

# **TEAMS GB NEWSLETTER**

**January – March 2026**



**Equipes Notre Dame  
TEAMS**

# Contents

Notes from the editors	1
Letter from the Super Region	3
GB Province report	6
Teams Financial Contributions– standing orders & gift aid	7
Solent Birthday Celebration	7
North West Birthday Celebration	8
Arundel & Brighton day of renewal	9
Greenford 2 Commitment service	10
National Jubilee Pilgrimage of Hope	12
Greenford 1 walk the Westminster Way	14
Ethics Unplugged seminars	16
The Hour for Love	18
Seminarians learn about Teams	20
Bishop Hudson praises Teams	21
January Team Meeting & reflection	22
February Team Meeting & reflection	24
March Team Meeting & reflection	26
Teams Directory	28
Last Notes	30

## Changed Address?

Contact your **Regional couple** for any change of postal address or any change in the number of newsletters your Team needs. Contact details in the directory towards the end of the newsletter.

## Tell us your Team News

Send us some photos and a few lines for the next newsletter by

**28 February Email** to: [editors@teams.gb.org.uk](mailto:editors@teams.gb.org.uk) or

**what's app** to 07722 014530.

**Cover Photo:** Brinscall Moor, Lancashire.

# Notes from the Editors

## Dear Friends in Teams

We hope that this newsletter finds you well. Over the past few months we have visited Sicily and had the pleasure of experiencing the many years of history and culture there. We couldn't resist getting this photo taken of us as three wise monkeys in the ruins of a Greek Temple.



As we write and edit we are in the midst of Advent and Christmas preparations and wish you all a very happy and holy Christmas. Our home town, Formby is full of the joy of Christmas with 40+ businesses displaying the story of the first Christmas compiled by children and adults from various community groups.



We are preparing for our annual outdoor Village Nativity which is also on tour in 7 local primary schools. With Christmas fairs, carol singing, choir concerts, pantomimes, get togethers with friends, then throw in having a new kitchen and flooring fitted this week and recovering from a recent foot operation (Dymphna) you get a feel for the level of chaos in our household at the moment. It will all culminate with mass on Christmas eve and Christmas day lunch for 35 local residents who are on their own. So apologies for any errors that we have missed this time.

We wish you every joy in 2026 and hope that it is a good year for you, your family and Team. In this, the first 2026 newsletter we have a letter from our outgoing superregional Couple, Paul and Annette O'Beirne. We are amazed at all of their activities (it makes us exhausted just reading about it) and grateful to them both for their work and commitment to Teams.

We've been pleased to include reports from Teams gatherings for Our Lady's birthday celebrations. This means that the newsletter may reach you a little later than usual but hopefully will be more up to date and topical. We also have reports



on the Greenford Teams' events and Arundel and Brighton day of renewal. Do send us a picture and couple of lines on any team events that you take part in.

2025 was the Jubilee Year of Hope and we have three articles on how local teams members have become involved. Finally and not least we have our monthly readings and thoughtful reflections. Thank you to all the people who have taken the time, energy and effort to contribute to the Newsletter.

We wish you every blessing for the new year.

**Dympna & Mark Edwards, Newsletter Editors.**

## News From Super Region

**Dear friends in Teams,**

What have the Transatlantic Super Regional Couple been doing since July 2025?

**ERI-Teams International College 21-26 July in Lyon France**

The ERI and Super regional and regional couples from around the world met in Valpre, Lyon, France. The incoming Transatlantic Super regional couple from January 2026, Brendan and Rosemarie Gavin attended with us and we were able to introduce them to the Regional couples from around the world. We were able to go with them to Taize the day before College started which was a wonderful experience

The theme of the College was "Today I must stay at your house" and the sub themes were personal prayer and Fr Caffarel.



Each day at the College we started with a time of reflection followed by silence in the way of Interior prayer of Fr Caffarel and ended with Mass. We had workshops which focussed on the rubrics and key building blocks of Teams and talks each day.

On Wednesday we were taken a short distance away to the village of Ars where we visited the church and home of the Cure of Ars, St John Vianney. We went to Mass and confession there. There we had a prayer session led by Elizabeth Saleon Terras who led on interior prayer at the International Gathering in 2024 in Turin.

ERI leading Couple, Mercedes and Alberto gave a talk entitled “God said, Christian couple you are my pride and my hope” where they reflected on words of Father Caffarel!

It was a time of prayer, learning and reflection, meeting of old and new friends, Hellos and Goodbyes. The handover ceremony was very poignant.



**GB-** September/October we attended 4 online training sessions with the US region Training for Responsible Couple / Sector couple /Piloting / Liaison Couple. We are preparing materials for a suite of promotional and piloting training.

21 September we attended the Commissioning of the new Greenford Team in London. The new Greenford team were commissioned during the 2pm Mass and there was a reception afterwards for all married couples in the parish. As a result of their efforts, 3 new couples enquired about joining Teams. We look forward to the piloting of new teams there.

On 23 September we met with the new Sector couple for Surrey on Zoom and have supported them with resources for a Teams stall at a Charis event.

30 September we met with the ACMO in London to discuss the next steps with Bishop Bosco McDonald, the Bishop with responsibility for Marriage and Family Life.

25 October we attended the Dublin responsible couples Gathering at the Avila centre. Mercedes and Alberto the leading ERI couple came from Valencia to witness the handing over of responsibility for the Irish Region of Brendan and Rosemarie Gavin to Mark and Anne O’Leary and Fr Richard Sheehy taking on the role of Spiritual Advisor for the Transatlantic Superregion.



