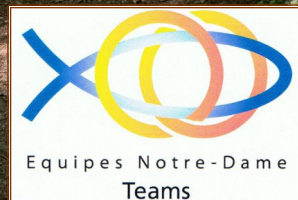


TEAMS GB NEWSLETTER July-Sept 2023



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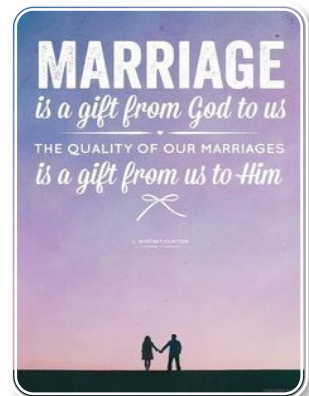
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Tell us your news

Send us some text and photos for the newsletter by 1st September to : editors@teams.gb.org.uk

Changed address? More newsletters needed each time?

Contact your regional couple for any change of postal address or any ongoing change in the number of newsletters your Team needs.



International Gathering- Turin 15-20 July 2024

Book Now for the International Gathering- Turin, July 2024

**but, if you can't attend ...
could you help someone else to do so?**

An international Teams gathering is a wonderful opportunity for couples, for growth in understanding of the movement, for making friends and for being inspired! Turin has a huge wealth of wonderful places, wonderful history and wonderful culture.

Now is the time to make your 'firm application' to join in the International Gathering. **Applications are open until 1st July.** Visit <https://teams-transatlantic.org/turin/> and click on the booking link.

The dates are noon on **Monday 15th to 20th July 2024** (5 nights) the key arrangement is that hotel, meal and attendance costs are included in the fee of is €695 euros for each person, so €1390 euro per couple. This excludes travel to Turin although a number of low cost airlines fly to Turin. **Firm 'applications to attend' need to be made by 1st July**, so that after allocation of places, deposits of 70 euros can be paid by the deadline of 30th July.

It is always good for Teams and Sectors to support a couple with costs; please do discuss this in your own Team. If no one in your Team can go to Turin, could you consider contributing to the Solidarity Fund, supporting someone else to go, even if they can't afford it?



Don't forget to....

Pay in May- the annual financial contribution- ideally by standing order and gift aided

Choose in June- choose your responsible couple for next year and tell your regional couple.

Review in July - review and reflect on the year gone and plan for the next one. Topic for 2023 review- Teams GB: Where we are now and what next? See pages 22-27.

Letter from Regional Couple

Dear friends in Teams,

Teams GB Re-Gathering: Well, well, well. The “New Wine, Fresh Skins!” Re-Gathering, so much anticipated in the last 3 issues of this Newsletter, finally happened from 21 to 23 April, attended by 73 Teams GB members, 17 children, 3 Children’s Programme helpers, and 4 other guests, including Bishop Paul Mason who celebrated the weekend’s Closing Mass, and Father Paul Nomanyo, a Togolese Teams Spiritual Counsellor who was visiting Great Britain at the time. Having ourselves been so much immersed in preparing the event, it was all at once reward, relief, and cause for humble gratitude to see the enormous enthusiasm and goodwill with which everyone participated, and stepped forward as needed to help the programme along. Even those things that were not part of the plan worked out better, we think, than our original plan; which we take to indicate that our Lord himself was at hand, turning mere water to wine in the way that He does, and turning the event to His wider purposes.



Gathering Fruits: The will to serve those wider purposes has quickly shifted focus onto what happens next. The Gathering must have fruits, and we take confidence that if the Lord assisted the Gathering, he will also assist Teams GB to seek its fruits. For the Central Region, it opened a door for dialogue with Bishop Patrick McKinney, our Keynote Presenter on the Sunday morning, about Teams as a pastoral offering for the Diocese of Nottingham, where we currently have no Teams. This dialogue will ask what further information and awareness about Teams and the whole



spectrum of marriage support represented within the Alliance of Catholic Marriage Organisations (ACMO) needs broadcasting to clergy and parishes across the Diocese, and how best to do this. It will also ask who in the Diocese can be our champion, helping to promote Teams in pastoral areas, deaneries, and individual parishes.

All 3 GB Regions are considering local follow-up events as the new Teams year gets underway; you can expect to hear more via Regional update emails circulated by Regional Couples.

The Future of Teams GB and the July Annual Review:

The 3 Regional Couples and other co-opted participants that make up the Province team are eyeing bigger issues over a longer term. At Swanwick they presented some analysis conducted over



the past year about strengths, opportunities, and challenges for Teams GB, the key challenge being that of growing through a co-ordinated, sustainable approach. Given the variety of feedback from the lively discussion groups that followed this presentation, the Province Team wants all Teams GB Members to have a chance to review and comment on the



material, and recommends that this form part of each Team's Annual Review during the July Team meeting. See pages 22-27 of this newsletter.

Resources from the Re-Gathering—presentations, prayer and Mixed Team meeting materials, and photographs—are being published on the “GB Events” page of the Teams GB website (<https://teams.gb.org.uk>).



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

**Janet and Paul DeBoo,
Responsible Couple, Central GB Region**

Note from the editors

Dear Friends in Teams,

Greetings from sunny Formby. As we write we are enjoying an early summer heatwave. This time of year always reminds us to appreciate the beauty of God's creation in our garden and countryside. We're getting out for a walk (or hobble at present!).



It was lovely to see so many of you at Swanwick, to reconnect with each other and catch up on news and each other's lives. We have been blessed in the past few months with a number of retreats and opportunities for nurturing our spiritual life. It is easy to become complacent and we have taken away a word, challenge, encouragement and support from each retreat or conference.



