

Equipes Notre-Dame

## Newsletter Teams of Our Lady – Irish Region

### Spirit of Teams at Eucharistic Congress



Photo shows John Cogavin conducting an impromptu workshop on teams for those unable to gain entry to the presentation by Pat and Carmel Cunneen.

### From the Regional Couple

Scripture has played a very important role in our journey, as a couple, in Teams. It has guided, consoled, empowered, and nourished us as a couple. Our scripture reading makes our encounter with the Liturgy of the Word at Mass so much richer. ‘The Church has always held the divine scriptures in reverence no less than it accords to the Lord’s Body itself’ (Vatican II’s Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, 21). We see reading Scripture, an endeavour, as integrated with all the other endeavours of Teams, all such endeavours in fact having a scriptural origin. Pope John Paul said ‘Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ’. In Brasilia we found over half of the five days was bound up in scripture. We had the theme of the Good Samaritan, each day for two reflections and we had the same text for our three 2-hour mixed team meetings. The rich sharing among couples is always a fruit of the Holy Spirit and the Word. ‘The word of God is something alive and active’ (Heb 4.12). We cannot be truly ‘alive’ and ‘active’ as couples without being fed by the Word.

Pat and Carmel

## Issue 90

### Autumn 2012

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## To Dare to Live the Gospel (Part One)

Fr. Brian O'Toole Cssp

Chaplain Team 25, Dublin

The hosting of the X1 International Gathering by the **Super Region BRAZIL** was indeed a sign of Teams coming-of-age there. In 1950, the first team was founded in Brazil – the first non-French speaking country for Teams. Today there are 19,404 couples in 3,363 teams throughout the country. This was the first time for an International Gathering to be held outside Europe; in Brasilia, in the heart of Brazil, a country much loved by Father Caffarel.

**Brazil** is a vast vibrant country with a population of over 201 million people. The early explorers brought back a wood that produced a red dye, *pau-brasil*, from which the land received its name. In October 2010, Dilma Rousseff became the country's first woman president. Brazil will host in 2013 the World Youth Gathering, in 2014 the World Cup and in 2016 the Summer Olympics.

The Super Region chose **Brasilia** as the venue of the X1 International Gathering. Brasilia is a megacity of more than 2 million people. Brasilia is a completely planned city built in just three and a half years – due to the vision and determination of President Juscelino Kubitscek. It is only 50 years since its construction with all its architecture acclaiming the 'Brave new world of Brazil'; tree lined boulevards, five lane motorways, all buses with wheelchair access, green areas and Paranoá Lake. It is the seat of federal government and boasts of libraries, universities, parks and museums – more than 20 museums tell the story of Brasilia and Brazil. The city also houses important works of Brazilian artists, such as the gardens of Burle Marx, panels by Athos Bulcão and the mural "Allegory of Brasilia" by Di Cavalcanti. It is home to the presidential palace, the metropolitan cathedral and the apostolic nunciature. This megacity has 12 mega shopping malls; those ubiquitous cathedrals of consumer capitalism.

**The Gathering** brought together more than 4,000 couples and 460 Spiritual Counsellors (SC) from 52 different countries. The smooth running of the Gathering was due to **the superb organization** by the Super Region BRAZIL. It was indeed a mammoth task carried out in a buoyant and fun-loving way by so many volunteers: reception and welcome, safety and stewarding, translation and transportation services, sales and lost & found. For all of the services rendered we say thanks, '*muitos muitos agradecimentos*' to all the 'yellow-vested' ones. The Opening Ceremony, Liturgical Celebrations, conferences and testimonies all took place in the morning time at the *Nilson Nelson Gymnasium*. For lunch and the afternoon 'mixed groups - 'sit-downs' we moved to *Brasilia Expo*, the largest convention centre in the country with a capacity for 60,000 people, located in 'Parque da Cidade D. Sarah Kubitscek'.

