

Teams Newsletter

for the GB Regions.
January- March 2022



Contents

Invitation- contributing to the Synod	1
Regional Couple letter	2
Teams Charity & Accounts	3
Responsible couple training	4
Teams Profiles	5
Couple Profile: Kevin & Jann Burr, Guildford 1	6
Couple Profile: Mark & Dympna Edwards, Formby 1	7
Profile of Epsom 1 Team	8
Silent Teams Retreat	10
Widows and Widowers in Teams	11
Northampton St Thomas Retreat	12
New Teams Study Topic	13
New Members of Transatlantic Team	13
Paul Callaghan RIP	13
January Study topic	14
January Team meeting	18
February Study topic	20
February Team meeting	24
March Study topic	26
March Team meeting	30
Teams Directory	32

Note from Editors

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 April- June 2022 edition to us by 1st March to: editors@teamsgb.org.uk

Need more Newsletters?

For extra copies of this newsletter, contact Dympna & Mark at editors@teamsgb.org.uk. Contact your regional couple for any ongoing change in the number of newsletters you need or any address changes.

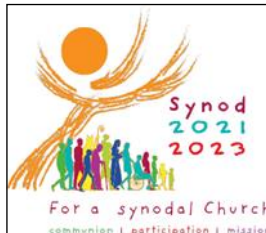
Front cover:

7m replica of the Earth at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral in 2019. Photo by Mark Edwards. To see more pictures visit- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-al_N5ghpfg

The Synodal Process: Teams Praying and Discerning Together



An Invitation



Would you appreciate the opportunity to pray, share, discuss and discern together with other Teams members around the Synod Themes?

You are invited to join others in informal Zoom meetings, each of which will focus upon two or three of the Synodal Themes.

You are welcome to any or all of these which may be in addition to reflections within your own Team and/or with your spouse.

Date	Host Couple	Themes
15 th Dec 2021 8 p.m.	Sue & Paul Rowney	1. The Journeying Companions 2. Listening 3. Speaking Out
12 th Jan 2022 8 p.m.	Janet & Paul Deboo	4. Celebrating 5. Co-responsibility in the Mission
11 th Feb 2022 8 p.m.	Dom & Chris Thompson	6. Dialogue in Church & Society 7. Dialogue with the other Christian Denominations
2 nd Mar 2022 8 p.m.	Yvonne & Peter Newman	8. Authority & Participation 9. Discerning & Deciding 10. Forming ourselves in Synodality.

**All meetings will be conducted via Zoom accessed with
Meeting ID 876 4120 8337 and Passcode Synod**

We hope to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to try to consider and dream about what we would like the Church and Teams to look like in future, and how we are hoping to journey together and develop ongoing dialogue.

Regional Couple Letter

Dear friends in Teams,

Reflecting on *Laudato Si'*—Since the Regional Gatherings in September and October, our monthly study topic reflections keep directing us toward issues flagged in *Laudato Si'*, toward climate change and other fallout from alienation, fracture, and misplaced values woven into our daily living. The phrase “alienation from nature” meant little to us until our daughter asked a few years ago why her patio tomatoes weren’t bearing any fruit, despite her diligent attention to a friend’s advice to pick the flowers off.



How did we ever become so disconnected from nature? When was it lost to common knowledge that it’s the flowers that become the fruit? Once noticed, alienation seems omnipresent: in our reluctance to answer the landline to another scam call or hard sell; in our wariness of misleading advertising; in damaged or severed relationships; in objectives finagled or imposed without honouring or accommodating those at whose cost they come. Imagine the simplicity of a world without locks or security screening or two-factor authentication because no one wanted or laid claim to what belonged to someone else. With the advance of climate change hanging on headlines and in the patterns of the seasons, we are plotting our shortest path to eradicating our carbon footprint. But we are praying for insight to perceive, and courage to pursue, the still deeper forms of purification that will allow God’s kingdom to radiate in our lives.

Synodal Process—As if this were not enough, there’s more to imagine. The XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will gather in October 2023 to reflect on “synodality”, that is, on how the Church “journeys together”. Pope Francis sees authentic synodality in the Church as a witness of the way forward for the whole human family to tackle its perplexities and pursue its future: *“A synodal Church is a prophetic sign, above all for a community of nations incapable of proposing a shared project, through which to pursue the good of all: practicing synodality is today for the Church the most evident way to be ‘the universal sacrament of salvation’ (LG, no. 48), ‘a sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole human race’ (LG, no. 1).”* Hence, on Sunday, 17 October, Pope Francis launched a Church-wide consultation to gather experience down to the grass roots of the highs and lows of how the Church at all levels currently lives the synodal process. This consultation has been initiated in Dioceses across the world. Alongside this, the Teams Movement, as an international lay association, has been requested to consult its Members and feed back directly to the Vatican. This is an important development that cannot be ignored. Toward that end, the Teams GB Province will conduct a series of online sessions between December and March through which all Members can contribute their experiences and reflections. The schedule of meetings is printed on page 1.

We urge all Members to participate in the Synod consultation, either via these meetings, through their local Diocese, or by sending feedback and reflections directly to our Super-Regional Couple (Annette & Paul O’Beirne) at srcouple@teams-transatlantic.org, or directly to the Vatican.

We wish peace in safety for all of you, your families, and all those dear to your hearts.

Janet and Paul DeBoo, Regional Couple, Teams GB Central Region

Teams Charity & Accounts

Have you ever wondered about the structure of Equipes Notre-Dame in the UK?

We are a Registered Charity, established as a Charitable Trust in the UK in 1994 to meet the legal framework for such an organisation.

A Trust means that we have Trustees. Our Trustees are the 3 Regional couples (Southern, Central and Northern) and the GB Treasurers who handle a large proportion of the administration with HMRC, the Charities Commission, the Bank and insurance companies under the collective leadership of the Trustees.

All Trustees have a duty to meet legal requirements for organisations and, to that end, the Trustees spent some of last year updating our policies and procedures and making them ready to publicise on our website, which was upgraded at the same time. The Trustees also prepare and approve an Annual Report and Accounts, which are published on the GB website and the Charity Commission website.

Although not Trustees, the Super-Region couple are permanent members of the Trustees meeting, and their help has been invaluable.

Apart from the business of running an organisation, the Trustees also have the task of ensuring that the purpose of Equipes Notre Dame is kept at the forefront of our Agenda: to promote marriage and marriage spirituality by supporting individual Teams, organising and making use of material from the international Leading Team such as the Study Topic, the Novena of prayer for Fr Caffarel and maintaining links with other organisations in the Association of Catholic Marriage Organisations, and with local bishops and their Marriage and Family Life representatives.

This work is blessed by mutual support and prayer (online since the start of Covid-19) and led to the introduction of monthly Zoom Mixed Teams meetings as a way of supporting those Team members whose own Team had decided not to introduce online meetings for themselves.

Dominique & Chris Thomson, GB treasurers.

EQUIPES NOTRE DAME, GREAT BRITAIN Registered Charity 1044902 Income and Expenditure Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020 Statement of Financial Activities 2020

Income

Contributions	£14,184
Other income (mainly Gift Aid)	£4,207
Total income	£18,391

Expenditure

Regions	£242
Province	
Payment to Transatlantic SR/ERI	£13,500
Other Province expenditure (mainly Newsletter)	£2,058
Total Expenditure	£15,800

Excess/(Deficit) of Income over Expenditure £2,591

Responsible Couple Training

A significant project undertaken by the Teams GB Province starting in November 2020 and continuing throughout 2021 has been to prepare video-based training for Responsible Couples. Training that reminds us of the basics about the Teams Movement and how Teams conduct themselves is useful to ensure we all continue adhering to the ideals envisaged by Father Caffarel, with the best opportunity for each Member to grow spiritually with the Team's inspiration and support.

Drawing on resources used for face-to-face Responsible Couple training in recent years, a script was developed, sections of which were shared to various couples to record as video or audio after the fashion of Teams Ireland's Marriage Masterclass. These were then edited together and supplemented with images to produce an engaging presentation.

As the project progressed, it became obvious that the training would be best delivered in two parts: (1) a Part 1 Video addressing "Teams Vision and Values" and "The Team's Practices", and (2) a Part 2 Video about "The Wider Teams Movement".

The Part 1 Video, with a running time of just under 30 minutes, is now completed and being piloted in some initial training sessions. Meanwhile, recording and editing for the Part 2 Video is in progress with the aim of completing in the first quarter of 2022, resulting in an artefact with a similar running time. Taken together, the two videos cover content that, in the past, would have occupied an evening-long or Saturday morning training session. Having captured the training in video format helps ensure a degree of uniformity in the training that is passed on, and eases the preparation effort required in organising training sessions.

The Province Team's concept has always been that such videos would principally be screened within group training sessions that allow for discussion, questions and answers, and the exchange of best practices. All the same, individuals, whether Responsible Couples or not, or even whole Teams (such as those that are re-piloting) can benefit to an extent from these resources outside the context of scheduled training sessions.