In our own team we have had a time of sadness this year as Maura Morley, a member of our team, passed away following a long illness. We also have had the joy of our team meeting again in person and are heartened that Dennis, Maura's husband has continued to be a member of the team.

Many of you have asked after our Ukrainian guests, Ivan, Krystyna, David, Masha and Lillia. In March, Ivan returned from sea (he is a marine captain) the family decided to look for rented accommodation. After a couple of months of frustration and rejection they received an Easter gift- an offer to rent a newly refurbished home locally. They moved out 11 months after arriving at ours and are settling in well to their new home.



The family took part in our local passion play - Ivan as a roman soldier. One of his props was a red lipstick, used to mark scourging marks and the wounds on Jesus. Afterwards he put it in his pocket- a mistake he realised later in a local park when a stranger noticed that it had fallen onto a path and approached him saying "I think that this is yours". Ivan started to explain but soon gave up!



In true Teams spirit we do many things together (not just this newsletter) and have the joy of presenting bible story assemblies in local schools.

With love

Mark and Dymrna Edwards
GB Newsletter Editors

2022 Teams GB Accounts

As Provincial Treasurers, part of our job is to keep members informed about how your money is spent, and the state of our finances. Below is a simplified summary of our Accounts for last year.



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

Statement of Financial Activities (Summary)

2022

Income

Contributions from Team Couples:	12,252
Refund from HMRC and interest	<u>2,852</u>
Total Receipts	<u>15,104</u>

Expenditure

Regions	150
Province	
Organisation and Administration	2,932
Payment to Transatlantic SR/ERL	<u>10,400</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>13,482</u>

Excess/(Deficit) of Receipts over Expenditure 1,622

The main item in Organisation and Administration is the quarterly Newsletter, but it also includes insurance and the licences for printing hymns. Although our reserves are adequate, we should note that our income has been falling since the beginning of the covid pandemic. One thing that you can do to help, if you pay income tax, is to check that you have a Gift Aid Declaration in place as that increases your contribution by 25%.

E-mail us to check: GBTreasurers@TeamsGB.org.uk

The full Annual Report and Accounts are on the website and we are happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Dominique & Chris Thomson, Teams GB Treasurers

What will your Team choose as a Study Topic for the next year?

Fr Caffarel, from the earliest days of Teams, encouraged couples to develop an aspect of their faith through study. Commitment to study and sharing reflections in the Team meeting is included in the Teams Charter. Fr Caffarel and the first couples were clear that couples should continue to develop their understanding of their faith throughout their lives. Using a study topic gives the opportunity to make this development.

The format for the sharing on the study topic in the Team meeting is also clear. The couple prepare the study themselves during the month then, in the Team meeting share their reflections on their study of the topic. What's the outcome from this? We leave this with the Holy Spirit! We open ourselves to the Spirit, then in our Sit Down we open ourselves to our spouse and decide on a personal and / or conjugal Rule of Life. Perhaps we might consider that we join a group or involve ourselves more in some aspect of our parish or local community.

The Leading Team of Equipes Notre-Dame, the ERI, is providing the topic for 2023-24 called Eucharist, source of mission. This is now available on the Teams-Transatlantic and TeamsGB websites .

The study topic links are on GB Website: www.teamsgb.org.uk/members/study-topics/ Teams International site: www.equipes-notre-dame.com/en/study-topic It is up to each Team to decide which study topic to use. It is the review meeting in July when this is usually one of the topics for the agenda.

During this last year. Our own Team has used the “**The Third Age**”. It has allowed us to review our perspectives on becoming retired and generally getting older, and even busier!! *Link: www.tinyurl.com/The-Third-Age*

Small group studies by **Bill Huebsch** on the papal encyclicals really help to work through these documents.

Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium) In this encyclical Pope Francis urges the Church to overcome complacency to be on mission in our modern world. A strong theme in The Joy of the Gospel is about accompaniment of people where they are. Huebsch has also written a short study guide on “The Art of Accompaniment”.

In **The Joy of Love (Amoris Laetitia)** Pope Francis asks that we meet people where they are, consider the complexities of life today and to respect people's consciences in their decisions

Care for our Common Home (Laudato Si') considers the huge importance of looking after our world as it is the common home of all humanity and earthly

creation.

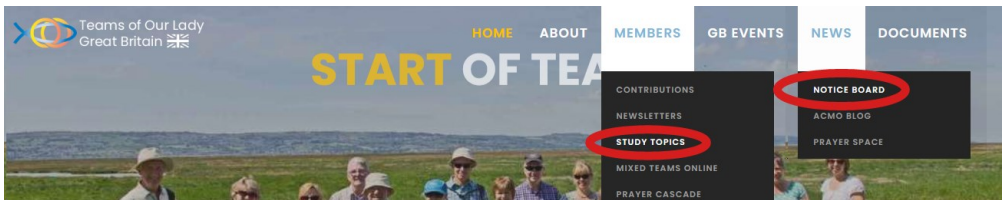
In **On Fraternity and Social Friendship (Fratelli Tutti)** the Pope draws us to consider how to build a better, more just and peaceful world, being inclusive and considering people and organisations but working to get over indifference.

Bill Huebsch recommends that in study groups the text is read aloud, each reading a paragraph. We find this also works really well for us as a couple; it keeps us focussed and ready to share reflections and discuss together.

These study guides, and indeed the full encyclicals, are available from Redemptorist Press: www.rpbooks.co.uk or St Paul's Books (online or at a bookshop) www.StPauls.org.uk. The encyclicals are available free on the Vatican website www.vatican.va

Teams who have seen many seasons have a particular perspective and character; they may like to consider the Long standing Teams study topic: www.tinyurl.com/long-standing-teams

Have a look on the TeamsGB.org.uk website browse to 'Members' and then Study Topics to see a variety of topics.