The '**integration party**' on the first evening was a rich display of many foods of Brazil; 'arroz' - white rice, 'feijao' – black beans, 'farinha' – like flour, 'manioc' - a root vegetable like a potato. The pièce de résistance is 'Churrasco'- chunks of beef, chicken or sausage cooked on metal skewers over hot coals. For the vegetarian there was plenty of 'polenta' - fried corn mush and 'banana frita' - fried bananas. The favourite desert was 'quejadinhas' - coconut and cheese snacks and all washed down with pineapple-orange drinks.

The **Opening of the Gathering** was presided over by Maria Carla and Carlo Volpini – International Leader Couple (ERI) and by Cida and Raimundo Araújo – Super-Region Brazil Couple. "*A blank page! It was like this, in an unusual, simple and unpretentious manner that a dream was born, grew, took form and – as a result of the enthusiasm, dedication and ability of so many brothers and sisters – became a reality*". *Let us dare to Live the Gospel: I have made an appointment with the sun and I can no longer separate myself from the light, because I have decided to become a flame*" – Cida and Raimundo. "*The Ode to Joy which we just heard, clearly expresses the affinity between personal harmony and the happiness of all.*"

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*The sense of joy that we experienced and will experience during the next few days while we live all together, is for each of us an invaluable incentive on the path of true faith, which is a journey of acceptance, justice, truth, hope and peace for humanity” – Carlo and Maria Carla.*

**The Presentation of all Countries;** where a couple from each country enters with the husband carrying the national flag and the wife a symbol of the country – the Ireland symbol was a reed St. Bridget’s cross. The entry of the couples from Syria and Norway were greeted with huge applause expressing solidarity for the present suffering of the Syrian people and the grieving for the massacred 77 in Norway in July 2011. In the procession, colour and panache were added by many wearing their national dress especially from: India, Malawi, Togo, Mauritius, Lebanon, Austria and Romania. The Bible was carried by the Spiritual Counsellor with the Pope’s message for the Gathering. Then entering from the back of the stadium the model of the gathering Logo, preceded by the statue of Our Lady of Aparecida which were placed on stage and remained there for the duration of the Gathering.

**Our Lady of Aparecida;** the history of “Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception who Appeared” began in 1717. His Holiness Pope Pius XII placed Brazil under the special protection of the Virgin of Aparecida. The Shrine of Aparecida is now part of the Catholic culture of Brazil. This Marian devotion is not only a sign of the Virgin’s “special protection,” but also the call of a mother who asks her children for their freely-given consent, renewed daily. Love and devotion to Mary is a characteristic trait of Brazilian popular piety.

The **Opening Mass** had as principal celebrant *Cardinal Raymundo Damasceno Assis*. “*To dare to live the gospel is the call of the everyday; in difficult times it is the call of conjugal love*”. Over 100 of the participants formed the **Gathering Choir** – by their persistence and dedication we were all familiar over the five days with the Gathering Hymn “We dare to live the gospel, knowing that Christ will be by our side” by Fr. Luiz Turra, OFMcap, in the five languages: Portuguese, French, Spanish, Italian and English

Each day in the **presentation of the different zones:** EurAsia, Central Europe, America, EurAfrica, Satellites, we became aware of our numbers and our diverse origins. We realized how we are bound by a common team spirit, willing to share friendship, life, prayer, the ability to listen. We were able to understand each other despite our linguistic differences. It was an experience so exhilarating; warming our hearts and filling us with energy. During the proceedings whenever any semblance of fatigue wafted over the stadium we were reenergized by the joyous exertions of the Mexican Wave and dance-like stretch breaks led by an aerobics ensemble.

**The Conference** with Françoise and Rémi Gausse – RC of Super Region France-Luxemburg-Switzerland: “*Father Caffarel regarded the gatherings as “an occasion for a pause; a pause to think, to reflect and to discern.” However, it is of fundamental importance – both for the Movement as well as the individual members – to concentrate and foster in certain moments a reflection on their vocation. In each of these gatherings, we make an effort to increase our awareness of the vocation of our Movement and its mission in the Church. It is also an occasion to share our joy of living the Good News of marriage and our missionary role in today’s world. Moreover the topic chosen for this gathering is Dare the Gospel and the theme over these five days will be the parable of the Good Samaritan. Father Caffarel did not want an exclusively individual sanctification of couples. The Teams are for the world. To dare to live of God, the courage to go to Him, this is the challenge of our Christian life*”.