To learn more about the availability of the Part 1 Video, or indeed about contributing to the recording for the Part 2 Video, please contact your Regional Couple.

Janet and Paul DeBoo,

Regional Couple, Teams GB Central Region

Teams Profiles

We have all missed social gatherings over the past 2 years. Teams gatherings were a great opportunity to get to know each other, particularly those outside our immediate Team. In the coffee breaks, the discussion time and sharing we came to know and understand a little more about each person and what makes them tick. We've often come away from a Teams event glowing, warmed by the time spent with really lovely people who have shared a little of their lives with us.

OK, we've all become experts on zoom and have had mixed team meetings with couples and spiritually counsellors across the country but it isn't the same as meeting face to face.

So now for something totally different! We proudly introduce the Teams profiles, a brief snapshot. It isn't quite the same as a chat over coffee but feel free to have a cuppa as you read the next few pages.

The idea is to have a brief introduction to a couple, spiritual counsellor or a Team, to give a little insight into them as people and what they've found valuable as a team. There are 7 questions available from your regional couple but not all have to be answered and the answers can be short or longer, depending on what you have to say.

Kevin and Jane Burr and Epsom 1 Team have kindly provided a profile. Having proposed the idea we couldn't avoid being guinea pigs too and include a profile of ourselves (once you've read the profile you can take a guess at which one of us came up with the idea of doing profiles in the first place!). So enjoy browsing the following pages and do think of who you can ask to do a profile and send it to us with a couple of photos.

Thanking you in advance

Dympna and Mark Edwards

Newsletter Editors



Couple Profile-Kevin & Jan Burr

Q1.Where did you meet?

At the 21st Birthday Party of a school friend of Jan's who was at college with Kevin.

Q2. What one word, would you use to describe your spouse?

K says " complementary". J says " conscientious ".

Q3. What do you love most about your spouse?

K says " A challenge that brings out the best and worst in me!"

J says " (Nearly) Everything!"

Q4. What do you disagree on?

K says " Me keeping old stuff because it might become useful."

J says " Nearly Everything! "

Q5. When did you join Teams?

1974. We were founder members of the first Team south of London which was piloted by Don and Sheila Gallagher from Barnet.

Q6. How would you describe your Team in three words?

Prayerful. Profound. Characterful.

Q7. Describe a highlight or funny moment in your Team.

A husband was asked " What do you think about this?" His wife quickly replied " He thinks the same as me!"

Q8. How has Teams enriched your lives?

K. Supporting us through difficult times. Exposing us to different takes on things.

Keeping us faithful to praying together etc.

J. Reminding us that we are husband and wife not just Mum and Dad. Meeting lots of lovely people in our Team and the wider movement. (We holidayed with another Team family two years running.)

Q9. What one piece of advice would you give to a couple about to get married?

K. Do a Marriage Preparation Course. (They weren't available in 1965!)

J. Pray together and keep up those lines of communication.

Q10. What are your hopes for the future ?

That our children will be able to face an uncertain future with faith and love.

That we will be able to remain faithful and loving in old age.

That we can face our Maker in love and trust in God's mercy.



Couple Profile-Mark & Dympna Edwards

Q1 How did you meet?

At a charismatic prayer group for young people in St Albans. We were young once! The prayer group adjourned to the local pub each week and we got chatting.

Q2. How would you describe your spouse in no more than three words?

Mark is patient, caring, thorough.

Dympna is energetic, empathetic & caring.



Q3. What do you disagree on?

Lots of everyday things but nothing really important. When asked to do something Dympna usually says yes first and then thinks through what it means. Mark is more cautious and tends to think things through before answering. We're quite a balanced couple... on average.

Q4. When did you join Teams?

We joined in 1992 when our children were toddlers. We reflected on our spiritual lives as BC and AC - before children and after children. Teams was a wonderful way of growing in faith as a couple and remembering that we were a couple as well as parents, and the Teams events were all family friendly. We moved to Merseyside in 1999 but still returned for retreats with our Bishop's Stortford Team. We formed a new team in Formby in 2001 and have, once again been blessed by the members of our team.

Q5. How would you describe your Team in three words?

Prayerful, Caring, Supportive.

Q6. Describe a highlight or funny moment in Teams

There are many moments 3 of the best include:

- Crazy-golf sector event (discovering the competitiveness of various teams members)
- Snow falling during Sector nativity event
- Doing a short animation at the Dublin Transatlantic gathering in 2014 with Mark telling a story and Dympna acting it out, and realising half way through that climbing on a wobbly chair with high heels on wasn't the smartest move!



Q7. How has Teams enriched your life?

In the busy-ness of family life, Teams provided a reminder to stop, focus on what was important and take time to grow in faith. We have been loved and supported through ups and downs of everyday life and have shared things with our Team that we haven't felt comfortable sharing with anyone else. We have learned so much from other Teams members and couples over the years.

Q8. What one piece of advice would you give to a couple about to get married?

We were told when we got married that "love is a decision, not just a feeling". This was often said in the early days of our marriage through gritted teeth in the heat of an argument "I love you, but it is a decision!" But showing each other love and forgiveness when we don't always feel loving has helped our love to grow over the years (either that or we no longer have the energy to argue!)

Q9. What are your hopes for the future?

That we all recognise the beauty in and learn to care for each other and our planet in the way that God intended.

Profile of Epsom 1 Team



Q1. Who are your Team members?

A. Sister Sheila Barrett dmj (Chaplain), Celia and John Flood, Kathy Maskens, Jenny and John Mortimer, Theresa and Howard Park, Linda and Tony Prince and Colette and Teddy Totman.

Q2. When and how did your Team start?

A. In 1996 (so this year is our 25th anniversary!). Some of us had been members of a Family Group, which used to meet monthly for prayer and reflection for around 20 years. We had decided that the Family Group had run its course when, shortly afterwards, Marilyn and Richard Cranfield, a couple from the Banstead Team, made a pulpit appeal on behalf of Teams in 1996 in our parish of St Joseph's, Epsom. The Holy Spirit works in unexpected ways! The appeal generated interest from several couples, including two from our Family Group, and we signed up immediately for a piloting session by Breeda and David Walsh from Worcester Park 1 Team. Two Epsom Teams were formed, Epsom 1 and 2, but Epsom 2 folded fairly soon afterwards and one couple from it (Celia and John) joined Epsom 1.

Q3. How would you describe your Team in three words.

A. Committed; Supportive; Organised.

Q4. How has it changed over the years? What have you learned? Tell us two things that you have learned.

A. Probably the biggest change has been the hiving off of the Study Topic into a separate meeting, usually around two weeks from the regular meeting. This innovation occurred during the time when we met regularly via Zoom during the Coronavirus pandemic, but it also reflected our experience of meetings pre-lockdown. We were finding that the time left for the study topic was frequently inadequate to do full justice to it after we had all shared, eaten, meditated and done the business side of the meeting. We have found that having a shorter, specific meeting midway between the regular meetings has worked very well for us, particularly when discussing Laudato Si and Let Us Dream, which require a lot of time to be considered in depth.

Another thing we have learned is how important it is to listen to each other, especially during the sharing. We are also more acutely aware of the value of friendship and mutual support, which has blossomed as a result of meeting together for the past 25 years.

Q5. Describe any highlights or funny moments in your Team. What is the silliest/funniest thing your Team has done?

A. Without a doubt, this was the occasion when , in 2014, our Team put on a display of Morris Dancing at the Transatlantic Gathering in Dublin to represent English Teams. We had been caught out at the previous gathering in Swanwick, where some of us were bounced into performing some unrehearsed offerings, which compared unfavourably with most of the other performances. Determined not to be "ambushed" again, we learnt two Morris dances in preparation for the Dublin gathering, which were rapturously received (!) alongside some very professional Irish dancing displays and other performances. It was great fun practising and performing them (especially the post-practice drinks parties!), although there were some very bruised knuckles from the "sticking" routine. The dances are still available for viewing on YouTube, under "Morris Dancing Teams of Our Lady".

Q6. What does your Team do well?

A. We have, as a Team, managed over the past few years to go on retreat together to The Jesuit Spirituality Centre of St Beuno's in North Wales. Prior to that we would go to the Kiltegan Fathers' house in East Molesley for a day's reflection, or we would run our own reflection in members' houses and gardens. The connection with St Beuno's is that Colette's brother, Rev Damian Jackson SJ, is based there. We started with a three day retreat and over the past ten years or so that has increased to six or seven days. It has been a profound and formative experience for our Team as individuals, as couples and as a Team. Because it is a silent retreat, and we have been together, but in silence, over a whole week, we have gone from the retreat to a "Jolly" in a large house for a few days together, to reminisce on the retreat but also to enjoy each other's company and the local pubs, before returning to "the real world". This is a key feature of our Team's year and there has been an impressive commitment by members of our Team to this endeavour.

The members of our Team are, and have been, involved in many activities outside the Teams movement, whether in the diocese, the parish, HCPT- The Pilgrimage Trust, the SVP, the Catenian Association, the Scouts and suchlike organisations.