Then why not tell others what you have decided ... use the News posts on the website. You will need to be registered to send and to receive, it's really good! Send a message to webeditors@teamsGB.org.uk asking to be included as a 'website member'.

Annette and Paul O'Beirne

**Responsible Couple
TransAtlantic Super Region**

Daily reflections are available
on [https://
www.dynamiccatholic.com](https://www.dynamiccatholic.com)



Team Profile- Warrington 3

Couple Profile- Tony & Pat Banks

How did you meet? Protestant stand-in Drummer was served Guinness by a temporary Bar-Maid with a wonderful smile, in a Catholic Social Club.

One word to describe Spouse?

Tony is Sociable, Pat is a loving person.

What do you love most about your Spouse?

Tony, his loving nature. Pat, wonderful to be with.



What do you disagree on? Tony's tidiness. Pat's sewing spells.

When did you join Teams? Twenty years ago as empty nesters.

How would you describe your Team in three words? Warm, funny and hard-working.

Team Highlight? Lenten Zoom presentations from Belmont Abbey during Lockdown and follow up Zoom Team's Meeting to discuss.

How has Teams enriched your life? Encouraged us through Endeavours and has taken us to many foreign countries such as Brazil for International Gathering and to Rome and Paris as a Regional Couple. Meeting wonderful people and making lifetime friends.

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

Teams Sit-Down is a great guide to communicate and keep dialogue open.

What are your hopes for the future?

That we spend many more years together as a couple and part of Teams.

Spiritual Counsellor Profile- A tribute to John Traynor

When did you join Teams? 20 years ago during piloting.

How would you describe your Team? Inspirational, open and enjoyable. (his words)

Describe a highlight. John enjoyed visiting Belmont Abbey on Retreats with the Team, bringing along his wife June on the first occasion. He also led retreats for our Team.

How has Teams enriched your life? In teaching us that, all that matters is our relationship with Jesus Christ. (his words).



What would you say to a potential Teams Spiritual Counsellor? We are pretty sure John would have said "Go along and enjoy it – especially the desserts".

What piece of advice would you give a couple about to get married? John used to challenge couples to come to church to get married, and he would officiate for free.

What are your hopes for the future? John's hopes at the end were to join his dearly loved wife, June, who died five years before him.



Team Profile – Warrington 3 Team

Who are your Team Members? Denis and Joan Povey, Pat and Ray Illingworth, Pat and Mike Nencini and Tony and Pat Banks & Fr Mark Drew (not in picture above).

How did your Team start? We began twenty years ago after an invitation from the Parish Priest to meet at the Presbytery with other existing Teams members over a glass of wine.

How would you describe Team in three words? Strong, faithful and supportive.

How has it changed over the years? For some years we were only three couples. Our fourth couple have now left us through health issues. Our fifth couple soon 'fitted in' after re-Piloting and have worked hard to support Teams e.g. Celebrating 80 years and working on the Synod Questions. We were five couples for a while.

Tell us two things you have learned. To appreciate the confidentiality in Teams. The ability of an open arena for speaking about faith.

What is the highlight or silliest or funniest thing our Teams has done? A retreat day at St. Mary's Shrine to Lancashire Martyrs in February 2019 to celebrate 80 years of Teams. Our Sector Crazy Golf days have been fun.

What does your Teams do well? Meets regularly and supports one another. Supports Sector, Regional and International events.

What is the best thing about marriage? Always being there for one another, during good times and bad. With each year, learning to love one another even more deeply.

Tony & Pat Banks, Warrington 3 Team.

New Wine, Fresh Skins! Reflections on re-gathering



What a wonderful weekend we had in Swanwick!

We arrived on a sunny Friday afternoon in April in Swanwick, along with Teams Chaplain Fr Paul from Togo, who was visiting the UK. He later said he had told his family he had just arrived in paradise!!



There was a real buzz as people arrived. It was wonderful to see “old” faces and “new” and lots of children. We were delighted to welcome people from far and near! As well as Fr Paul from Togo, Brendan and Rosemary Gavin, Regional Couple from Ireland attended and Andrew and Rosemary Hayes-Milligan from Edinburgh. However, there was a

real international flavour as Teams members present hailed from Trinidad, Brazil, Colombia, Nigeria, Germany, Poland to name but a few!

As usual the food was fantastic and the atmosphere at Swanwick peaceful and prayerful. Our first liturgy on the Friday evening,



dramatised by Paul DeBoo with the help of one of the children, set the tone for the weekend. Through careful questioning we were led to understand that we all need our batteries to be charged up and ready if our light is going to be shining in the world but they also need to be switched on!

Each evening there was entertainment provided with fun activities, quizzes, puzzles and games! On Saturday evening we were treated to a dance extravaganza where each couple came up to dance depending on their years in teams. We were given



the treat of Jim and Maria Mason, in Teams over 50 years, dancing a quick step beautifully! We were also amazed at the skill of some couples who were able to keep an orange between their foreheads for a long time while moving to music!!



On Saturday morning we opened with a liturgy based around the Wedding feast at Cana and reflected on the theme of the weekend “New wine, fresh skins”. The morning session included marriage enrichment activities, ways to strengthen our “cord of 3 strands”- our 3 way relationship between God and the couple, as well as time for a sit down and lots of opportunities to reflect on how to build joy into our relationship.