In Part Two of this article some of the insights from the talks by Fr. Timothy Radcliffe OP, as well as some gleanings on ‘mixed-teams’, ‘testimonies of couples’, the ‘Public Act’ demonstrating the centrality of the ‘Sit-Down’ will be presented.

**“Go and do likewise” (Luke 10.37)**

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**PAPAL MESSAGE TO THE 11TH INTERNATIONAL GATHERING OF THE TEAMS OF OUR LADY**

"Be The Smiling and Sweet Face of the Church"

BRASILIA, Brazil, JULY 23, 2012.- Here is a translation of the message that the pope's Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, sent in the name of the Holy Father, Benedict XVI, to the participants of the 11th International Meeting of the Teams of Our Lady, taking place in Brasilia, Brazil, from July 21-26 on the theme: "Dare to live the Gospel."

\* \* \*

Most Reverend Eminence,

Informed of the 11th International Gathering of the Teams of Our Lady, the Supreme Pontiff requested me to send you, through this means, his paternal greeting to the participants and to all the couples of the Movement born of the far-sighted pastoral intuition of the Servant of God Henri Caffarel, priest, whose mission has not seen diminish, with the passing of time, its timeliness and urgency, rather in a certain way it has increased in the light of the problems and difficulties that marriage and the family experience today, surrounded by an atmosphere of growing secularization.

In this context, the couples of the Teams of Our Lady proclaim, not so much with words but above all with their life, the fundamental truths about human love and its most profound meaning: "A man and a woman who love one another, the smile of a child, the peace of a home: here is an exhortation without words, but extraordinarily persuasive, in which every man can already anticipate, as by transparency, the reflection of another love and its infinite appeal" (Paul VI, To the Couples of Our Lady's Teams, May 4, 1970).

Of course this idea might seem too lofty. It is for this reason that the Movement encourages its members to drink constantly from the sources of grace of the sacrament of marriage and of participation in the Sunday Eucharist; so that beyond the resources of the grace of the sacraments, it proposes to them, with great wisdom, a "method rich in commitments and simple and concrete suggestions to live day by day the incarnated spirituality of Christian spouses. Among them, it stresses the "duty to sit down together," that is, the commitment to hold periodically a time of personal dialogue between the spouses, during which each one presents to the other, with total sincerity and in a climate of mutual listening, the most important problems and situations in the life of the couple. In our world so marked by individualism, activism, speed and distraction, sincere and constant dialogue between spouses is essential to avoid the emergence, growth and hardening of misunderstandings that, unfortunately, often end up in irremediable breaks that no help can repair. Hence, cultivate this valuable habit of sitting together to talk and to listen to each other, to understand one another again and again in face of the surprises and difficulties of the long journey.

In three months' time we shall be commemorating the 50th anniversary of the opening of Vatican Council II that, in many of its documents, offered the Church of our time a renewed vision of the value of human love, of conjugal and family life; on that occasion we will begin the Year of Faith, to rediscover all the vivacity and joy of the proclamation of the faith in our world and in our time. His Holiness Benedict XVI invites Christian couples to be "the smiling and sweet face of the Church," the best and most convincing messengers of the beauty of love sustained and nourished by faith, gift of God offered with abundance and generosity to all, so that every day they can discover the meaning of their life

As sign of ecclesial gratitude, of encouragement for the new challenges we meet, and as a guarantee of grace and light of the Most High for the works of the 11th International Gathering of the Teams of Our Lady, the Holy Father grants to all the participants and their families his implored Apostolic Blessing.

I take advantage of this occasion to express, to your Most Reverend Eminence, my sentiments of fraternal esteem in Christ the Lord.

Vatican, July 5, 2012

Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone  
Secretary of State of His Holiness

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## Photos from Brasilia



Transatlantic Super-Region at Brasilia



Pat and Carmel with model of Gathering Logo



Elaine, John and Carmel with Luis and Maria Gandara from Puerto Rico, who were members of Cork Teams in the 1990s.