It was a wonderful weekend of fellowship and sharing and we were delighted to meet two of the young couples in the new Belfast team.



We will be attending the MFL conference in Hinsley Hall in November 25-27 where the focus is on Marriage in different cultures within the UK.

November 8<sup>th</sup> We had a GB Province meeting on Zoom where we discussed the website and training for piloting and planning for a Gathering in 2027.

December 6-8<sup>th</sup> Many teams will be hosting events to celebrate the Charter of Teams and the Immaculate Conception, the birthday of Teams. In our area Teams will host an Advent meditation open to all in the pastoral area and streamed online .

We continue to pilot and support the new Team in Aberdeen. It is wonderful to join their meetings albeit on Zoom but it was even better to join them face to face for their June meeting. We hope to attend their new team commissioning service in 2026.

We have supported couples with planning the information evenings being held in Poole and in Bromley and in Solent Sector in Gosport.



We have agreed to lead a Valentines retreat on February 14th in Bromley as a way of supporting marriage and a way of informing about Teams. The parish priest is supportive of the initiative and a couple have agreed to be involved in piloting.

We finish our time of service at the end of December and hand the Superregion over to Brendan and Rosemarie. We thank you all for your support and encouragement for the role and look forward to seeing you in 2027 at the GB gathering.

We wish you a Happy Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

**Paul and Annette O'Beirne, Super Regional Couple**

# GB province report

At its most recent meeting in November 2025, the Teams GB Province Team, wishing to communicate more clearly and effectively with Members, decided it should report regularly—at least annually—in this newsletter about its priorities, and activities, and plans. This is our first effort which, with your feedback, we will refine going forward.

## Who are the Teams GB Province Team?

The **Teams GB Province Team** comprises the GB Treasurer Couple and Regional Couples for each of the three GB Teams Regions, who collectively are the organisation's registered trustees, plus other invited couples (e.g., Trans-Atlantic Super-Regional Couple, Rosemarie and Brendan Gavin). As a Team, they exercise legal trusteeship for the Teams GB charitable trust, and bear the burden of stewarding the Teams Movement in Great Britain to its fullest contribution to spreading Christ's love and gospel, especially in the lives of married couples and their families.

Dominique and Chris Thompson (*GB Province Treasurers*)

Joanne and David Harries (*Northern Region*)

Janet and Paul DeBoo (*Central Region*)

Annette and Paul O'Beirne (*Acting for Southern Region*)

Rosemarie and Brendan Gavin (*Trans-Atlantic Super-Region*)

## What are our priorities?

As COVID lockdown began to relax in 2022, the Province Team met in-person—for the first time since the 2019 Teams GB 60th anniversary—to plan the Movement's post-COVID re-animation and future growth with a kickstart at the April 2023 GB Province Gathering at Swanwick.

Two particular considerations, crucial to the Movement's future, were on our minds then, and continue driving the Province Team's agenda:

- Expansion (recruiting new Members and forming new Teams)
- Recruiting and forming couples for service in the GB Movement



**National Marriage Week** runs from 07 to 14 February 2026. Begin planning your Regional, Sector, Team, and local parish events helped by resources from the Catholic Bishops' (England and Wales) website:

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/marriage-and-family-life/>



## Tackling Expansion

For many years, expansion was largely, if not wholly, delegated to local Sectors and Teams. Local efforts remain critical, but because securing the Movement's future requires relentless and coordinated expansion focus, the Province Team has, since 2022, become altogether more strategic about it.

Geography, and the geographic spread of our Teams, are pivotal in our membership and organisational models: in this past autumn's Province survey of Team practices, 89% of responding Teams said they still prefer meeting face-to-face, physically; that is, not remotely via Zoom or similar. This requires geographic proximity. Organic emergence of Teams is to a degree inevitable, and we will never spurn interest in forming a Team wherever it arises, but the whole Movement is significantly strengthened and more viable when Teams are clustered. The Province Team has to stimulate and work with local Teams to bridge gaps between individual Teams and clusters.

The Province Team is working to build our Movement's social media footprint and appeal, a task of massive dimensions and implications; you have probably noticed one aspect of this, reshaping our Teams GB website ([TeamsGB.org.uk](https://TeamsGB.org.uk)). Strong social media presence helps us reach out to Christian couples outside the Catholic tradition who also need the accompaniment we offer.

At the start of 2020, just before COVID, there were 104 GB Teams; at the start of 2024, there were 78. Many factors underlie this. The good news is that since 2023, new Teams have formed in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Nottingham, Cambridge, Greenford, and Chichester, and other Teams have attracted new couples to bolster their membership. Seeing these fruits helps embolden us to believe that our Lord will support the spread of Teams as a means for couples to encounter Him.

## Tackling Formation for Service

**Teams of Our Lady is all about formation.** Our goal is, as couples, in the support of our Teams, **to encounter Christ**; **formation** is our **means**: through our Endeavours, Study Topics, accompaniment, Gatherings, and events. Mostly we pursue **faith formation**, but the continued life of our Movement also depends on a variety of other formation:

- **Responsible Couple / Team Formation** to keep faithful to Teams methods
- **Piloting Couple Formation** so we can help new Teams get started
- **Formation for other service** to Teams GB (e.g., expansion and information events, etc.)