Q7. What is the best thing about marriage?

A. Unconditional Love!



Silent Retreat- Epsom 1

An opened mouth look of fascination is the usual comeback when we tell others we have spent another week on a silent retreat. We can understand the response if they have never undertaken such an enterprise since comprehending its reward appears to defy contemporary reasoning. The joy of the retreat comes with its, and our, growth and development.

Silence can cause irritation. Not being able to make an enquiry can cause you extra work but once you have discovered where everything is and how things work you realise the benefit. Your train of thought is not disturbed even at meal times but it is strange, not to say uncomfortable, to ignore your friends and strangers. However, you are not distracted and you can continue your contemplations.



St Bueno's Jesuit Retreat Centre in North Wales near the city of St Asaph is a substantial imposing grey towered block that sits in magnificent grounds and woods on the side a steep hill that is part of the Clwydian Range that is topped by Offa's Dyke with the building looking out on the flood plain farm land of the Vale of Clwyd towards the spectacular mountains of Snowdonia

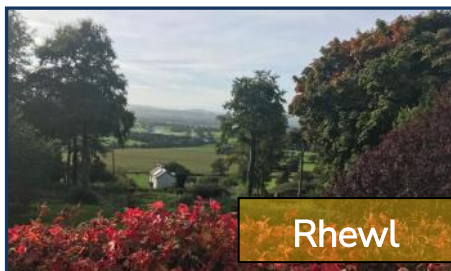
This year's trip to St Bueno's was an immense success for Epsom 1 and their friends. It was our first visit in the autumn so, although we missed the flowing fields of daffodils, the rich display of harvest berries compensated. As usual the establishment was dominated by builders on their constant drive to improve the superb facilities of St Bueno's. This time the apple store rooms and the art suite were mid-transformation in to new kitchens. Their previous contribution was the remarkable amelioration of two cottages on the lane from Rhualt to Tremeirchion that runs just to the west of the main building. Four of our party stayed in the one called Rhewl, which was just one hundred and fifty meters from the main house and provided us with quiet, warm and spacious accommodation with a modern, fully-fitted kitchen and a string of garden grottos each with terrific views to the hills some ten kilometres away across the open vale.

Fr Tom Shufflebottom SJ, one of our regular retreat directors, had retired and he was replaced by Fr Ian Tomlinson SJ alongside our stalwart, Fr Damian Jackson SJ, the brother of Team member Colette Totman. Others that came with us on retreat but who are not our Team members were Colette's daughter's mother in law, Frances Mary (FM) Took (Epsom 2) and FM's Sister, Catherine McKenna. Jenny Mortimer's sister Mary Robinson also came but unfortunately Celia Flood from our Team was absent due to the after effects of Covid although we are pleased that she is now well again.

Being abstemious for the week and feeling renewed, if not a little mentally exhausted, we always look forward to a "jolly"



experience together, relaxing and bonding to make up for ignoring each other in silence so the Team spent a few days in Glossop visiting the stunning Lyme Park (Pemberley) on the way there. We stayed in a spacious modern house on the banks of a tributary of the Etherow. We played table tennis and walked from the house into the High Peak and explored the town discovering that St Philip Howard, our Arundel and Brighton diocesan patron saint, was extensively commemorated there as the area had once been in the Dukedom of Norfolk.



Fr. Caffarel may not have specified the treat of a “jolly” but we certainly recommend a one week retreat and a jolly to follow.

Our fifteenth retreat trip is already booked for May next year so let us hope that those yellow flowers will be waving their heads again for us.

Howard & Theresa Park, Epsom 1 Team

Widows & Widowers in Teams

Once you are widowed one of the things you notice is how often Widows are important personalities in the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments. Widows who are shown to be alone, unprotected, often very poor, receive from prophets and from Christ, special treatment and recommendations. Maybe modern widows do not share the absolute poverty of the Biblical economy, where without a husband or family she would often be destitute, but losing a loving spouse of 40 or 50 years can feel like destitution in our present world, where widows on their own live often in permanent “Lockdown”. Often the only people who understand what this is like are other widows, or widowers, but they are fewer of these.

Life in Teams taught us the value of praying together every day, sharing where we are, talking about our faults and our progress along the Christian Way, and if our experience has been to have someone to share prayer with this is one of the things we miss the most. To try and build a group where some of these things can be brought out into the open some of us widows have come together to form a Widows team, with a retired Teams chaplain to join us.

We are scattered from Newcastle to Bognor, and in between. All of us were years in Teams, but do not have our own team nearby, and for all of us it is much too challenging to join an established team of married couples on our own. Before last year we did not see a way forward, but Lockdown has taught us all about “Zoom”, and that is where our monthly meetings are organised. It is not a straightforward path we have chosen, and meeting electronically has lots of challenges but after 6 months of meeting we hope we have found a way to help ourselves to keep going.

Nora Courtney

Northampton St Thomas Retreat

Relaxing in the cosy sitting room at St Katherine's Parmoor, we realised that it was our 10th retreat! But a first for attending a retreat centre which included 3 full meals a day!

Over the years, as a team, we have committed to paying a sum of money each month into a kitty which helps pay for our annual retreat. In the past, we have booked a house or holiday cottage and catered for ourselves, but this

year we decided to book St Katherine's Retreat Centre, Parmoor, Nr Frieth, nestled in the Chilterns, not far from the M40. As it turned out, apart from one other person attending for 24 hours, we were the only guests staying in the house which is part of the Sue Ryder Prayer Fellowship.



We still ran our own programme of events which included our monthly team meeting, a walk through the countryside, a talk and house Mass offered by Canon John Udris (newly appointed parish priest at St Peter's RC Church, Marlow), and reflections on a theme of Faith in Action. We shared life experiences, artifacts, books and photographs of where our faith had lead us.

Having spent so much time with each other over Zoom, it was

exciting to be together face to face for the weekend. St Katherine's, with its sweeping staircase, magnificent Cedar of Lebanon (older than the house) and resident Peahen offered us time and space to relax and chill together.

[Home - St Katharine's Parmoor \(srpf.org.uk\)](http://srpf.org.uk)



New Teams Study Topic

This quarter we continue with the 2021/2 Teams study topic. This is month 3-6 in a ten month programme. All the information is available in the newsletter- just read through and discuss the study topic before the meeting and then work your way through the prayers and structure of the team meeting when you meet. A copy of the full study topic with more explanatory notes is also available on the Teams website if you would find that helpful.

<https://teams-transatlantic.org/2021-22-study-topic/>

New Members of Transatlantic Team

The Super Regional Couple, Annette and Paul, are delighted to announce the extension of the Super Region Team, besides including the Regional Couples and Spiritual Accompanists, we now have a Treasurer Couple, Adrian and Karen, and a Communications Couple, Ingrid and Padraig.



Ingrid and Padraig from Ireland have masterminded the Marriage Masterclass over the last couple of years and will continue with this wonderful project. They are inviting other couples to consider offering to join them on a number of other projects that will help build links with and between couples in Teams and those who might join. This reaching out is also to youth – our couples of the future. It's a synodal and collegial approach.

For more information and to see where you can help please visit

www.teams-transatlantic.org/communications

Annette & Paul O Beirne



Paul Callaghan RIP

Paul Callaghan, with wife Clare a vigorously active Member of Teams in the GB Central Region, passed away peacefully on Friday, 19 November 2021 after a two-year battle against a lung infection. Paul's funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Peter's Catholic in Ludlow where he and Clare had retired. Due to the publishing deadlines for this issue of the Quarterly Newsletter it has not been possible to organise a due tribute to Paul and his contribution to the Teams Movement, but we will look to arrange this for the next edition.

Janet and Paul DeBoo

January Study topic

Joint Responsibility for the Common Good

Objectives - Challenges and Attitudes

Look at what is happening in the world and **take** responsibility for the contribution that each person can give to society from their personal and family life.

Exercise your citizenship as a political response and participate responsibly in the service of the common good, in sectors such as education, media, health, work and employment, promotion of life, peace, social inclusion, environment, management of global resources, etc.

Commit yourself with clear actions to build the community where your family is living by taking care of the environment, of community groups and communal spaces.

Develop a strong sense of responsibility in your family for your role in society, now and for future generations.

Introduction

Integral ecology is inseparable from the notion of the common good. "The common good is respect for the human person as such, endowed with basic and inalienable rights ordered to his or her integral development." [LS, 157]. All groups and institutions, from the Family to the State, must be active champions for the defence and promotion of the common good. In the same way, and because everything is interrelated, we all have a responsibility, as citizens, to contribute to such a goal through solidarity.

In today's society, where social inequalities persist and people are deprived of their basic rights, the principle of the common good is revealed as a call for solidarity, first and foremost towards the poorest, and towards the common destiny of the goods and resources of the planet.