3800 Teams Couples have a Sit-Down in a public park in Brasilia



Brasilia Team No. 203.



Donal and Katriona O'Keeffe

## News from around the Region

### Dublin

#### International Eucharistic Congress

The 50<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress was held in Dublin earlier this year. It commenced on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> June with the Opening Ceremony in the Arena at the Royal Dublin Society and Closed with the “*Statio Orbis*” in Croke Park on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> June. The Theme of Congress was “***Communion With Christ And With One Another***”. The opening liturgy included Mass and a ceremonial welcoming of the pilgrims to what was a truly amazing spiritual and cultural experience. The choirs and music for each celebration of the Eucharist were provided by some of the finest musicians and singers in the country including a recording of the famous Count John McCormack from the 1932 Congress.

The Theme for Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> June was “***Exploring and Celebrating the Communion of Marriage and Family***” (*Family day*). The Regional Couple, Pat & Carmel Cunneen gave a lovely presentation on “***Spirituality for Married Couples***” commencing at 10.00. However, as it turned out, it was heavily oversubscribed and more than 40 people had to be turned away. Fortunately, John & Elaine Cogavin (who were Congress volunteers) came to the rescue and, as it was a lovely sunny day, they invited all of those who were disappointed to join them outside on the lawn. A large group soon assembled and what followed was truly remarkable with excellent discussions and exchanges of views. We would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to John & Elaine for their spontaneous reaction to what was the wholly unexpected situation and for bringing the message of Teams and Spirituality for Married Couples to all of these people.

A Workshop on “***Strengthening Marriage and Family Life***” followed Pat & Carmel’s talk. It was organized by The Council for Marriage and the Family of the Catholic Bishops of Ireland. This Workshop was designed to provide an opportunity for those involved to share their own experience on what the Church, lay people, bishops, priests and religious working together could do to meet the challenges of today. Following the introduction by Bishop Christopher Jones, John Quinn, writer and former RTE Broadcaster gave the Keynote Address, “A Letter to Olive – Reflections on Marriage”. It was a moving experience listening to John’s heart-felt delivery of his reflections. Gerry Mangan from Team 26 played a very important organisational role and, amongst other important matters, arranged for Rosemarie and Brendan Gavin from the Navan Team to give a ‘talk’ on how we as church, laity and the clergy working together, can best support and strengthen marriage and the family. Rosemarie and Brendan were excellent and their views as expressed were very well received.

### Teams Stand

The Teams Stand was manned by Teams members from Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> June through to and including Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June. It worked very well and a large number of enquiries were recorded throughout the week. We would like to acknowledge the great work done in manning the Stand by the Regional Couple, Pat & Carmel Cunneen, the Super-Regional Couple, Antony & Janet Denman and all of the Teams members who included Hugo & Mary Gallagher, Michael & Lily Brennan, Gemma Rowley, Juliet O'Donoghue, Brian & Una Moore, Kevin & Martha Wade, John & Bernie Healy, Jerry & Maeve Clifford, Áine & Joe Clayton, Maureen & Pat Seery, Jacinta & Paddy Quigley and Tony & Noreen Lawlor. A

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special thanks also to those who provided accommodation to fellow Teams members attending the Congress. Good progress is being made in processing the enquires received from interested couples and we look forward to a significant increase in the number of new Teams being formed over the coming months.

### **Summer Outing**

We have planned a new and exciting activity for this year. After considering various possibilities we thought everyone would enjoy a trip to the National Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin. The Botanic Gardens are a wonderful resource and we are hoping you will enjoy the day in this beautiful location. The Outing is arranged for Saturday 8th September (our Lady's Birthday) and we are to meet at 10.30 am in the Reception Area of the Visitors' Centre. A guided tour costs €2 per person and needs to be booked 3-4 weeks in advance. Tours can be tailor-made to suit the pace and preferences including a tour of some of the magnificent glasshouses. A 20 minute video is available in the Auditorium next to Reception. This could be a welcome slot if the weather is unkind. During September there is a Sculpture Exhibition in different locations around the Gardens and in the Display Area on the First Floor above the main Restaurant. There are two cafés and it will be possible to reserve an area provided we can give sufficient advance notice of numbers. We are suggesting a set Programme at a fixed cost of €20 per person which includes parking. The Programme and further details are posted on the website <http://www.equipes-notre-dame.ie>