The Province Team is looking to run formation events in 2026 and 2027, and needs couples to step forward to help animate these events.



## Teams Contributions– Standing orders and Gift Aid

Thank you so much for your annual contribution to the work of Teams of Our Lady. Information on how to set up a standing order and to gift aid your contribution are available on the Teams GB website. Just scan the QR Code or visit  
<https://teamsgb.org.uk/members/contributions>



## Solent Birthday Celebrations

Each year, Teams in the Surrey and Sussex sector celebrate Our Lady's birthday (8th December). After the Saturday Mass at St Pius Church in Guildford we gathered in the church hall to remember our Blessed Virgin Mary with shared food, a variety of drinks and good conversation.

It was also an opportunity to promote Teams of Our Lady within the parish of Guildford and children's activities were provided such as making Christmas cards in order to encourage attendance at the event.

### Andy and Theresa Fogell, Sector Couple



# North West Birthday Celebrations

Our North West Sector Teams of Our Lady birthday Mass was celebrated at St John the Evangelist Church in Bebington, Wirral, where we were warmly welcomed by Fr Mario, the parish priest and spiritual counsellor for Wirral 1. The celebration left us renewed in spirit and looking forward to the graces and opportunities the coming year will bring for all our Teams.

**Carol & Mark Francis,  
Sector Couple**

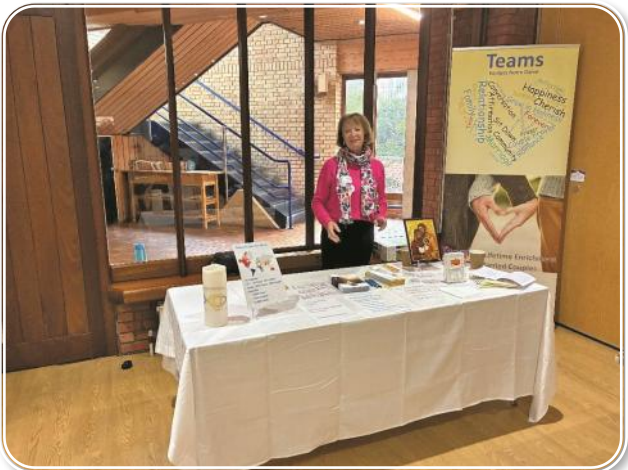


**How do you remember  
your wedding anniversary?  
Forget it once and see  
what happens!**



## **Arundel & Brighton Day of Renewal**

This day of Fellowship and Worship on Saturday 15th November at St Joseph's Church Guildford was an opportunity for the different groups in the Diocese to advertise their activities to those attending. The photo shows the stall set up by Theresa and



Andy Fogell, the local area Sector Couple, to promote Teams of Our Lady by speaking about the benefits for married couples of meeting regularly for prayer, scripture readings, discussion and sharing.

**Andy and Theresa Forgell, Sector Couple**



## Greenford 2 Commitment

Greenford 2 Team, the newest Team in the GB Central Region, made their Team Commitment at the 14:00 Parish Mass offered by Father Liam O'Donovan at Our Lady of the Visitation Church in Greenford on Sunday, 21 September.

In his homily, Father Liam observed a pattern that couples who join a Team often begin to contribute significantly to parish life in other ways. How we wish that every priest in the country could hear and come to acknowledge the same!



We think it's probably true that many couples who seek to belong to a Team will

be the sort of couples who feel compelled anyway to serve their parishes in a variety of ways, but we have certainly seen cases where joining a Team is the trigger, leading in time to other kinds of service.





It was a lovely gathering—our first opportunity to meet Katherine and Valiton, Kim Elaine and Daniel, Luisa and Emmett, and Chantala and Darren, and their children—and to rub shoulders again with old friends from Greenford and Ealing-based Teams, and from further afield. And there was no shortage of snacks and treats!

Congratulations to Katherine and Valiton, Kim Elaine and Daniel, Luisa and Emmett, and Chantala and Darren, and to Piotr and Dzidzia who piloted them! We look forward to seeing you at the Teams Birthday Celebration on Sunday, 14 December!

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



# National Jubilee Pilgrimage of Hope



Beginning in the latter half of August, and continuing until 13 September, 20 pilgrims in four separate groups started walking from Cardiff, Leeds, Norwich, and London, respectively, heading toward Nottingham. This was the **National Jubilee Pilgrimage of Hope**, brainchild of Phil McCarthy and the “**Hearts in Search of God**” Project for the Jubilee Year. By the time they met, they had collectively walked 641 miles, climbed 21257 feet, and were accompanied at points by 250 day-pilgrims, including Bishop Patrick McKinney for the final stage to his own St. Barnabas’ Cathedral, where an Apostolic Blessing from Pope Leo XIV greeted them. In their course, they had traced a rough cross over the face of England and Wales.

The southernmost leg of the enterprise, the St. John’s Way, launched from St. George’s Cathedral in London and arrived at our home parish of the Cathedral of Our Lady Immaculate and St. Thomas of Canterbury in Northampton for the

last Mass of Sunday, 7 September. There were seven pilgrims in the group, and Paul and our daughter Frances joined them for that day’s walk from Newport Pagnell to Northampton. After Mass, families in the town hosted members of the group for dinner at their homes.



Perpetual Pilgrims (mostly in green T-shirts) and Day Pilgrims on 7 September.