On Saturday afternoon we were updated about Teams in the UK and the wider Transatlantic Superregion. We also had an opportunity to hear about discussions held by the Province Team as a result of a SWOT analysis. Regional couples shared progress so far! More to follow... We then had Mixed teams reflecting on the flight into Egypt and how Mary and Joseph coped with the turmoil in their lives. After dinner we experienced a liturgy about Gods love, finishing with the haunting sounds of “O Love” by Elaine Hagenberg before heading to our evening entertainment.

On Sunday morning our keynote presenter, Bishop Patrick McKinney of Nottingham explained why he chose his motto “Seek the face of Christ.”

He encouraged us to look for Christ in those around us. He also shared the synodal process so far and an update on responses from the Bishops of England and Wales. He personally recommended house groups for strengthening Church, just like Teams.



After coffee we were again in Mixed Team groups this time the theme was “Awaiting the Holy Spirit”. As usual with Teams occasions the sharing is very deep and inspirational and we come away enriched and often challenged!



Our closing Mass was a wonderful celebration of all that we experienced over the weekend. Led by Pat and Tony Banks the children acted out the Gospel of the “Road to Emmaus” which was inspirational! The children were wonderful! We were so blessed to have Bishop Paul Mason, Bishop to the Forces, to celebrate Mass. Paul is also the son of Jim and Maria Mason long standing Teams members from Northern Region.



During Sunday, couples were invited to share a testimony about what being in Teams meant to them. Photograph the QR code next to each picture or use the web link www.TeamsGB.org.uk/gatheringvideos to watch the videos on page 22.

We left feeling that we had indeed experienced a little bit of heaven!

Annette & Paul O’Beirne,
Responsible Couple, Transatlantic Superregion

Reflection

There is something very special and affirming about a gathering of married couples who all hold family life and spirituality at the heart of their marriage. The presence of so many younger couples with their children gave much hope that the spirit is working in his church!

For us highlights included the interactive presentation on Saturday morning. Even after 26 years of marriage there is always something "fresh" to discover and share with one's spouse. This presentation provided us with some useful tips!

The children's enthusiastic presentation of the gospel reading and the thought provoking homily that followed at mass on the last day will always be remembered.

**Mark and Carol Traynor,
Responsible Couple-
North West Sector**



New Wine, Fresh Skins!

Feedback on Re-Gathering

In the days and weeks following the Re-Gathering, emails sent by those who attended enthusiastically expressed the impact of the experience. We have selected snippets from those emails to share with you.



Bishop Patrick McKinney, Bishop of Nottingham and Keynote Presenter on Sunday, 23 April: Thank you so much for your most kind letter...I was very happy to join you all for the Sunday morning session of your “New Wine, Fresh Skins” Teams of Our Lady gathering...I would welcome the continuation of a dialogue to explore any ways in which the Teams GB Central Region might be able to offer support to

couples in the Diocese of Nottingham. Please do contact me or my secretary to see if we can arrange a meeting.

Bishop Paul Mason, Bishop of the Armed Forces, and Main Celebrant for the Closing Mass: The short time I spent with you reminded me of the many Teams retreats I attended as a child at Minsteracres. The sense of the wider family of faith, the good humour and conversation all made for a joyful occasion which I hope was uplifting for all who attended. I know these gatherings don't just happen but are the fruit of much work so my congratulations to all who had a hand in organising the weekend. So, thank you once again for inviting me and do be assured of my prayers for the ongoing mission of Teams.

Fr Paul Nomanyo, Togo: “I can't pass over in silence the paradisiacal place where we had our gathering. It was a moment to discover the beauty and the richness of the Teams of Our Lady in England. The quality of the teachings and the welcome that the team members gave me were very pleasing.”



Other feedback, published anonymously:

Dear Friends in Teams, a HUGE thank you for the brilliant weekend. Well done for all the hard work, enthusiasm, and joy. It certainly paid off and we are sure there will be many fruits...

We would like to extend our thank you and appreciation for the amazing time at Swanwick over the weekend...The endless hours that you and all the other couples involved might have spent to organize this Gathering has paid off and it was truly a blessed weekend. The professionalism, motivation and dedication from organizing the program, children's activities, as well as evening events has impressed us immensely and it is such an inspiration to be part of a bigger picture. We will share how much we've taken by being there in our next home Team's meeting. Thank you once again for all your effort.



Well done for a wonderful weekend... There was a great atmosphere in Swanwick and so many positive comments about the preparation for the event and how smoothly it all ran. There was such a buzz, it was so great to see so many old friends, and to meet the young families. Thank you for all your efforts.

Well done! The entire weekend was amazing and well organised but we didn't feel rushed. There was time to meet up

with old friends and make new ones. There were opportunities to pray and discuss. We thank you and the Province Team, for all your hard work.

We had such a wonderful time at the Gathering and we are putting to practice all we have learned. We know that by the help of the Holy Spirit we will become what God has called us to be in our marriage and our family.



(We) appreciated and enjoyed every second of the Teams Re-Gathering. It was evident how much thought, planning and organisation was invested for the pleasure of all who attended. The constant pulling out of the hat, show stopper after show stopper was phenomenal and we had to take time to draw breath; how your Team managed we do not know but we



are in awe of your energy. You have renewed our energy. The highlights are many but seeing Team members dancing and laughing when their chosen year was announced is one of our favourites. We really appreciated Bishop McKinney's open and honest presentation and enjoyed watching Bishop Mason with his parents and of course the lovely closing Mass he



celebrated, together with children, of course. Our thanks and prayers to all who participated in any way, it was a weekend to remember with Joy and Love.

Thank you for all the work you and the whole team dedicated to this. It continues to bear much fruit. It was such a valuable experience for us all round—in the people we met and who inspired us, in the new ways of thinking, and yes, the new ways of seeing we encountered. We are carrying that hope into all we do in our local parish community, in Teams and beyond.