### **Responsible Couples' Weekend**

The Responsible Couples' Weekend will be held on 6th and 7th October 2012 at the Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre, Newry, Co. Down and details are given elsewhere in the Newsletter. The Programme and further details are posted on the website <http://www.equipes-notre-dame.ie>

Breda & Tony Preston

### **Belfast**

Three couples from Belfast Sector attended the Eucharistic Congress, as well as Fr Gerry Cassidy CSsR. Only one of these couples was lucky enough to get in to hear the excellent presentations on Teams by Carmel and Pat Cunneen, Fr Richard Sheehy, John and Bernie Healy, with help by Antony and Janet Denman at question time.

However, the impromptu meeting outside on the grassy patch in the middle of the RDS, and led by John Cogavin, was much appreciated by those unable to get inside the building! (Apparently another impromptu grouping took place at the same time in one of the eating places, led by Elaine...) The Teams' stand in the exhibition hall was impressive too, with many people showing an interest in our movement. It was great, too, to meet other team members, old friends and new.

Belfast 1 had their annual outing last weekend – a meal in the “Dirty Duck” restaurant in Hollywood.

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The Sector Team are still working on the RC Weekend 6th-7th October 2012. Emails or letters have been sent out to new RC's and chaplains, inviting them to attend. Travel directions will be sent out later to all who are to attend, but if you want to know more about the venue, look up:

[www.dromantineconference.com](http://www.dromantineconference.com)

Moyra and Brendan Bunting

## **Mullingar**

This Summer the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin became our main focus in Teams of Our Lady in Mullingar. We were given great assistance with information beforehand but the Congress itself far exceeded our expectations. We attended on Tuesday, Family Day, and on the final Sunday. The television coverage of the opening ceremony indicated some of what was in store – a great gathering of prayerful followers from all over the world. There were many stands with information about devotions within the Church : St Vincent de Paul Society, The Carmelite Sisters, The Jesuit Priests, The Camillians etc. and in quite a central position our own E.N.D.(Teams of Our Lady ) stand.

Pat and Carmel Cunneen, assisted by Tony and Breda Preston were at the ready to help with the many inquiries that were made. Frank and I were at the Stand for a while at which time we were delighted to meet Bishop Michael Smith (a Team Chaplain) and a Cardinal from South Africa, who made plenty of inquiries. He inquired “where are the husbands” at which time we were glad to introduce him to all of them! The Cardinal was very pleased about that and left with some of our Information Leaflets in his hand.

The workshop of Pat and Carmel was full by the time we arrived but John and Elaine Cogavin of Dublin formed an outdoor workshop which took on a life of its own – quite spontaneously and open to everyone. It was as if it was the way it was meant to be. I shall never forget what one lady wistfully said there “I would have loved that in my home.” There were tears in her eyes. It made it very clear to me how blessed we are to be members.

We attended the Mass celebration at 4pm. in the main arena – a most moving, devotional and spiritual experience. It was truly a blessed place to be. The day was packed full of meeting and greeting, always glad to meet many Team members from our own Sector and from the other Sectors too. We returned home by coach – exhausted but truly content.

The Statio Orbis on the final day of the Congress was another memorable and splendid occasion. Again we travelled by coach from Mullingar and were fortunate to be in the company of Joe and Assumpta O'Meara who “guided us along the right path”. It was a wonderful day from beginning to end; full of song, jubilation and spectacle ending with a special blessing from Pope Benedict XVI. The entire experience was a powerful affirmation of faith as Cardinal Marc Ouellet said “The Congress has helped to make us more aware of God's call to communion with Him and with one another”.