Prayer and Meditation of the Word

During the month and using the biblical text, it is proposed that each person and the couple follow the four stages of the Prayerful Reading (Lectio Divina) - reading, meditation, prayer and contemplation. (see meditation page 18)

Supporting texts

The Common Good is a principle defined in the Social Doctrine of the Church as *"the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfilment,"* [GS, 26]. Today we easily understand that everything is linked and therefore access to fundamental rights such as work, health, education, and housing are part of the set of living conditions, as well as the environment as a *"collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone"* [LS, 95].

From this perspective there are three points worth reflecting on: the universal destination of goods, the responsibility for the proper use of natural resources, and the responsibility for caring for the environment in which the family thrives.

From a Christian perspective, the Earth, with its resources and fruits, is an inheritance from God who created the world for the benefit and fulfilment of all. For this very reason, the Christian tradition defends the legitimate right to private property but at the same time clearly emphasises the social function of all forms of private property so that goods may serve the purpose for which God intended

them. Saint John Paul II forcefully reaffirmed this as “the first principle of the whole ethical and social order” (LE, 19), stating that “God gave the earth to the whole human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favouring anyone”. (CA 31) These are strong words. He noted that “a type of development which did not respect and promote human rights – personal and social, economic and political, including the rights of nations and of peoples – would not be really worthy of man”. (LS, 93).



A healthy and sustainable environment as well as access to natural resources such as water and biodiversity are an integral part of the ecosystem where people live and develop. For this reason, it is expected that everyone will do their duty in a responsible and supportive manner. Their concern for the environment and the rights of future generations (e.g., moderation in the use of resources, reuse and recycling) is shown in the way they conduct their daily lives. When we talk about the environment we think about the relationship between nature and the society that inhabits it. *"Recognizing the reasons why a given area is polluted requires a study of the workings of society, its economy, its behaviour patterns, and the ways it grasps reality. Given the scale of change, it is no longer possible to find a specific, discrete answer for each part of the problem. It is essential to seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems. We are faced not with two*

separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature." (LS, 139]

Humanity is by force of circumstances, waking up to this reality. The economic risk due to the loss of biodiversity has been taken into account by the World Economic Forum. Health is considered one of the fundamental human rights, and for the World Health Organisation it is not only the absence of disease, but a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. Biodiversity is essential to human health, as it maintains the functioning of the ecosystems on which we depend for food and fresh water; it helps regulate climate, floods, and diseases; it produces benefits for well-being and offers aesthetic and spiritual enrichment.

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2021 - 2030 as the *"United Nations Decade for Ecosystem Restoration"*. During this decade, it is hoped that the restoration of 350 million hectares of degraded ecosystems and soils will generate \$9 trillion in ecosystem services and remove between 13 and 26 giga tons of greenhouse gases. These initiatives include the Bonn Challenge, the 20x20 Initiative in Latin America and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative AFR100 .

In this effort, *"Every creature has a function, none is superfluous. The whole universe is a language of God's love, of his boundless affection for us: earth, water, mountains, everything is God's caress."* [Pope Francis, 22/5/2019, International Day for Biological Diversity]. The environment is also our home, our place of work, our neighbourhood, anywhere we live, where we learn to understand ourselves, where we express our identity. Thus, caring for the environment in a responsible and supportive manner also includes helping to ensure that, even with limitations, common spaces and Christian homes are

welcoming, dignified, and inclusive. It is only through human relationships with neighbours that it is possible for each person to feel *"held within a network of solidarity and belonging"* (LS, 148), within the framework of a dignified life.

It is not only governments and large institutions that have the responsibility to change this path of progress. *"...It is the Church's task to show the true face of God in our age. But, in a certain sense, this is very especially the task of couples. I can guess your reaction: 'The mission is great, very great; we have neither time nor competence'. But I say to you: you are particularly suited to carry out this mission precisely because you are couples. You have a special charism. Moreover, to be the witnesses that the world is waiting for, you do not need to abandon your family and professional duties; you do not need to go on a distant crusade. Let me explain: the atheist world, without knowing it, awaits the essential witness of your conjugal love, of your home."* [Fr. Caffarel, May 1970].

Finally, it is worth considering the contribution to the common good due to different social institutions. The encyclical *Laudato Si* states that *"social ecology is necessarily institutional and gradually extends to the whole of society, from the primary social group, the family, to the wider local, national and international communities. Within each social stratum, and between them, institutions develop to regulate human relationships. Anything which weakens those institutions has negative consequences, such as, injustice and violence and the loss of freedom."* [LS, 142]. The integrity of the institutions, as well as the political role that corresponds to each one, are fundamental requirements. Conditions and processes must be created so that institutions, beginning with the Family, can contribute to the common good without replacing or cancelling each other out. *"However, it should be added, though, that even the best mechanisms can break down when there are no worthy goals and values, or a genuine and profound humanism to serve as the basis of a noble and generous society."* [LS, 181].

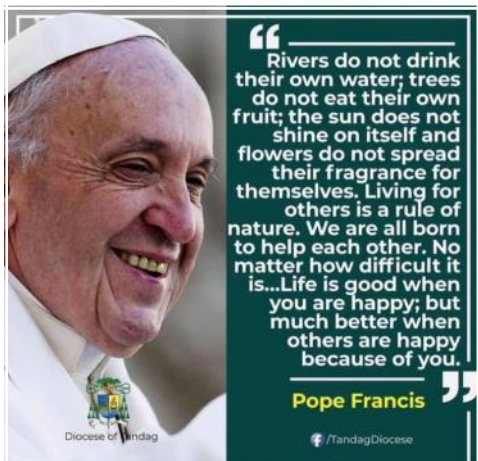
Letter from the Portuguese Bishops

We ask all citizens, Catholics and those who share the ethical principles of the Church's social teaching that we have just outlined, to encourage public life and the common good of the community with responsible solidarity, by renewing the following energies:

- ◆ that of hope against pessimism,
- ◆ that of trust against defeatism,
- ◆ that of participation against passivity,
- ◆ that of responsible commitment for the common good against seeking refuge in individualism,
- ◆ that of dialogue in the search for solutions to the problems of our society against fruitless confrontations with no future perspective,
- ◆ that of justice and the option for the poor against inequality,
- ◆ that of welcoming foreigners and immigrants against exclusion,
- ◆ that of promoting human rights against attacks on human dignity,
- ◆ that of peace against terrorism, conflicts and wars,
- ◆ that of participatory democracy against dictatorships,
- ◆ that of reform of laws and public institutions against stagnation,
- ◆ that of safeguarding the environment against ecological disasters and irresponsible attitudes,
- ◆ that of the culture of life against cultures of death,
- ◆ that of the dignity of life against diseases and the destruction of the human being,
- ◆ that of social peace against environments in crisis,
- ◆ that of solidarity and subsidiarity against selfishness and injustice.

We invoke the Mother of God to give us all more trust, hope and generosity. United with the Pope's intentions, we pray for peace, for families, and for a fraternal society. It is everyone's duty to build a more just and supportive society. [Letter from the Portuguese Bishops, Lisbon, September 15, 2003].

Text by Benedictine Theologian, Joan Chittister *"Never endure what is not in itself essentially good, or designed to make everybody's world a better place, or, in the end, really good for your own development. To violate any of those*



things is to violate the will of God for creation." [Joan Chittister in "It's New" - Pastoral culture, 7/3/2020].

Testimonials

Politics, *"the science or art of governing the common good,"* must be part of Christian action and participation, for if it is guided by values, social benefit will be better guaranteed. On being invited to take on a political role, I hesitated to accept and as a couple we prayed for help with making our decision.

Rereading the Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1906, *"the common good concerns the life of all. It calls for prudence on the part of each one ..."* we felt the strength to accept the challenge. The motto - *"Cowards never start; the weak never finish and the winner never quits"* - made me move forward without hesitation.

The fulfillment of my duty was based on the courage to never give up in the face of obstacles, to make decisions in accordance with the road map for the common good even if sometimes there was emotional pain.

I have never used words like refuge because I believe that the country needs pragmatic and active people. It is fundamental to act in order to achieve the supreme goal - the common good, being indifferent to slander, ingratitude, etc. We have kept the promise to work for the common good day after day.

Isabel and Joaquim

In February 2008, we were called to become Responsible Couple for Teams for the Region of Mozambique. By accepting this responsibility together, we have been called not by our merits but by the gaze that the divine Saviour has placed upon us. Our yes, *"Here we are, Lord,"* has become our joint commission. (Lk. 9:1-6).

We began our journey with enormous challenges facing the Movement and society.

We accepted our departure towards the vast Mozambican territory carrying the cross of Christ in the mission of evangelising (going out to radiate), in the mission of piloting and formation of team couples.

We quickly understood that the success of our mission of joint responsibility would teach us to participate in the building of a humanised and fraternal society in the search for the common good.

We encouraged the spirit of helping each other within the movement, of promoting peace, harmony and social inclusion. We participated in activities of solidarity with families in need, affected by hurricanes and terrorism in Cabo Delgado, through the gathering and distribution of supplies and goods. We urged the team members to make known the positions of the Government and the Church in the prevention of Covid19.