The pilgrims had planned a rest day at Northampton for Monday, before heading onward Tuesday for Market Harborough and points beyond. Most had booked town centre hotel accommodation, but two who hadn’t done this stayed with us. A particular rest break objective of the pilgrims was to launder their clothes, a weight duly lifted by their Sunday dinner hosts before depositing them at their evening lodging, peaceful at heart if damp of garb. Paul met a few of the group for coffee in the town centre on Monday morning; we both joined the entire group Monday evening at Sorrentino’s Restaurant for a bon voyage repast. And that, so we thought, was that.

Amid heavy rainfall late on Wednesday afternoon, Paul took a phone call at home from the parish office. A cyclist had arrived unannounced purportedly pursuing the earlier pilgrims, and hoping to pitch a tent overnight in the Cathedral grounds.



Having served him a cup of tea, they phoned to ask what we knew. Paul spoke to Eoin and coaxed enough names and destinations from him to ask the Cathedral team to send him pedalling in our direction. His stay that night with us was certainly the most heartwarming, and possibly most memorable, part of our entire Jubilee Pilgrimage experience.

The National Jubilee Pilgrimage was a work of hope, principally of toil and prayer, and consequently inestimable blessing, on the part of all the pilgrims, all of whom have now returned to their homes. But it was also importantly supported by acts of charity and hospitality from groups and individuals at points all along the four arms of a cross who paused in greeting or opened their churches, parish rooms, community centres, and homes to offer hot and cold drinks, sandwiches, spreading places for sleeping bags, a welcome bed, a parking place for a bicycle. Those people remain in their places, and had one the right sort of spectacles for gazing from space onto the face of England and Wales, one might see a lingering hopeful glow in the rough form of a cross from hearts somewhat enlarged and kindled by having once offered kindness to pilgrims, and so having disposed themselves, at a future need, to offer more, or maybe greater, kindness. That, too, is a legacy of hope.

Read more about the Pilgrimage at:

<https://www.pilgrimways.org.uk/national-jubilee-pilgrimage-of-hope>

**Janet and Paul DeBoo, Northampton St. Thomas Team**



The National Jubilee Pilgrims flanking Bishop Patrick McKinney at St. Barnabas' Cathedral in Nottingham on 13 September 2025. Photo courtesy of [www.pilgrimways.org.uk](http://www.pilgrimways.org.uk).

## Greenford 1 walk The Westminster Way



When Pope Francis proclaimed this Jubilee Year to be that of “Pilgrims of Hope”, our team (Greenford 1) agreed that our annual retreat would be mobile... and we would walk the Westminster Way. This is a short 4-mile pilgrimage connecting the church of English Martyrs near the Tower of London to the Cathedral of Westminster, meandering through Whitechapel, Barbican, Holborn, Covent Garden and finally Westminster.

Each halt on the way invites us to meditate on an expression of Sainthood:

- \* Unsurprisingly, the **martyr** at the church of English Martyrs, Tower Hill;
- \* The **missionary** at St Mary’s Moorfields;
- \* The **servant** at the Charterhouse Monastery;
- \* The **scholar** at St Etheldreda’s, Ely Place; and
- \* The **prophet** at Corpus Christi, Maiden Lane;

and each couple took a lead in studying and introducing one of the churches.

Although our team was sadly deprived of Jerry and Terry Wierzan due to sickness, we were bolstered by our liaison couple Dzia and Piotr (Ealing 46) and even Chantala and her two youngest children as ambassadors of the brand new Greenford 2 team.



Departure prayer at Church of English Martyrs

Father Liam Donovan celebrated our send-off mass at the Church of English Martyrs before we set off in the autumnal sunshine towards St Mary’s Moorfields, known as “the City parish” numbering Saints Thomas Beckett, Thomas Moore and John Henry Newman amongst its parishioners!

Charterhouse Monastery, Clerkenwell was our next stop, the largest Carthusian monastery in the world in its heyday, sadly brutally dissolved in 1537. After visiting its chapel and museum, we shared a cheerful picnic in its courtyard (see team photo);



Team Lunch at Charterhouse Courtyard

Our next stop was St Etheldreda's, for many of us the revelation of the pilgrimage: a beautiful and deeply prayerful little church dating back to the reign of Edward I in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It is one of the oldest Catholic churches in the country, but also boasts a stunning modern stained glass of Christ in majesty (Photo 2).

A brisk walk through Holborn

and Covent Garden then took us to Corpus Christi, the Diocesan shrine of the Blessed Sacrament, whose quiet atmosphere offers a striking contrast with the bustle of the surrounding streets. And a final stretch through Horse Guards led us back to the familiar majesty of Westminster Cathedral, currently hosting an inspiring exhibition on Saint Carlo Acutis.

However brief, this day on the Westminster Way nonetheless gifted us everything that we have witnessed on much longer pilgrimages: moments of prayerfulness, of deep spiritual emotion, of insight into the historical wealth of the Catholic faith, of solidarity and companionship. We were left enriched and nourished, and warmly encourage other teams to share in such an experience.