We thought the Re-Gathering had a very happy and successful feel. The two evenings had a buzz to them...providing a Children's





Programme encouraged younger families to attend which again changed the ambiance of the Gathering.

The children's involvement and programme were just amazing; well organised and executed. The children loved every bit of it. Thank you for making it possible for parents with young children to attend.

The presence of children at the Gathering added significantly to the spirit of the event. It was great to see their interaction with each other and with other adults; that is, it was great to see how they were welcomed. It was also very clear that the Children's Programme had been carefully prepared so that the children could be purposefully and safely engaged. This was a great challenge for the Children's Programme team because of the age spread among the children, but they encouraged older children to work with the youngest children.



It was so good to have the children there! Good for the adults and the children. Many thanks to the couples that organised the programme, implemented and took care of them. Well done! We hope we can have the children again, and they'll never forget the event.



Huge thanks to all who contributed to such an amazing weekend!

**Compiled by
Janet and Paul DeBoo**

**On behalf of the Animating
Team for the New Wine, Fresh
Skins! Re-Gathering**

Teams members taking part in



Teams GB re-gathering April 2023



How has Teams changed your life?

This is what you said at the end of the re-gathering conference

- ⇒ Teams has given us the confidence to share our faith and highs and lows with others
- ⇒ It has given us the opportunity to grow our faith as a married couple
- ⇒ Teams Endeavours have given us the push to go on retreat
- ⇒ Teams has encouraged us to become prayerful, bible reading disciples being continually formed into the image of God as a couple.
- ⇒ Teams allowed us to grow together spiritually and gave us tools to use on the journey
- ⇒ Teams makes us feel supported spiritually and practically by other Team members during the highs and lows of the daily grind.
- ⇒ Being in Teams is like being part of a big extended family which supports us to know that God is at the centre of our marriage.
- ⇒ Being part of Teams has given us friends we would trust with our lives.
- ⇒ Teams helps us to grow in our marriage with God at our centre.
- ⇒ In busy family life it can be easy to lose God and your sense of spirituality. Teams provides a regular opportunity to seek Gods presence, in the presence of others in similar situations. It provides comfort, support and challenges.
- ⇒ Teams brings us back to the presence of God together.
- ⇒ Teams Endeavours provide the nudge for us to do the things we should be doing anyway.
- ⇒ Teams awakes the spirituality in our marriage. We could feel the touch of God in our lives through Teams we did not feel alone in a new country through our link with Teams.
- ⇒ Support for our marriage as we have travelled through life, helping us to grow together in faith.
- ⇒ Being in Teams gives us the opportunity to enrich our marriage not only spiritually but also practically through sharing with other couples the highs and lows of life, the gifts and challenges of faith.
- ⇒ Teams means to us our improvement base for us to grow in faith as a couple and family.
- ⇒ Being part of Teams has changed our marriage life for the better. We created friendships with other like minded couples that we will carry for a lifetime.
- ⇒ Quakers believe “There is that of God in everyone” Teams is a reflection of that.

Listening to the Bishop speak this morning and the comments from the floor. i.e. to bring in the disaffected, the disillusioned (abuse scandal /hypocrisy of religion)

⇒ Our children are the future - we really do need to “all be in it together” and work collaboratively to grow.

What does Teams mean to you?

Community, support, friendship, spiritual development, trust, Sit downs, Rule of Life

Try these links just click the QR code with your phone

Or on your computer go to www.TeamsGB.org.uk/gathering-videos



Teams GB: Where are we now and what next?

The much-heralded Teams **Re-Gathering** was held in Swanwick from April 21st to 23rd. It was a great success - a most enjoyable weekend. The event was attended by about 40 couples, 17 children, two Bishops and a priest from Togo.



As well as engendering a wonderful sense of prayer and spirituality we were able to focus on the **future of Teams in GB**. It is really important to consider how we go forward now, many of us are getting older and we need to see more and younger couples come into Teams, we need to grow and develop for the future.

We would like to share the key points of our deliberations with you. Please see below the document entitled “Teams GB: Where are we now and what next.”

We are aware that only a fraction of the total membership of Teams GB was able to attend the Re-gathering and contribute to the discussion. We would like to share our thoughts with all the Teams members and invite you to comment on and add to the analysis. We particularly want to hear the opinions of all Teams on how we go forward.

Paul & Sue Rowney,
Responsible Couple, Northern GB Region on behalf of province team

MOST IMPORTANT PRIORITIES

- ◆ Expansion appears to be a critical need at the moment, however, a clear path must be made as to who will be our target - Catholic couples/other Christian couples? (In Trinidad “Common law” couples are accepted).
- ◆ How we advertise ourselves as Teams -TOL doesn't say anything; we need to make sure “married couples” is prominent in our advertising.
- ◆ Address issues which appeal to the young e.g. environment. Climate Change really important; 'it is what young people are excited about'.
- ◆ Expansion and communications - GB region may need to be reorganized to enable better use of resources.
- ◆ IT systems to improve stability and communication.
- ◆ Online flexibility.
- ◆ Priests need to know about us.

STRENGTHS



- ◆ A balance of spiritual & social support.
- ◆ Collegiality; a synodal approach.
- ◆ Spirituality & talent.
- ◆ Culture of hospitality.
- ◆ Environmental awareness.
- ◆ Resilience & Adaptability, e.g. during lockdowns.
- ◆ Willingness to serve, responsibilities shared over time.