Families have grown in their role as domestic church, through the practice of the Endeavours as a team.

We recognise in this journey, especially during this period of Covid19 worldwide, that in our country in particular, there has been not only an economic crisis but also a spiritual crisis. Through our joint responsibility, it is up to us to commit ourselves to creating the conditions for fraternal dialogue with the couples who are living this spiritual crisis.

In short, our responsibility of solidarity for the common good that we have lived in our journey as a Regional Responsible couple is a true school of learning in how to defend the fundamental rights of the human person.

Olinda and Ernesto

January Team Meeting

GUIDELINES FOR THE TEAM MEETING

The leading/ facilitating couple will start the meeting.

The leading couple starts with a prayer calling on the Holy Spirit to be present in the meeting and recalling the objectives for this meeting.

Welcome and meal

After the grace (blessing of the food), it is important to remember that the sharing during the meal should be in the context of a meeting in the name of Christ, a meeting that began when the couple invoked the presence of the Spirit. During the meal it is suggested that there be an exchange of views on topical issues.

Sharing / Pooling

Comment as a team on the experiences of the last month- those that were significant for the life of each individual and for the couple, giving of themselves, opening their hearts and expressing their feelings.

Reading of the Word of God and meditation [Acts 2, 42-47].

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common. They would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved." Acts 2:42-47.

Liturgical Prayer - [Psalm 132 (133), 1-3]

How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.

It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion.

For there the LORD ordained his blessing, life forevermore.

Endeavours

Sharing on our experience of the Endeavours is a special time of mutual spiritual support during the team meeting. It is a time to check out our progress on the path towards conjugal and individual holiness. In this meeting the focus is on the **Sit Down**, as a way to build a new common good based on the relationship between spiritual and material gifts.

QUESTIONS FOR THE TEAM MEETING

(Exchange of ideas on the Study Topic)

Based on the challenges and attitudes proposed at the beginning of this meeting, it is suggested that the couple prepare the study topic based on the following questions.

- ◆ In a time when everything points to individual well-being, how do we live out our responsibility in solidarity with those close to us? From an environmental point of view what are the most pressing needs (*Laudato Si* Ch 4) for the improvement of the areas in which we live?
- ◆ What is our attitude in the face of the challenges in our daily family life? In front of our children do we show ourselves as peace builders and defenders of our responsibility to contribute to the common good?
- ◆ Do we live out the values of the Gospel in all areas of our own life? Give some examples from your own experience.
- ◆ In real life, what do we do to care for the common good, at work and as global citizens?

Final Prayer

This is the time when the team members pray for their intentions and for everything that came into their hearts during the meeting.

To begin the final prayer of this meeting, we invoke the words of Pope Francis:

Mary, Virgin and Mother, you who, moved by the Holy Spirit, welcomed the word of life in the depths of your humble faith: as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One, help us to say our own "yes" to the urgent call, as pressing as ever, to proclaim the good news of Jesus.

Filled with Christ's presence, you brought joy to John the Baptist, making him exult in the womb of his mother. Brimming over with joy, you sang of the great things done by God. Standing at the foot of the cross with unyielding faith, you received the joyful comfort of the resurrection, and joined the disciples in awaiting the Spirit so that the evangelizing Church might be born.

Obtain for us now a new ardour born of the resurrection, that we may bring to all the Gospel of life which triumphs over death. Give us a holy courage to seek new paths, that the gift of unfading beauty may reach every man and woman.

Virgin of listening and contemplation, Mother of love, Bride of the eternal wedding feast, pray for the Church, whose pure icon you are, that she may never be closed in on herself or lose her passion for establishing God's kingdom.

Star of the new evangelization, help us to bear radiant witness to communion, service, ardent and generous faith, justice and love of the poor, that the joy of the Gospel may reach to the ends of the earth, illuminating even the fringes of our world.

Mother of the living Gospel, wellspring of happiness for God's little ones, pray for us. Amen. Alleluia!

(Pope Francis: Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013))

Prayer for the Beatification of Fr. Caffarel

Magnificat

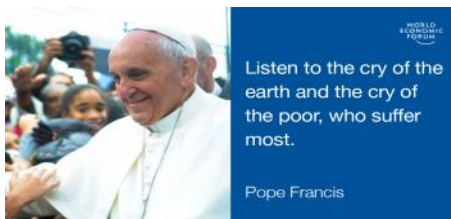
Suggestions for the month ahead

The technological paradigm has become so dominant that it would be difficult to do without its resources and even more difficult to utilise them without being dominated by their internal logic. [LS, 108]

Read chapter 3 of the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si* [LS, 101-136].

Make or schedule a retreat as a couple, in silence, as a way of regaining inner freedom, by creating the space and the time where, with phones disconnected and away from daily life, calm dialogue with God is possible!

Prayerful reading (Lectio Divina) of the biblical text for the following meeting (Eccl 3, 9-15)



February Study Topic

Meeting 5 - Technology: Creativity and Power

Objectives - Challenges and Attitudes

- ♦ **See** how technology contributes to the well-being of people in areas such as health, education, and communications.
- ♦ **Consider** and critically **reflect on the** objectives, context, consequences, and ethical limits of technology.
- ♦ **Transform** communication possibilities into opportunities for encounters and solidarity among all, thus contributing to a culture that celebrates "living together" on the planet.

Introduction

"In our time humanity is experiencing a turning-point in its history, as we can see from the advances being made in so many fields. We can only praise the steps being taken to improve people's welfare in areas such as health care, education and communications. At the same time, we have to remember that the majority of our contemporaries are barely living from day to day, with dire consequences. A number of diseases are spreading. The hearts of many people are gripped by fear and desperation, even in the so-called rich countries. The joy of living frequently fades, lack of respect for others and violence are on the rise, and inequality is increasingly evident.

It is a struggle to live and, often, to live with precious little dignity. This epochal change has been set in motion by the enormous qualitative, quantitative, rapid and cumulative advances occurring in the sciences and in technology, and by their instant application in different areas of nature and of life. We are in an age of knowledge and information, which has led to new and often anonymous kinds of power." [EG, 52]. This power presents many risks, and it is therefore necessary to consider the effects, the context and ethical limits of technology.

Moreover, in these times when social networks and other means of human communication allow us all to be constantly connected, the challenge is to rediscover the profoundly human character of face-to-face encounters and friendship, to transmit

the "mystique" of living together, to transform the possibilities for communication into opportunities for encounter and solidarity. *"To go out of ourselves and to join others is healthy for us. To be self-enclosed is to taste the bitter poison of immanence, and humanity will be worse for every selfish choice we make."* [EG, 87].

Prayer and meditation of the Word

It is suggested that each person and couple follow the four stages of Prayerful Reading (Lectio Divina) - reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation during the month and based on the biblical text.

What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil knowing that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him. That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already is; and God seeks out what has gone by. (Ecclesiastes 3, 9-15)



Supporting texts

"Humanity has entered a new era in which our technical prowess has brought us to a crossroads. We are the beneficiaries of two centuries of enormous waves of change: steam engines, railways, the telegraph, electricity, automobiles, aeroplanes, chemical industries, modern medicine, information technology and, more recently, the digital revolution, robotics, biotechnologies and nanotechnologies. It is right to rejoice in these advances and to be excited by the immense possibilities which they continue to open up before us, for "science and technology are wonderful products of a God-given human creativity" (LS, 102).

In fact, the progress made in the fields of medicine, engineering and communications, among others has helped us to overcome many situations of illness, exclusion, loneliness, sacrifice and pain. In addition, they have led to the emergence of alternatives in the use of natural resources for a more sustainable development.

However, with the advancement of technology there are two challenges for humanity. Firstly, *"it must also be recognized that nuclear energy, biotechnology, information technology, knowledge of our DNA, and many other abilities which we have acquired, have given us tremendous power."* [LS, 104]. Never has humanity had so much power over itself, but there is no guarantee that it will use it

skillfully - let us look, for example, at the atomic bomb, the manipulation of embryos, discrimination and violation of privacy, organ trafficking.

Even some environmental movements that *"defend the integrity of the environment, rightly demanding that certain limits be imposed on scientific research, sometimes fail to apply those same principles to human life. There is a tendency to justify transgressing all boundaries when experimentation is carried out on living human embryos. We forget that the inalienable worth of a human being transcends his or her degree of development. In the same way, when technology disregards the great ethical principles, it ends up considering any practice whatsoever as licit. (.....), a technology severed from ethics will not easily be able to limit its own power."* [LS, 136].

On the other hand, the easy access to technology and its globalisation, which are in themselves good realities, ultimately influencing people's lifestyles and social lives. Can we manage to live without our mobile phones? Without being permanently connected? What do we express in social networks? These behaviours that are popular (we all have to look happy), addictive (we can't live without them) and compulsive (we interact all the time) are proof that *"Our capacity for making decisions, a more genuine freedom and the space for each one's alternative creativity*

are diminished." [LS, 108]. Little by little, we cease to command our destiny, to have our own identity that expresses the diversity of human life, and interpersonal relationships are mediated by screens and systems that we can switch on or off at will.