## Mathieu and Valerie Rossano

You may also find these links useful:

*For the Pilgrim's Passport*

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XbdWoS1SE5gRNPdJkSmrk2zQ3YOBHFH/view>

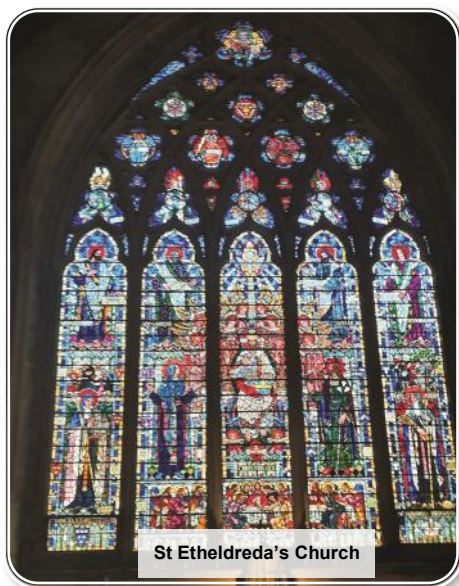
*For the Westminster Way Leader's Guide*

<https://rcdow.org.uk/att/files/jubilee%202025/jubilee%202025%20westminster%20way%20leader%27s%20guide.pdf>

*For the Jubilee Indulgences*

At two of the churches on our route, Corpus Christi, and Westminster Cathedral, pilgrims will be able to obtain the Jubilee Indulgence.

<https://rcdow.org.uk/jubilee-2025/the-jubilee-indulgence-step-by-step/>



St Etheldreda's Church



# Ethics Unplugged in Nottingham



From September through November, Northampton Diocese ran a four-part Jubilee-inspired seminar series spotlighting key contemporary social concerns, and some of the principles from Catholic belief that can guide how we respond to them. These Zoom-powered “Ethics Unplugged” sessions led by domain experts offered some rare and measured reflection such as usually gets smothered by agenda-driven, hollowed-out media sound bites. The four topics were:

- \* Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery, presented by Miriam Cakebread, the Policy and Network Officer of Santa Marta Group
- \* Gender Identification, presented by Dr. Julia Sadusky, a Denver - based Catholic licensed psychologist specialising in trauma-informed care who is a noted educator, author, and speaker on sexuality and gender identity
- \* Artificial Intelligence, presented by Adrian Cottrell-Boyce of the London Jesuit Centre
- \* Ageing, Life, and Death, presented by Dr. David Jones of St. Mary’s University in Twickenham, who was also Director of the Anscombe Bioethics Centre, which made key contributions from a Catholic perspective to the parliamentary considerations about legalising assisted suicide in this country

Each topic marks, to some extent, a contentious battleground of influences for our lives and future society. Nor do they exhaust the candidate subjects, given fake news, climate change, cybersecurity, genetic modification, and other developments where wisdom feels wanting, exploitative interests press for advantage, humanity appears at war with itself, and our future hopes lean heavily on God’s good guidance. Their intersecting thread is the individual dignity of each human person, impossible to overstate, that is the unique core of Christian gospel.

Miriam Cakebread’s awareness-raising session highlighted manifold guises under which Human Trafficking, brazenly scorning human dignity, operates and seeks to pass unnoticed within our own neighbourhoods.

The session on Gender Identification

seemed to strike particular chords. Dr. Sadusky laid her foundation with a challenge to recognise which of three typical filters, each a partial truth,



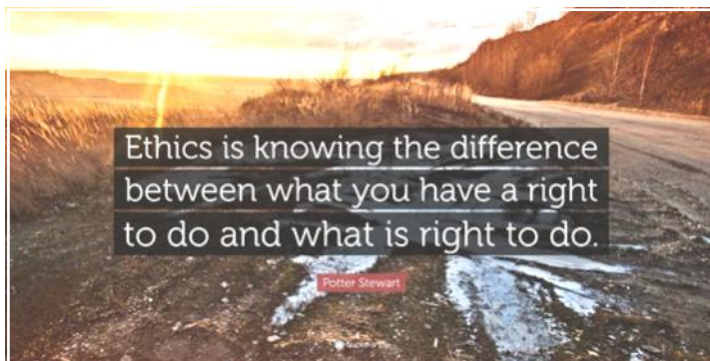
usually colours our thinking on gender divergence: as a sin to be rejected; as a sickness to be pitied; as a difference to be celebrated. After navigating confusing vocabulary with which people frequently talk past each other, and heartfelt contributions from participants, the session closed by pre-eminently affirming God's infinite love for every person—the ground of individual dignity.

Artificial Intelligence conversations almost inexorably steer to grappling to define authentic human intelligence itself. Adrian Cottrell-Boyce cantered through key concepts from sacred scripture and classical, ecclesiastical, and contemporary philosophy. He then summarised *Antiqua et Nova* promulgated by the Vatican in January 2025 to address ethical points regarding further development and implementation of artificial intelligence, the key one being that it would be false, hence immoral, to view or deploy, especially in its current state and for some time to come, artificial intelligence - a mere albeit increasingly sophisticated problem solver—as anything other than tool and servant of humanity. Problem solving, though certainly an exquisite capability of human beings, is decidedly not our core purpose. Can an artificial intelligence truly love? Is the heart a function of intelligence, or the other way round?

With charts and statistics, Dr. Jones illustrated improving trends for well-being and life expectancy in senior age brackets in this century, yet overshadowed by dementia fears feeding impressions of old-age dependency and diminishment of identity. He also described how assisted suicide proposals have brought together as allies various traditionally opposed interest groups, either contesting the principle, or dismayed at the poor quality of the legislation under current Parliamentary review.

“Ethics Unplugged” was a rare forum for exploring faith implications of important contemporary issues. There is no shortage of similar issues, only of space and guidance in examining them.