- ◆ Teams is 'tried and tested' resource.
- ◆ Our network of support.
- ◆ Past experience of successful movements e.g. 'Equipes Jeune', Tandem teams (Young, not yet married couples) Re-alliance (divorced, second partnerships etc.)
- ◆ Experience of recent expansion efforts & experiences.
- ◆ Past experiences of Team members.
- ◆ About 100 Local Teams + Monthly Mixed Teams on Zoom; diverse Teams can be more resilient.
- ◆ Formation as a Team through a Piloting process.
- ◆ Unity across the movement- structured meetings with some flexibility.
- ◆ Endeavours.
- ◆ Good material, including the Study Topic, from the International Movement.
- ◆ Vatican Recognition.
- ◆ The Teams Charter.

- ◆ Communication: Printed newsletter, website, regional emails.
- ◆ Independent of parishes; locality-based.
- ◆ Lay-led.
- ◆ Support of many clergy.
- ◆ Our chaplains/ spiritual advisors.
- ◆ Membership of Alliance of Catholic Marriage Organisations.

WEAKNESSES



- ◆ Low visibility in many parishes (clergy and lay people).
- ◆ Not parish-based, therefore little tradition of 'ownership' by the parish.
- ◆ No systematic way of communicating with parishes.
- ◆ Small pool of people in GB Teams.
- ◆ Ageing membership, reduced capacity for action.
- ◆ Lack of chaplains for all Teams.
- ◆ Some people cannot commit beyond their base Team.

- ◆ The name 'Teams of Our Lady': Does this speak to us of marriage? What does it mean? How does that attract married couples? **** (See Opportunities)**
- ◆ Introductory leaflet doesn't explain how to 'join' or establish a Team.
- ◆ Patchy geographical spread; difficult to "join" a Team if none nearby.
- ◆ Lack of pathway for new lone couples.
- ◆ Lack of focussed approach to expansion.
- ◆ Teams' definition of 'couple' is tight* *(See Opportunities)*
- ◆ We are targeting only Catholic and Christian couples.

- ◆ Perceived disconnect between ERI & local Teams.
- ◆ Dense academic language may be used by ERI in publications.
- ◆ Publications can appear too proscriptive or directional.
- ◆ Communications tend to be 'vertical' rather than 'horizontal' between Teams.
- ◆ Little communication with other parts of Europe to explore similar issues & share best practice.

CHALLENGES

- ◆ Changing demographics, ageing population.
- ◆ Later marriage.
- ◆ Hugely busy lives of many couples.
- ◆ Stretched church resources.
- ◆ Fewer priests & religious.
- ◆ Changes of culture around families and childcare: Access to childcare (v) time to meet.
- ◆ Relevance of Teams to others: Growing proportion of couples not marrying. 2% of marriages in the UK- Catholic. About 20%- 'religious'. Catholics about 5% of the population; 1 Catholic in 5 marries another Catholic.
- ◆ Most young people do not grow up in traditional catholic homes and have no idea what a long-term committed Christian marriage could be like.



OPPORTUNITIES

- ◆ **Prayer and Discernment**
- ◆ **Expansion**
- ◆ Dedicated Team to run expansion.
- ◆ Proposed coordinated strategy for growing Teams across GB.
- ◆ Publicity needs to be a strategic long-term priority.
- ◆ Consider re-organisation of GB Regions/Sectors.
- ◆ Expanding into a new parish should be a strategic campaign.
- ◆ Important to spend some time 'rolling the pitch'; pulpit talks by strangers can be ineffective.
- ◆ Piloting material now being reviewed; request for advance consultation on this.
- ◆ **Connection**
- ◆ The power of testimony: Sharing stories/ testimonies is important -by both priests and couples.
- ◆ Couples could target their own parishes- direct approaches to couples and priests.



.....OPPORTUNITIES CONTINUED

- ◆ Grow Teams where we already have Teams- at first.
- ◆ Should we think about spiritual development with non-married couples?
- ◆ Promotion of Teams in other Christian communities.
- ◆ Explore SION Community for Evangelisation.
- ◆ Notice & invite 'unlikely' couples.
- ◆ Target people new to the parish; spot strangers at the back of church.
- ◆ Should we 'Find a bigger pond to fish in'.- *Include engaged couples, committed couples, common-law couples.
- ◆ 'Come for a meal' rather than 'Come to a meeting'- hospitality is very important.
- ◆ Speaking with parents at the schools. Tap into PTAs; Teams might be a route back to church for some?
- ◆ Consider what service we are/can be as Teams to others, our parishes and communities.
- ◆ Communicate how Teams supports us to be of service to others, our parishes and communities.
- ◆ Use National Marriage Week- Move around parishes- organise a service for marriage with Bidding Prayers focused on married life (engagement, marriage, children, childlessness, parenting, widow(er)s).
- ◆ Faith formation after marriage; expansion could be 'in-house', using Teams members who are natural influencers.
- ◆ Promotion of Teams in marriage & baptism preparation: work closely with Marriage Preparation Couples, ask what new parents need.
- ◆ Proposal for ACMO ambassadors in parishes.

Communications:

- ◆ **Could we re-translate 'Equipes Notre Dame'? Or add a clear tag line? 'A Movement for Christian Married Couples- Equipes Notre Dame'
- ◆ Improve coordination of resources.
- ◆ New short flyer needed.
- ◆ Use media more.
- ◆ Promotion in parish bulletins and social media.



- ◆ Inclusion in Catholic digital publications.
- ◆ Promote benefits of Teams using case studies and stories.