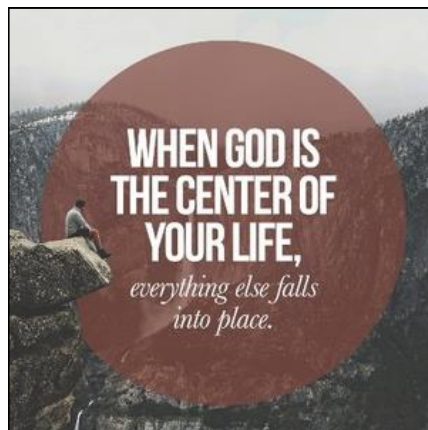
The Christian ideal, on the contrary, will always invite *"to overcome suspicion, habitual mistrust, fear of losing our privacy, all the defensive attitudes which today's world imposes on us. Many try to escape from others and take refuge in the comfort of their privacy or in a small circle of close friends, renouncing the realism of the social aspect of the Gospel. For just as some people want a purely spiritual Christ, without flesh and without the cross, they also want their interpersonal relationships provided by sophisticated equipment, by screens and systems which can be turned on and off on command. Meanwhile, the Gospel tells us constantly to run the risk of a face-to-face encounter with others, with their physical presence which challenges us, with their pain and their pleas, with their joy which infects us in our close and continuous interaction."* [EG, 88].

Because of all this, it is important to think critically about the ethical limits of the development and application of technology. Basically, to frame technology as a means at our disposal to better carry out our vocation, especially in our relationship with God, with others and with the world. Above all, to reflect as a couple, to think as a couple, creating the foundations of a truly human family culture.

To think in pairs is to be open to God invading the common space of thought, of our conjugal prayer, and of enlightening it. *"..It would be more accurate to say that the thoughts came neither from her nor from me - they came from the union, the marriage of our intelligences or rather the marriage of an intelligence with a soul. There is an intellectual fruitfulness which is the fruit of love. This kind of dialogue requires a certain state of grace... Only an effort of humility and love will allow us to find it... Above all, it made me understand that it is not the thoughts of humanity that are important, but the fact that they are imbued with the thought of God."* (Fr. Caffarel in *Aux carrefours de l'Amour*, page 20/21).

New forms of organisation of work and society such as the possibility of working at home, allowing for fewer daily commutes, better accompaniment of the family, and the development of models of close community proximity - but also time for face-to-face meetings with friends, for family meals without a mobile phone, for silent prayer, and for other habits of common social life, these are examples of good places to start.

In conclusion, science and technology are not neutral. And what is happening puts before us the responsibility of being, as a family, the protagonists of a cultural revolution that affirms that *"we can once more broaden our vision. We have the freedom needed to limit and direct technology; we can put it at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral."* [LS, 112].



Text by Cardinal D. Vincenzo Paglia

The real risk of technologising the human and not humanising the technical already exists. Skills that are necessarily human are quickly attributed to so-called "intelligent machines". It is necessary to better understand what intelligence, conscience, emotion, affective intentionality, and autonomy of moral action mean in this context. Artificial devices that simulate human actions do not actually have human qualities. This must be taken into consideration in order to regulate either their use or the research itself, for a constructive and fair interaction

between the human and the most recent machines.

It is necessary to identify a model of interdisciplinary support for shared research on ethics throughout the process where different skills are involved in the development of technological devices (research, design, production, distribution, individual and collective use). It is an indispensable mediation, given the capacity of the instrumentation of Artificial Intelligence to determine real forms of control and orientation of mental and relational habits, and not only to enhance cognitive and operational functions. It is a matter of developing a shared model that makes it possible to examine, from different points of view, the foreseeable repercussions of each stage of the process. (...) Making ethical choices today means trying to transform progress into development. It means orienting technology towards a humanism that is always centred in the dignity of the person and of the entire human family. [Cardinal Vincenzo Paglia, interview with Rossella Avella, April 14, 2020]

Testimonials

With the arrival of the Covid 19 pandemic, the world, and particularly our family, has experienced one of the most recent shocks in history. One of our family members was hospitalised in critical care for seventeen days... days of anguish and total surrender to God's will. Without technology we would not have been able to maintain contact in a situation of total isolation; yet we managed to have our family and friends united with us in a chain of prayer that made all the difference in the outcome of this situation. This is the most recent event that has forced us to rethink, as a family, the meaning of life, and to re-evaluate how science and technology support us and allow us to develop our creativity, to go to meet the One who loves us and welcomes us with His infinite love, the Lord. During our time in hospital, in total confinement, we made our days a continuous prayer. We had the opportunity to pray with friends from all over the world, to attend Mass and to experience moments of very intense prayer, in places belonging to our family history... and we were never alone. Because of this family event, several prayer groups were formed which, six months

later, continue to pray together a few days a week. We were able to bring together the extended family, some of whom now pray with us. This "common home" of ours reminds us how important it is to take care, to watch and to be attentive to the signs of God who shakes us, uses our fragility, but also our mobile phone or the media, to teach us to see the planet as a space for sanctification.

[Isabel and Paulo]

We live in a time of great challenge as families, when we say that everything is just a click away. For our children, four boys, temptations and "nonsense" are therefore very accessible and their exposure on social networks diminishes the capacity for dialogue. The "competition" with books is brutal.

With working from home, "telework", enabled by technology, we are also living in a time of change with regard to the organisation of daily family life.

We cannot change these realities. However, we can take advantage of them to reinforce our goal of putting God at the centre. Our 19-year-old son, for example, listens daily to the "10 Minutes with Jesus" on WhatsApp, and we often use this time to talk about the theme of the day.

The laity and the Church must take advantage of technology for a better relationship with prayer and with God. There is an urgent need to offer ethical and moral formation, taking advantage of the benefits of technology so that it may be at the service of Truth and Justice.

At a professional level, technology can offer a greater balance between work and family. In particular, we are able to be more present and accompany our children more; and we have, in our work, the possibility of freeing ourselves from tasks with no added value and of being able to focus on our *raison d'être*, linked to our personal purpose and that of our work. The humanisation of functions and the good use of talents will happen through this good adaptation of technology.

[Joana and José Luís]

February Team Meeting

The leading/ facilitating couple will start the meeting.

The leading couple starts with a prayer calling on the Holy Spirit to be present in the meeting and recalling the objectives for this meeting.

Welcome and meal

After the Grace (blessing of the food), it is important to remember that the sharing during the meal should be in the context of a meeting in the name of Christ, a meeting that began when the couple invoked the presence of the Spirit. During the meal it is suggested that there be an exchange of views on topical issues related to family life and the importance of the healthy use of technology.

Sharing / Pooling

Share in turn as a team on the experiences of the last month. Those that were significant for the life of each individual and for the couple, giving of themselves, opening their hearts and expressing their feelings.

Reading of the Word of God and meditation [Eccl 3:9-15].

What do workers gain from their toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God. I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him.

Whatever is has already been, and what will be has been before; and God will call the past to account.

Liturgical Prayer - [Psalm 64 (65), 4-9]

Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion.

*Happy are those whom you choose and bring near to live in your courts.
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, your holy temple.*

*By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation;
you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.*

*By your strength you established the mountains; you are girded with might.
You silence the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples.*

*Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs;
you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.*

Sharing on the Endeavours

Sharing on our experience of the Endeavours is a special time of mutual spiritual support during the team meeting. It is a time to check out our progress on the path of conjugal and individual holiness. In this meeting the emphasis will be on the **Retreat** as a way of praising God in individual and marital intimacy, away from daily life.

QUESTIONS FOR THE TEAM MEETING (Exchange of ideas on the Study Topic)

Based on the challenges and attitudes proposed at the beginning of this meeting, it is suggested that the couple prepare the study topic based on the following questions.

1. Technological means are becoming more and more indispensable and invasive in daily life. How do we, as a family, balance the use of technology and interpersonal relationships? Give some real examples.
2. How do we, as parents, balance respect for our children's privacy with the accompaniment of our children in their use of social networks?
3. How do we use technology in our relationship with our Team and the Teams movement?
4. Give examples of how the use of technology has been fundamental to celebrating the "encounter" during the 2020 pandemic.

Final Prayer

This is the time when the team members pray for their intentions and for everything that came to their hearts during the meeting. To begin the final prayer of this meeting, we invoke the words of the very old Akathist hymn.