**Janet and Paul DeBoo, Northampton St. Thomas Team**



# The hour for Love

***“This is the Hour for Love” — Pope Leo XIV***

## **The Call to Love in the Vocation of Marriage & Family**

Paul and Annette O’Beirne recently attended the Marriage and Family Life Conference at Hinsley Hall, Leeds, together with members of the Alliance of Catholic Marriage Organisations. The conference was presented by Roger Carr-Jones on behalf of Bishop Bosco MacDonald, Bishop of Clifton and Lead Bishop for Marriage and Family Life for England and Wales. The theme, *“Love in Marriage”*, guided two days of reflection on the Church’s teaching and the importance of supporting married couples today.



### **Exploring “Love in Marriage”**

The conference opened with prayer and the evocative sound of Roberta Flack singing *“The First Time...”*. From there, participants reflected on the beauty and depth of married love, drawing on the Song of Solomon and on the distinct but complementary forms of love—*eros* (romantic love) and *agape* (self-giving love).

We revisited the Church’s teaching that marriage is a lifelong covenant ordered toward the good of the spouses and the gift of life. Its sacramental nature calls couples to mirror God’s faithful love. We also discussed contemporary pressures on relationships, including the influence of social media.

Pope Leo XIV’s recent encouragement for couples to find a personal style of



prayer that suits them offered further inspiration—highlighting marriage as a covenant that strengthens both family and society.

## Key Presentations

**Bishop Bosco MacDonald** delivered a talk entitled *“This is the Hour for Love – Marriage and the Language of the Heart”*. He reflected on the realities facing young couples today, drawing on his pastoral experience preparing couples for marriage, as well as the rich insights of his own large family life.

On the second day, **Fr Matt Blake**, a Carmelite priest from London, led a powerful reflection rooted in 1 John 4:19: *“We love because He first loved us.”* Connecting this with the phrases, “I am a child of God” and “Be who God made you to be,” he reminded us that if *God is love*, then all authentic love flows from God and leads us back to Him.

Further presentations offered insights into African, Indian, and Filipino marriage traditions. A couple from the Philippines introduced the work of “Couples for Christ”, which supports singles, couples, and families in growing their faith and relationships.

## Resources for Marriage Support

The Bishops’ Conference website provides excellent material for parishes and groups, including:

- **The Joy of Love (2022)** – a resource exploring the themes of *Amoris Laetitia*: joy, love, mercy, human realities, discernment, and mission.

**National Marriage Week Novena** – a reflection on the marriage of Mary and Joseph in art and tradition.

Links will be added to the TeamsGB website to help Teams plan for **Marriage Week next February**. It is an ideal moment for parishes to bless engaged couples or celebrate marriage in creative and pastoral ways.

We also commend the **Alpha Marriage Course** as a simple and effective tool to help couples strengthen their relationships.

## A Word to Our Teams

We left the conference encouraged and inspired. We invite you and your Team to reflect together on how you might collaborate with your parish to accompany couples at every stage of married life.

**Annette & Paul O’Beirne**

# Seminarians learn about Teams

## Meeting Seminarians at the Venerable English College

Belonging to Teams brings us exotic opportunities from time to time. In early October, our former Team Chaplain, Canon John Udris, offering a retreat in Rome to seminarians at the Venerable English College, found himself discussing with Father David King, their Director of Pastoral Formation, possible supplements to the students' upcoming marriage topics. They were due to receive input from a couple representing Retrouvaille, the Catholic organisation that helps couples heal their marriages, but seemingly Father David was still scouting for something more. Surmise suggests that their subsequent exchange ran something like, "What about Teams of Our Lady?", followed by, "I know a couple you could speak to..."



The Venerable English College.  
Rome.

The motto of the Venerable English College is "Ignem veni mittere in terram" ("I came to set a fire on the earth", Luke 12:49). Founded in 1579 to train priests for England and Wales, the College solemnly honours 44 illustrious alumni whose ministry ended in martyrdom. Father Stephen Wang, creator of the Sycamore library of resources for Catholic formation, is the current Rector at the VEC.

It rather tickled and thrilled us when Canon John sounded us on our interest and availability. Would it could be an on-site venture! A week later, Father David was in touch, warmly appreciating our willingness to get involved. As much as talking about Teams—more, in fact—he wanted seminarians to hear insights and inside discoveries from our own marriage story of its unexpected dynamics, challenges, rewards, and sources of support; in short, things to inform a priest's pastoral guidance to couples that he might not himself stand a chance intuit.

In the event, we spent two hours via Zoom with 3 seminarians: from the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, the Archdiocese of Birmingham, and the Diocese of Oslo. Taking as our starting point God's radical call and invitation for married couples to a unique oneness in heart and mind surpassing every other familial or social relationship, that they signify with their bodies, that reflects Jesus and his Church, and echoes the Trinity itself, we painted our experience as a journey from different starting points, overcoming step by

step both natural and self-imposed obstacles to shared understanding and common intent. Difference of sex—what it’s like being a woman, or a man—is merely the first, and probably most fundamental, lingering, and unknowable stumbling stone in the whole uneven landscape we navigate toward a meeting of minds. It suddenly became clear as we spoke how crucial skilled, effective communication is as a mainstay of marriage. There’s possibly no better pastoral advice to share with seminarians.

We’ve since got as far as contacting the Regional Couple in Rome to see if “taster” opportunities for VEC seminarians to join meetings with local Teams can become a regular feature of their pastoral formation. The suggestion has been funnelled down to the Sector Couples. Janet and Antony Denman were always keen for exposure to Teams to be somehow orchestrated for seminarians at Oscott and elsewhere, something we should now pursue.