Online Teams

- ◆ Capture what worked on Zoom and what didn't.
- ◆ Provide Taster Sessions on Zoom.
- ◆ Potential of the digital world.
- ◆ Use of Zoom for formation of new Teams & ongoing meetings: Start Teams online initially if needed- could be for formation of local Teams or geographically dispersed ones.
- ◆ Potential for increased international interaction.
- ◆ The synodal route.
- ◆ Use Deanery meetings as opportunities if possible.
- ◆ Consider what our priests need.
- ◆ Teams as a solution for priests- Educating priests- Seminary formation- Taster Meetings-
- ◆ Target communication with bishops and seminarians (following them through to their dioceses?)
- ◆ Understanding priests' responses.
- ◆ Focus on encouraging priests/ getting clergy onside- they can spot likely couples and encourage them.
- ◆ Include more deacons.
- ◆ Can we use Deaneries structures for communication?
- ◆ Priests/ spiritual advisors could support by contacting other priests/religious.
- ◆ Potential of MFL co-coordinators to promote Teams and identify potential parishes.
- ◆ Establish links with Diocesan Communications Officers.
- ◆ Our graces, gifts & talents!

There is much food for thought. Please discuss in your July Team meeting and feedback some key points to your regional couple.

A thought.... When doing an assessment for the CAFOD 'Live Simply' schools award recently the headteacher started by saying that the school was "out, loud and proud about being Catholic." It was clear that the living faith of teachers and pupils inspired social and environmental action which spoke volumes both in the school and local community. Are there things we can learn from this in Teams? Dympna Edwards.

Thanks from Malawi



Times 360 Malawi

1m · 🌐

#Times360News

Some community members in the area of Traditional Authority Ganya in Ntcheu have stressed on the need for government to put in place measures that can help in reaching out to all survivors of disasters with relief items.

Village Headman Zalengera 1 of the area said for example, at least 20 households that were hit by Cyclone Freedy in his area have not received any relief items from government since the disaster happened early this year.

Zalengera 1 said currently, the affected households are facing food and shelter challenges since their houses, food, livestock and crops were destroyed by the disaster.

He said this today while commending Teams of Our Lady Malawi and Zambia(Malaza) Pre Region(a family movement in the Catholic Church) in conjunction with Dedza Sector for donating assorted items including cooking oil, sugar, salt and soap to some survivors of Cyclone Freedy in the area.

Teams of Our Lady Malaza Pre Region Treasurer Couple Horace Tamanda Kasudze said they will continue lobbying their partners in an effort to reach out to many survivors.

According to Kasudze, the movement has set aside K2.5 million it received from it's partners in Great Britain and Ireland to support survivors of Cyclone Freedy and heavy rains in Ntcheu, Zomba, Blantyre, Mangochi and Mzuzu.

Reported by Pemphero Malimba

Teams couples from across Britain and Ireland donated £2,800 to Teams couples in Malawi who were affected by Cyclone Freddy earlier this year.

Thank you for your generosity- it has made a difference.





"In difficult times, I will hold you. In the good times, I will celebrate with you. In uncertain times, I will pray with you. In all times, now and forever, I will be by your side through it all...no matter what!"

From "Vow: Secrets to a Stronger Marriage"

By: Dave Willis

July Team meeting

Matthew 11:25-30

You have hidden these things from the wise and revealed them to little children

Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

Psalm 144(145):1-2,8-11,13b-14

I will bless your name for ever, O God my King.

I will give you glory, O God my king,
I will bless your name for ever.
I will bless you day after day
and praise your name for ever.

The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures.

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

The Lord is faithful in all his words
and loving in all his deeds.
The Lord supports all who fall
and raises all who are bowed down.

Concluding Prayer: Lord, we praise you showing us the way to God. When we are weary you give us rest and strength to take us through whatever we face. May we never lose hope. Amen.

July Reflection

It is a real pleasure to hear other priests preach and so I own up to you what I share I first experienced when Fr Douglas Morris of Southwick preached and I was present. Sadly Douglas died a few years ago.

He held a beautiful flower in his hand and started to remove the petals one by one and telling us what they where, then he said that with them removed we could see the anther and filament (the male parts) which he then removed to show us the stigma style and lastly the ovary (the female parts) which he also removed leaving him holding a stem. While he was doing all this the congregation could physically be heard taking an intake of breath and getting angry as this thing of beauty was reduced to something to be thrown away.

'I thank you father for revealing these things to mere children.' Children can just appreciating the things around them, they are filled with joy and excitement at what they encounter. They don't need to understand it they just want to enjoy it. Jesus is talking about faith in today's Gospel, but it could be about so many things including relationships. Sometimes we don't know why they work, and being learned and clever does not help. We just need to appreciate them, and allow the love that is within them raise our hearts and spirits.

Fr Graeme Dunne



August Team Meeting

Matthew 14:22-33 Jesus walks on the water

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he would send the crowds away. After sending the crowds away he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, while the boat, by now far out on the lake, was battling with a heavy sea, for there was a head-wind. In the fourth watch of the night he went towards them, walking on the lake, and when the disciples saw him walking on the lake they were terrified. 'It is a ghost' they said, and cried out in fear. But at once Jesus called out to them, saying, 'Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid.' It was Peter who answered. 'Lord,' he said 'if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water.' 'Come' said Jesus. Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus across the water, but as soon as he felt the force of the wind, he took fright and began to sink. 'Lord! Save me!' he cried. Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. 'Man of little faith,' he said 'why did you doubt?' And as they got into the boat the wind dropped. The men in the boat bowed down before him and said, 'Truly, you are the Son of God.'

Psalm 84(85):9-14

Let us see, O Lord, your mercy, and give us your saving help.

I will hear what the Lord God has to say,
a voice that speaks of peace.

His help is near for those who fear him
and his glory will dwell in our land.

Mercy and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have embraced.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth
and justice look down from heaven.

