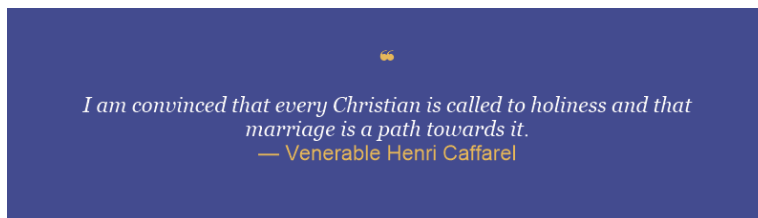


## Teams of Our Lady (Équipes Notre-Dame) is Celebrating

It is with great joy that we announce that Pope Leo XIV has authorised the recognition of the heroic virtues of the founder of Teams of Our Lady, Father Henri Caffarel, who has now been given the title *Venerable*. Teams of Our Lady was put under the patronage of Mary so that we as couples can follow her example of saying 'Yes' at God's invitation. It's a Yes or 'Fiat' that we celebrate this feast of the Annunciation.

Fr Henri Caffarel was a diocesan priest in Paris, ordained in 1930. He invited married couples to "journey together," including himself, so that they might grow in their married spirituality. The movement was recognised as a Catholic association by the Vatican in 1975. Today, around 72,000 couples in 92 countries, supported by 10,000 priests and religious, are striving to grow closer to the Lord and to one another through the Teams way. Fr Caffarel also founded a religious fraternity for widows and died in 1996.



Teams began when four couples whom Fr Caffarel had prepared for marriage returned to him after their weddings. They were puzzled by his encouragement to continue growing their "married spirituality." Together they explored ways to deepen their faith and relationship. The method—small groups, prayer, spiritual endeavours, and fellowship—proved fruitful. At a time when religious belief was often seen as private, even within marriage, Fr Caffarel's vision that Christian couples should support one another in holiness was radical. The purpose and method remain unchanged today: couples strive to grow closer—to Christ and to each other.

### Couples Growing Closer

This year marks the tenth anniversary of *Amoris Laetitia*, and we are mindful of Pope Francis' words: "The joy of love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church." Couples, families with children, and families facing struggles are all encouraged to support one another in faith.

One effective way to do this is by joining a support group for prayer, fellowship, and formation. Équipes Notre-Dame (known in England and Wales as *Teams*) offers precisely this. Across the world, in around 14,000 Teams, couples meet once a month with a Spiritual Counsellor—a priest or religious. Together they share a simple meal, talk about their lives, pray, and support one another in growing in faith and in marriage. It is a safe place to be open and honest. During the month, couples practise simple "holy habits" that help them grow in prayer, love, and understanding of each other.



We have personally found the image of the "cord of three strands" a beautiful model of Christian marriage and helping each other grow closer to Christ has been a real joy. You can watch our short video here:

[https://youtu.be/OK\\_fHwgEV1U](https://youtu.be/OK_fHwgEV1U)

To find out more, please contact us at [Hello@TeamsGB.org.uk](mailto>Hello@TeamsGB.org.uk) or visit [www.TeamsGB.org.uk](http://www.TeamsGB.org.uk).

We will hold an online (Zoom) information meeting during May—couples from anywhere can join. Christian married couples wishing to grow closer to one another and to God are warmly invited to send us a message.

**Annette and Paul O'Beirne** Responsible Couple