A VEC on-site visit would never have worked. The seminarians were moving on from us to a Brits-only reception with the King, in Rome to meet and pray with Pope Leo XIV. Had we been there, Janet might have been welcomed in, while Paul kicked his heels and toured sites with Andre from the Diocese of Oslo.

**Janet and Paul DeBoo, Northampton St. Thomas Team**

## **Bishop Hudson praises Teams**

**Congratulations to Bishop Nicholas Hudson who has been installed as Bishop of Plymouth recently.**



**Scan the QR code to hear him reflect on his experience of his parents involvement Teams of Our Lady.**

<https://youtu.be/75m9ap4fJHs>





# January Team Meeting

**Reading:** John 1:29-34

'Look: there is the Lamb of God'

Seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This is the one I spoke of when I said: A man is coming after me who ranks before me because he existed before me. I did not know him myself, and yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptising with water.'

John also declared, 'I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven like a dove and resting on him. I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is going to baptise with the Holy Spirit." Yes, I have seen and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God.'

## **Psalm**

Here I am, Lord! I come to do your will.

I waited, I waited for the Lord,  
and he stooped down to me; he heard my cry.  
He put a new song into my mouth, praise of our God.

You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings,  
but an open ear.  
You do not ask for holocaust and victim.  
Instead, here am I.

In the scroll of the book it stands written  
that I should do your will.  
My God, I delight in your law in the depth of my heart.

Your justice I have proclaimed in the great assembly.  
My lips I have not sealed; you know it, O Lord.

## **Concluding prayer**

Dear God, thank you for the gift of your son. Thank you that we can take part in the life he gave us through our baptism. May we grow ever closer to you day by day. Amen.

You are a child of  
God, you are  
wonderfully made,  
dearly loved and  
precious in his  
sight. -Psalm 139



# January Reflection

*For this month we have the account of the Baptism of Jesus to accompany our prayer and reflection. Our own Baptism sacramentally begins our Christian pilgrimage in this world, by which we seek through faith, hope and love to ultimately arrive at seeing the face of God in heaven. Jesus is baptised for us to align his life with ours, just as he will offer his life on a Cross for us to provide us with all that we need to share in his defeat of evil, sin and death. The Church has been given to us so that we can receive this grace and help as we travel through this world.*

*All the sacraments, especially our participation on the Holy Eucharist, help us to live our Christian way of life. The Church invites those members called to marriage and family life to receive the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, to live out this baptismal life with a special grace that shares in the relationship of Jesus, the Bridegroom, with his Church, the Bride. The divine identity of Jesus is revealed at his Baptism, when the Holy Spirit descends like a dove and the Father pronounces: "You are my Beloved Son, my favour rests on you."*



*By Baptism now, each one of us can claim those words for ourselves: "You are my beloved son... my beloved daughter... my beloved child..." In the home, called the 'Domestic Church', God desires that each member is lovingly nurtured and helped to live as a beloved child of God. This puts an awesome responsibility in the hands of parents. In the Baptism ceremony for a child, parents are asked if they 'clearly understand' this calling that they are consenting to. St John tells us in his letters: 'We love because he first loved us.' (1 John 4:19)*

*Spouses and parents are invited to continuously rediscover the everlasting love that God has for them, so that this love can flow through them in their role of being a husband, a wife, a father or a mother.*

*A holy monk once said: Life begins again, every time we remember how much God loves us! Let us pray this month to let God love us and fill us with all the blessings that our Baptism still has to give us, so that we can allow our homes to be already a foretaste of heaven.*

**Fr Martin Plunkett**

# February Team Meeting

**Reading:** Matthew 5:13-16

## **Your light must shine in the sight of all**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by people.

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

## **Psalm 145**

*How happy are the poor in spirit: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

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

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,  
who raises up those who are bowed down,  
the Lord, who protects the stranger  
and upholds the widow and orphan.

It is the Lord who loves the just  
but thwarts the path of the wicked.  
The Lord will reign for ever,  
Zion's God, from age to age.



## **Concluding Prayer**

Lord, thank you for the essence of salt and light that you plant within each one of us. Help us to stay connected to you so that they bear fruit in your service and the service of others. Amen



# February Reflection

## Being Salt

*Have you ever wondered about that 'salt of the earth' saying in the Gospels? We all know the use of the phrase in the English language: 'He is the salt of the earth' roughly translates as 'He's a good bloke' – although it may also imply 'a bit of a rough diamond', or 'somewhat lacking in polish'. One can hardly imagine any member of the royal family, however noble, being so described.*



*But, if you think about it, salt and earth are not a promising combination. Go for a walk by the sea and notice what will or won't grow behind the dunes. I heard tell once of retreating white settlers in Mozambique 'salting the earth' as they abandoned their farms following the collapse of the Portuguese empire – ensuring that the locals would not benefit from their departure.*

*So why would Jesus use the phrase? Imagine yourself in ancient Palestine, an arid country with few trees. Imagine the need for fuel for cooking. What would you use? One possibility is animal droppings, collected by the children (probably the girls) and dried in briquettes, to provide something akin to cut peat. However, apparently nightsoil needs a catalyst before it will ignite successfully – namely, a block of salt placed on the floor of the oven. However, with time this gradually loses its effect, until finally it gets thrown out for 'trampling under foot'. The bit about 'losing its savour' is a misunderstanding: It's not flavour but potency which is at issue.*

