say we believe in God, Father Son and Holy Spirit should affect the way we live our lives and how we treat other people and the whole of creation. St James makes this very clear in his letter. Faith without action is dead and a pretence. So let each one of us try to make even the smallest but important gestures that say to the people we live or work with, I appreciate you, I value who you are. Let us treat people and the world as precious as made and loved by God. When we do this we say we are 'practising our faith' and we know what practise makes! It will mean that our faith will speak out loud and clear.*

**Fr Graeme Dunne**



# Last notes...

## **The Magnificat** (Lk 1: 46-56)

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 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 forever.

Our Lady of the Home, pray for us.

## **Regional Gatherings 2021**

**Northern- Saturday 25 September**

**Southern- Saturday 2nd October**

**Central- Saturday 9th October**

**More details from your regional couple.**



Equipes Notre Dame, Teams,  
is an international Christian movement  
for married couples of all ages.  
Charity Reg No: 1044902  
Teams Website: [www.teamsgb.org.uk](http://www.teamsgb.org.uk)