Rejoice, O seer of the ineffable Will.
Rejoice, O surety of those praying in silence.
Rejoice, you the Preface of Christ's miracles.
Rejoice, you the Pinnacle of His commandments.
Rejoice, O heavenly Ladder, by which God descended.
Rejoice, O Bridge leading those from earth to Heaven.
Rejoice, O Miracle, much marvelled of Angels.
Rejoice, O trauma, much dirged of demons.
Rejoice, you who ineffably gave birth to the Light.
Rejoice, you who revealed the mystery to none.
Rejoice, O knowledge superseding the wise.
Rejoice, You who enlighten the minds of the faithful.
Rejoice, O Bride Ever-Virgin

Rejoice, Vessel of the Wisdom of God.
Rejoice, Treasury of His providence.
Rejoice, you who prove the philosophers fools.
Rejoice, you who prove the logicians illogical.
Rejoice, for the subtle debaters are confounded.
Rejoice, for the inventors of myths are faded away.
Rejoice, you who break the webs of the Athenians.
Rejoice, you who fill the nets of the Fishermen.
Rejoice, you who draw us from the depths of ignorance.
Rejoice, you who enlighten many with knowledge.
Rejoice, Raft for those who desire to be saved.
Rejoice, Haven for those who fare on the sea of life.
Rejoice, O Bride Ever-Virgin.

<http://www.orthodoxa.org/GB/orthodoxy/spirituality/AkathistMotherGodGB.htm>

Prayer for the Beatification of Fr. Caffarel

Magnificat

Suggestions for the month ahead

"These settings influence the way we think, feel and act. In our rooms, our homes, our workplaces and neighbourhoods, we use our environment as a way of expressing our identity." [LS, 147]

- ◆ Read chapter 4 of the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si* [LS, 137-162].
- ◆ During the Sit-down, consider as a couple the environment you seek to build at home, in your professional environment, and all the environments that you move in. In the family or at work, how can you overcome limitations, constraints and difficulties? In these environments do you help each other to develop fully?
- ◆ Prayerful reading (Lectio Divina) of the biblical text for the following meeting [1 Pt 1, 22-23].



March Study Topic

Meeting 6 - An Economy with a Soul

Aims - Challenges and Attitudes

- ◆ **Consume** responsibly, recognising that we are protagonists of an economy which is attentive to both its people and to the environment in which we live.
- ◆ **Contribute**, in a positive way, with intelligence, creativity and generosity, to create a society where both goods and people are valued and social justice reigns in institutions and in the workplace.
- ◆ **Optimise** the use of natural resources (water, energy, ...) and adopt a culture where nothing is wasted.

Introduction

In this meeting we are going to discuss and lay the foundations for a different economy, one that, "sustains and does not kill, includes and does not exclude, humanises and does not dehumanise, takes care of creation and does not pollute it", according to the invitation of Pope Francis in his letter to young entrepreneurs for the conference "The Economy of Francis" in 2020. The Pope goes on to say that it is necessary to "change our present economy and give a soul to the economy of the future" so that it will be more just, sustainable and inclusive.

In the same letter he also states that "we must correct the models for growth that do not guarantee respect for the environment, respect for life, care for the family, social justice, the dignity of workers, and the rights of future generations." In the face of this emergency, all of us, without exception, are called to re-examine our ways of thinking and our moral ethics. We must endeavour to create an "economy attentive to both its people and the environment" which is in keeping with the expectation of justice for all and in line with God's Plan.

Prayer and meditation of the Word

During the month and based on biblical text, we suggest that each person and each couple follow the four stages of Lectio Divina - reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation.

Now that you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another

deeply, from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. [1 Peter 1, 22-23]

Supporting texts

"Some circles maintain that current economics and technology will solve all environmental problems, and argue, in popular and non-technical terms, that the problems of global hunger and poverty will be resolved simply by market growth. They are less concerned with certain economic theories which today scarcely anybody dares defend, than with their actual operation in the functioning of the economy. They may not affirm such theories with words, but nonetheless support them with their deeds by showing no interest in more balanced levels of production, a better distribution of wealth, concern for the environment and the rights of future generations. Their behaviour shows that for them maximizing profits is enough. Yet by itself the market cannot guarantee integral human development and social inclusion." [LS, 109].

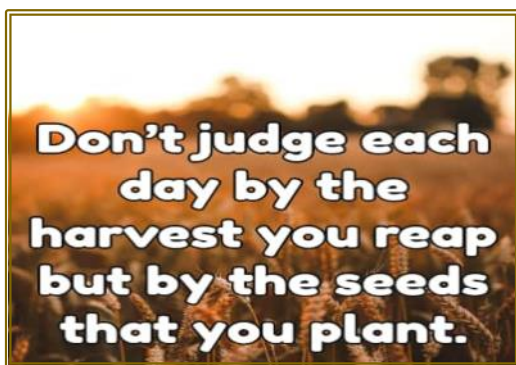
With honesty it is up to us to "question certain models of development, production and consumption" [LS, 138]. The world and what exists in it is a gift that we have been given and that we will pass on to future generations. We do need to consider the criteria for efficiency and productivity as they are important but mitigating the effects of current social and environmental imbalances depends on what we do now, especially if we consider our common responsibility towards present and future generations.

On September 23, 1976, at the Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels, Father Caffarel spoke about St. Francis of Assisi to thousands of couples from thirty countries. He told them: *"Francis, who are you? What do you have to tell us? (...) Francis' message for Christian couples is that of the evangelical radicalism of total love, the same as the crucified Christ, of whom the stigmatised Francis becomes the icon: the Christian must be another Christ: if he is not, he will be nothing... But watch out! You will be subtly tempted, deep down in your heart you will think that Francis is more to be admired than imitated, that his ideal and the imitation of his life are unattainable... Do not give into this temptation, I beg of you. It would be no more honest to accept then abandon the message of the stigmatised Francis than it would be to abandon the message of the Crucified Christ. It is precisely what is not possible - living in shacks, giving up studying - that gives us a lesson that we cannot question. Material riches, the respect of others, the desire for glory and power, and our lack of faith are all insurmountable obstacles to our union with Christ, if we give in, even just a little, to the temptation of complacency and to an attachment to these things: Your heart will always be where your treasure is. For the disciple of Christ - whether in a religious order or married - it is essential to be detached from material possessions. Love is uncompromising: no one can serve two masters, no one can love two people. But he who is united to the one Master, in His Name, can and must serve and love all beings."*

[Father Henri Caffarel in *Les Equipes de Notre-Dame à Rome et à Assise* 1976, p 67].

Although the topic of the economy is vast, we suggest you reflect on three areas: consumption and production within the framework of an integrated ecology; work, employment, and the promotion of human dignity; and, finally, the distribution of wealth being conscious of social justice.

In relation to the first point, it will be good to consider that it can be beneficial to reduce the frantic pace of consumption and production that governs the market for which we are all responsible. We do not want to hinder progress and human development,



but to reflect on the value created (and destroyed) by each economic activity not only in the light of financial criteria, but also in the light of social, environmental and sustainability criteria. The truth is that *"technological and economic development which does not leave in its wake a better world and an integrally higher quality of life cannot be considered progress."* [LS 194]. It is a question of opening the way to different opportunities, not stopping creativity and its dream of progress, but redirecting it towards intelligent and profitable ways of reusing, recovering and recycling, improving energy efficiency and rationalizing the use of natural resources and raw materials. *"Efforts for sustainable use of natural resources are not an unnecessary expense, but an investment that can generate other economic benefits in the medium term."* [LS, 191].

Therefore, a different model of integral development must also have as its goal access for all to a dignified life through work. Work is a need and a right, it is part of our human vocation, the reason for life on earth, it is a path to achievement, human development, and personal fulfilment. Consequently, helping someone with money should only be a temporary response to emergencies because living on state benefit without being able to find work takes away the dignity of the person receiving it. The challenges are varied, particularly when technological progress has as its goal the reduction of production costs by replacing the workforce with machines. An alternative for generating employment is the promotion of an economy that fosters productive diversification, entrepreneurial spirit and entrepreneurial creativity. *"Business is a noble vocation, directed to producing wealth"*

and improving our world. It can be a fruitful source of prosperity for the areas in which it operates, especially if it sees the creation of jobs as an essential part of its service to the common good." [LS, 129].

Moreover, it is not enough to just create work, it is important to promote humane conditions so that work can be carried out in a dignified manner; internships and adequate training should be provided, workers should be made aware of what they contribute to the mission of the institution, a framework should be drawn up for the different job descriptions, regulations should be in place for health and safety standards, job security, sickness benefits and retirement pensions, work schedules should allow for a good work-life balance allowing for time with family, leisure and religious commitments and so on.

Finally, the debate on the distribution of wealth created by economic activities leads us once again to realise that everything is interrelated.

Indeed, there are plenty of resources and money in the world, but what we need to examine is how everyone can have equal access to opportunities, and wealth can be shared out in a fair and just way, as wages, incomes, benefits, or any other possible ways. Alternatives and solutions will only emerge from a dialogue between politics and the economy which will address inequality, poverty, and environmental degradation, either on a global, national, or local level. Let us hope that in this debate we might find ways to collaborate for the common good. It will be up to each person to contribute to this debate, in a positive way, intelligently, creatively, and generously.