The Lord will make us prosper
and our earth shall yield its fruit.
Justice shall march before him
and peace shall follow his steps.

Concluding prayer

Lord, there are many times when we are afraid, are anxious or have doubts. In those time may we take comforts from remembering that you are Lord of all our world and of our hearts. Amen.

August Reflection

Walking On The Water (Or Not)



Three of the four Gospels have the story of Jesus walking on the water. Interestingly, Luke leaves it out. Perhaps this one was, in his estimation, a bridge too far for “the most excellent Theophilus” to whom the evangelist dedicated his Gospel. Matthew, in contrast, seems to delight in the miraculous element, adding to Mark’s account the detail about Peter being invited to leave the boat and walk on the water with his Lord. Peter duly goes for a walk and sinks like a stone. It’s not that Matthew has it in for Peter. After all, he’s the only evangelist to report Jesus’ fulsome response to the apostle’s confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi, declaring him to be the rock on which he will build his church (Mt 16.17-19). But Peter takes an early bath in order to teach Matthew’s community a lesson.

Most of us probably share something of Luke’s unease. Walking on the water doesn’t compute, doesn’t fit with our scientific worldview and presuppositions. That sort of thing just can’t happen, even to Messiahs ... can it? Ironically, we process far more easily Matthew’s extension of the story – bracketing it as clearly allegorical or symbolic in some way. Perhaps Matthew’s point is something like this: that faith, ultimately, is more about acknowledging our incapacity (“Lord, save me!”) than about confidence in our own abilities. There but for the grace of God go any of us, sinking in the face of life’s storms.

The walking on the water comes straight after the feeding of the 5,000 in Matthew, Mark and John alike. But only the Fourth Gospel suggests a reason why the disciples got into the boat without Jesus: he realised that the people were about to come and make him king and so fled back up the mountain. Perhaps his disciples couldn’t be trusted either.

What sort of Messiah is it that we follow? One we scarcely understand, it seems; one who refuses to be the all-conquering hero of our dreams yet comes through the mist and darkness to journey with us, facing the headwinds of life and leading us to safe havens. What all three Gospel accounts have in common is Jesus’ greeting: “It is I! Do not be afraid!” Matthew adds the hand that reaches out to grasp Peter, a hand that the apostle welcomes gratefully. Will we respond in the same way?

Fr Rob Esdaile, parish priest of Woking & Knaphill Catholic parishes

September Team Meeting

Matthew 18:21-35 To be forgiven, you must forgive

Peter went up to Jesus and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times. 'And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants. When the reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; but he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet. "Give me time" he said "and I will pay the whole sum." And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go and cancelled the debt. The king said, you are bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you.

Psalm 102(103):1-4,9-12

The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord
all my being, bless his holy name.
My soul, give thanks to the Lord
and never forget all his blessings.

It is he who forgives all your guilt,
who heals every one of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grave,
who crowns you with love and compassion.

His wrath will come to an end;
he will not be angry for ever.
He does not treat us according to our sins
nor repay us according to our faults.

For as the heavens are high above the earth
so strong is his love for those who fear him.
As far as the east is from the west
so far does he remove our sins.

Concluding Prayer

Lord, thank you for forgiving us again and again for the times when we fail to respond to your love. Let us remember your patience when we need to forgive others. Amen.

September reflection

It is a human characteristic to see limits to generosity because we are ourselves finite beings. For that reason, Peter finds it difficult to comprehend the scope of God's mercy. This is especially so since Peter assumes that mercy and forgiveness have in some way to be earned. What is incomprehensible is the sheer gratuitousness of divine mercy and forgiveness. In the abbreviated form of the parable in the extract, we note that the debt of the servant, who had no means of paying, was fully cancelled. The ten thousand talents mentioned by Matthew was a sum that exceeded the national income of medium-sized states and therefore totally beyond the resources of any individual.

This generosity is echoed in the psalm where we read that God "crowns you with love and compassion". This generosity is more than what is shown in giving money to a beggar on the street because the word "compassion" is meant to communicate that God, like Jesus, enters into our very lives and shares our own sufferings through his being able to empathise with us.

In our relationship within our families, we are called to recognise that we are in different ways indebted to each other and that our ability to forgive is based on our realisation that we are, ourselves, in need of the forgiveness of others. The ability to say "Sorry" unconditionally can often defuse tense situations and provided the opportunity for a rebuilding or resetting of relationships. Forgiveness and reconciliation are at the heart of Christian living and its source is the supreme generosity of Jesus's act of self-giving on the cross, which is the true cost of our reconciliation with the Father – a cost that we can never hope to repay.

Forgiveness is the best form of love. It takes a strong person to say sorry and an even stronger person to forgive.

Fr Bill Muir

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Last notes...

The Magnificat (Lk 1: 46-56)

**My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
and my spirit exults in God my Saviour,
because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid.**

**Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed,
for the almighty has done great things for me.**

**Holy is His name,
and His mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear Him.**

He has shown the power of His arm.

He has routed the proud of heart.

**He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly.
The hungry He has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away.**

**He has come to the help of Israel His servant, mindful of His mercy
According to the promise He made to our ancestors
of His mercy to Abraham and to his descendants forever.**

Our Lady of the Home, pray for us.

**Teams International
Gathering-15-20 July
2024**



**Book before
1st July to
guarantee
your place.**

*I was standing in front of
the bathroom mirror one
evening admiring my re-
flection, when I posed this
question to my wife of 30 years:*



*“Will you still love me when I’m
old, fat, and bald?”*

She answered, “I do.”

Equipes Notre Dame, Teams, is an international
Christian movement for married couples of all ages.
Charity Reg No: 1044902