*'Salt of the earth' is a very Jesus image: domestic, earthy (literally!), well-observed, witty, arguably slightly impolite. The disciple is someone who can make the (expletive) catch fire! 'You are the light of the world' simply repeats the point: let that fire burn openly, publicly, bringing others warmth and heat.*

*A question for us all, then: do we believe in this alchemy of the excramental? Do we recognise the possibility of such unromantic engagement with reality having a catalytic effect, bringing a change that all can see? It's worth remembering that it's not our fire that we have to stoke, not our light that we have to display. We're just the ones willing to get our hands dirty, so that others may share its warmth. And unless we keep going back to the source of the light, we'll eventually burn out and no longer bring light to anyone.*

**Fr Rob Esdaile**, parish priest of Woking & Knaphill Catholic Community

# March Team meeting

**Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14**

## **Anything exposed by the light will turn into light**

You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth. Try to discover what the Lord wants of you, having nothing to do with the futile works of darkness but exposing them by contrast. The things which are done in secret are things that people are ashamed even to speak of; but anything exposed by the light will be illuminated and anything illuminated turns into light. That is why it is said:

Wake up from your sleep, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

## **Psalm 22(23)**

*The Lord is my shepherd:  
there is nothing I shall want.*

The Lord is my shepherd;  
there is nothing I shall want.  
Fresh and green are the pastures  
where he gives me repose.

Near restful waters he leads me, to revive my drooping spirit.

He guides me along the right path; he is true to his name.  
If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear.  
You are there with your crook and your staff;  
with these you give me comfort.

You have prepared a banquet for me in the sight of my foes.  
My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing.

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life.  
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for ever and ever.

## **Concluding prayer**

Dear God, thank you for your light. May we receive your light and may that light shine in us and through us so we may carry your light to others.

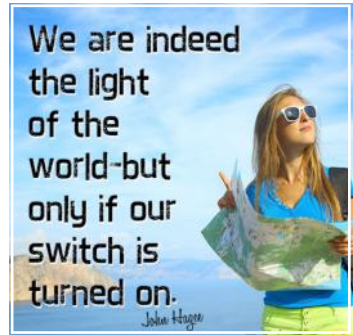
**WHEN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST  
SHINES UPON YOU,  
IT WILL SOON SHINE IN YOU,  
AND THEN IT CAN  
SHINE THROUGH YOU.**

# March Reflection

***You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord” (Eph. 5:8)***

*The liturgical (Church’s) year is filled with seasons of light. And we love to light a few candles when we meet together in our homes and our churches.*

*But INSIDE of us, in our thoughts and emotions, many of us are sometimes tempted to allow difficult circumstances, or the latest political news, or the darker side of the secular world to cast a shadow on our souls, as if there is no light, as if it only shines at Christmas, or on the righteous, or the lucky, or the blessed. But light is a part of life and we are **all** blessed with it. Light finds a way to surround us and shine through us on life’s journey.*



*In February, Candlemas marks the end of the Christmas season, but it does not mark the end of light coming into the world, rather it reminds us that the joy of Christ’s birth is only the **beginning** of the gift we have been given, are given, and will be given. When his parents presented Jesus in the Temple, the prophets Simeon and Anna experienced awe when a child pierced their ordinary vision and revealed the light of God in their midst.*

*The Christian vision nurtures the belief that we are all not only seekers, but bearers of light. Individually and as married couples and families we all carry a spark or an ember of that gift of holiness, that kindles hope and shines in and through us throughout the year to bring hope to others. Lighting our candles reminds us that the light came, the light shines, and it will always shine.*

*So, receive the light from your partner, friends, words and places that encourage you and share what comes to you. That is how the light of God, in whose image we are created, spreads through the universe and transforms the world into a peace-filled place, one glimmer at a time. And, beautifully, light is not diminished by giving it away – giving away light, sharing light, multiplies its power and its effects.*

*Who is it that you know that needs the light of encouragement; the light of a kind word; the light of a helping hand; the light of being accepted for who they are; the light of faith?*

**Deacon Keith Ballard, Formby Team**



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**Vacancies: Southern Region, Wessex Sector, North & Midlands Sectors.**

# Prayer to the Holy Spirit

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

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

*You are for us the Spirit of life, the Spirit of  
creation, the sanctifying Spirit.  
It is You who renew all things.*

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

*So that we may live in the sacrament of marriage  
as a place of love, a path to happiness  
and a way to Holiness.*

*Amen*



## Teams Websites

GB Website: [www.TeamsGB.org.uk](http://www.TeamsGB.org.uk)

Superregional: [www.Teams-transatlantic.org](http://www.Teams-transatlantic.org)

International: [www.Equipes-Notre-Dame.com](http://www.Equipes-Notre-Dame.com)

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[TeamsPrayers@GoogleGroups.com](mailto:TeamsPrayers@GoogleGroups.com)



Equipes Notre Dame  
TEAMS

# 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.**

**Christmas gift ....**

**I asked my wife what she wanted for Christmas. She told me, "nothing would make her happier than a diamond necklace." So, I bought her nothing.**

**New Year thought for those of us who have eaten too much over Christmas!....**

**Brain cells die, skin cells die, even hair cells die.**

**But FAT CELLS must have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour because they seem to have eternal life!**



Equipes Notre Dame

Equipes Notre Dame, Teams, is an international Christian movement for married couples of all ages.  
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