In conclusion, current economic models have contributed to the increase in social inequality and environmental degradation. Hence the need for a different form of understanding of the economy, so that so-called economic interests do not override the common good and so that harmony in the ecosystem in which we live is preserved. We need a new

economy that is commensurate with humanity, an economy which is socially just, economically viable, environmentally sustainable, and ethically responsible. But, beyond the theories and debates, it is useful for every person, every family to think and commit themselves to real tasks: how can we optimise the use of resources, how can we reduce consumption, how can we avoid waste, what can we reuse, what can we share with others in need?

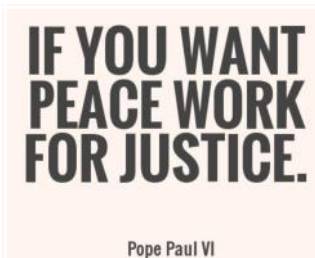
Text by Pope Francis

"The economy is a vital element of any society, it largely determines its quality of life, even of death, it contributes to making human existence worthy or unworthy. Therefore, it occupies an important place in the Church's thinking; men and women are called to cooperate with God's plan through their work in the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services...."

Our world is capable of the best and the worst. It has always been like this, but today technical and financial resources augment the possibilities for good and evil. The Church whilst spreading the Gospel message of charity and justice, cannot remain silent in the face of injustice and suffering. She can and she wants to join the millions of men and women who say no to injustice and suffering in a peaceful way, committing themselves to greater fairness. Everywhere I see people who are law abiding, saying yes to life, justice, and solidarity. I have so many meetings that confirm to me that the Gospel is not a utopia, but a true hope, even for the economy: God does not abandon his creatures to the mercy of evil. On the contrary, He invites us to never lose courage and to all cooperate for the common good.

There are a few "no's" that must be said to the mentality of waste: we must avoid acting individually, thinking and acting courageously against the common trend. According to the teaching of Scriptures, everyone can repent, be converted, become a witness and prophet of a more just and united world. (...)

It is impossible not to believe that, with God's help and together - I repeat, together - it is possible to improve our world and to revive hope, which is perhaps the most precious virtue of the present day. If we are together, united in His name, the Lord is among us as



He promised (cf. Mt 18:20); then He is also with us in the world, in factories, in businesses, and in banks as well as in homes, slums, and refugee camps. Can we, should we, have hope? (Pope Francis, Preface to the book *Potere e Denaro, La giustizia sociale secondo Bergoglio* by **Michele Zanzucchi** (*Power and money, Social Justice according to Bergoglio*)).

Testimonials

We live in a time when the “me” and the “now” is the only direction we are urged to go. What we want and when we want it, without asking why, what, and with what purpose. We try not to be drawn in by this throwaway economy of unbridled consumption where money buys everything, because we know that at this rate it will be impossible for us to give our children the future that we have dreamed of for them. We see their options constantly thwarted by the lack of respect for our planet and for community life as we would like it to be.

Consequently, we are trying, either on a professional or a personal level, to counteract this trend through a variety of actions, such as reducing, reusing, and recycling, using renewable energies, using efficient electrical appliances, and finding ways to reduce water and energy consumption, stimulating the sharing of goods with those who need them, and putting our talents to work for the greater good.

Fabiola and Nuno

We are both 41 years old, we have been married for 14 years and we have three children of 8, 6 and 1 and a half.

As professionals – an architect and an entrepreneur in the wine sector - we are both interested in local culture and respect for nature.

-Joana: through architecture I seek to reinterpret local and indigenous cultures according to contemporary logistics. Using natural materials and traditional crafts, I believe in improving the economic, social, and aesthetic daily lives of those involved in the creative and construction processes and the daily lives of those who will enjoy these spaces.

-Diogo: in the world of wine, I encourage a close relationship between the consumer, the people, and the region, thus optimising our economy and the culture of Portuguese wine in the world. I put a lot of effort into boosting the local economy by making people realise its value, and by highlighting environmental concern in the production and marketing of wine.

As a growing family we seek to improve our emotional and social framework as a foundation for our common growth. The sense of equality begins, at home, in our relationships. We work on the recognition of what God gives us and, during the time of prayer and sharing as a family, we give thanks for all that we receive every day. We instil in our children the duty to care for others and for what we receive, extending the family circle to friends and community.

To do this, we encourage each other to carefully look out for others, at family gatherings and meetings with friends. As parents, during the first years of our children's lives, we are gradually teaching them about the world and its different cultures, explaining to them that we all have the mission and the responsibility to *leave the world a little better than we found it*. Through the stories, travels and experiences of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and friends we teach them about adventures experienced in situations different from ours.

We try to teach them that the greatest challenge is to discover one's vocation, to discover how to be happy and to make others happy. The awareness of living in a world that belongs to all and exists for all makes us more attentive and active in our social and environmental responsibility.

Joana and Diogo

Count your blessings. Once you realise how valuable you are and how much you have going for you, the smiles will return, the sun will break out, the music will play, and you will finally be able to move forward the life that god intended for you with grace, strength, courage and confidence.

March Team Meeting

The leading/ facilitating couple will start the meeting.

The leading couple starts with a prayer calling on the Holy Spirit to be present in the meeting and recalling the objectives for this meeting.

Welcome and meal.

After the Grace (the blessing of the food) has been said, it is important to remember that the sharing during the meal should be carried out in the context of a meeting in the name of Christ, a meeting that began when the leading couple called on the Holy Spirit. During the meal it is suggested that there be an exchange of opinions on current topics related to family life as the centre of learning about mutual love and commitment.

Sharing / Pooling

Share in turn as a team on the experiences of the last month. Those that were significant for the life of each individual and for the couple, giving of themselves, opening their hearts and expressing their feelings.

Reading of the Word of God and meditation [Jn 15:9-11].

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

Liturgical Prayer - [Psalm 33,4-5, 12-15, 20-22]

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous.

*For the word of the LORD is upright;
and all his work is done in faithfulness.
He loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.*

*Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!*

*The LORD looks down from heaven,
he sees all humankind;
from where he sits enthroned, he looks forth
on all the inhabitants of the earth,
he who fashions the hearts of them all,
and observes all their deeds.*

*Our soul waits for the LORD;
he is our help and shield.
Our heart is glad in him,
because we trust in his holy name.
Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us,
even as we hope in you.*

Sharing on the Endeavours

Sharing on our experience of the Endeavours is a special time of mutual spiritual support during the team meeting. It is a time to check out our progress on the path to conjugal and individual holiness. In this meeting the emphasis will be on the **Sit Down**.

QUESTIONS FOR THE TEAM MEETING

(Exchange of ideas on the Study Topic)

Based on the challenges and attitudes proposed at the beginning of this meeting, it is suggested that the couple prepare the study topic based on the following questions.

1. How do we look after the material goods that God gives us? Are we aware that the Lord asks us to use our goods responsibly in all areas of our lives?
2. How do we organise our family budget? Is there a real communion and a real sharing of views as a couple and as a family on this subject?
3. Do we often waste money? Are we economical consumers? Do we have concern for the environment?
4. Do we regularly share our goods with our neighbour?



Final Prayer

This is the time when the team members pray for their intentions and for everything that came to their hearts during the meeting. To begin the final prayer of this meeting, we call on Mary to help us in the words of Pope Francis.

Mary, woman of listening, open our ears;

grant us to know how to listen to the word of your Son Jesus among the thousands of words of this world; grant that we may listen to the reality in which we live, to every person we encounter, especially those who are poor, in need, in hardship.

Mary, woman of decision,

illuminate our mind and our heart, so that we may obey, unhesitating, the word of your Son Jesus; give us the courage to decide, not to let ourselves be dragged along, letting others direct our life.

Mary, woman of action,

grant that our hands and feet move "with haste" toward others, to bring them the charity and love of your Son Jesus, to bring the light of the Gospel to the world, as you did. Amen.

Pope Francis - St. Peter's Square, May 31, 2013.

Prayer for the Beatification of Fr. Caffarel

Magnificat

Suggestions for the month ahead

- ◆ *They need to be encouraged to be ever open to God's grace and to draw constantly from their deepest convictions about love, justice and peace.* [LS, 200]
- ◆ Read the fifth chapter of the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si* [LS, 163-201].
- ◆ Establish a rule of life, personal or couple, that responds to the challenge of being an instrument of peace, either in our conjugal relationship, in the family or in social life. Then, with God's grace, commit to the fulfilment of this purpose.
- ◆ Read prayerfully (Lectio Divina) the biblical text for the next meeting [Jn, 15, 9-11].

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Last notes...



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



Who says men don't remember!

A COUPLE were Christmas shopping. The shopping centre was packed and as the wife walked around she was surprised to discover that her husband was nowhere to be seen.

She was quite upset because they had a lot to do and hence, she became so worried that she called him on her mobile phone to ask him where he was.

In a quiet voice he said: "Do you remember the jewellers we went into about five years ago, where you fell in love with that diamond necklace that we couldn't afford, and I told you that I would get it for you one day?"

The wife choked up and started to cry and said: "Yes, I do remember that shop."

He replied: "Well, I'm in the pub next door!"

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.