A sequel evening was held on June 23<sup>rd</sup> at Bloomfield House Hotel. It turned out to be a most enjoyable get-together: a lovely meal with plenty of discussion enjoyed by all. The Congress experience was deeply appreciated by all who attended.

We look forward to meeting you all again after the Summer holidays.

Frank and Margaret Fagan.

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## Galway

We were again very fortunate to have had a very good day for our summer outing. Unfortunately we did not have Fr. Colin Garvey OFM to celebrate the Eucharist in the Park. He was extremely busy on that Sunday. Luckily we attended 12.15 Mass in Gort and the celebrant, An tAthair Gearóid Ó Gríofa, gave us a céad míle fáilte. Fr Tommy Marrinan PP of Gort who had been a team chaplain in Galway gave us a very hearty welcome also. Our outing was reasonably well attended and we were delighted to welcome Carmel and Pat Cunneen from Dublin together with the families from Limerick and Sligo. The weather was very good so we enjoyed a picnic in the park followed by a walk by the lake and a ramble in the beautiful woodland.

The Eucharistic Congress was a wonderful event for Teams. The Dublin and Mullingar sectors were very generous with their time and effort to promote the Team movement during the congress. It was encouraging to meet so many couples particularly on the Tuesday who came to support Pat and Carmel. Míle buíochas do gach duine.

We look forward to our team meeting in September and sharing the feedback from Brasilia which will encourage us to share the Good News. In October our teams look forward to the Responsible Couples' weekend in Newry. This will renew our energies as we go forward with strength in the Lord.

Here in Galway the future looks daunting as we face the mighty Kilkenny for the second time in Croke Park. Ní neart go cur le chéile. Guímis gach rath agus beannacht ar Mheithil Mhuire, go gcumhdaí Dia sibh uile.

We are delighted to say that Máire and Brendan Kelly are the next sector couple from Galway, go n-éiri go geal leo, we wish them every blessing. Míle buíochas do gach duine a thug cabhair dúinn le blianta beaga anuas. Le gach deaghúí.

Ann and Billy Hyland



Group taken at Galway Teams Outing

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**Photos from 50<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress, Dublin June 10<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> 2012**



Maureen and Pat Seery on Stand Duty



Antony and Janet Denman on Stand Duty with Carmel and Jacinta



Joe Clayton, Juliette O'Donoghue, with Pat, Carmel and visitor



Fr. Richard Sheehy contributes to Workshop on Couples Spirituality



Teams Stand at International Eucharistic Congress



The scene at Croke Park after the Conclusion of the Congress

**From The Regional Chaplain Fr. Gerry Cassidy**

Call and Discipleship

And immediately they left their nets and followed him

September Luke 5: 1-11

Where and when have I known or experienced God’s invitation or call?  
What have the relationships in my life taught me about commitment and the renewed choices it requires?



October 1 Cor. 12 :4-11

In what ways do I acknowledge my God-given gifts and talents and humbly, generously, offer them back in service to God’s people?  
In the key relationships active now in my life, how am I being asked to be more like the person of Jesus?

November Ephesians 1: 15- 22

What have been the moments of intimacy with Jesus in my life? In what circumstances have they occurred?  
Do I consider Jesus an intimate friend?  
Do I encourage and mentor others by revealing their own, often hidden, gifts to them?

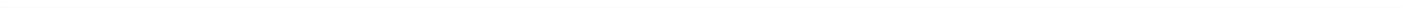
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**Prayer Intentions**

For the deceased:

Bridie Thomson, sister of Pauline Flanagan, Belfast.

Pat O’Gorman, husband of Mary O’Gorman, former members of Team 25. Dublin.



## **Transatlantic Super – Region**

### **Third Gathering – Preliminary notice.**

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Gathering of the Super-Region is scheduled to take place in Ireland at Dublin from 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> August 2014. It will coincide with the celebration of 50 years of Teams in Ireland.**

The Transatlantic Super-Region was instituted by the College of Teams in 2005. It currently includes the 3 Great Britain Regions, Ireland, Trinidad and Tobago, Malawi, English-speaking South Africa and Zambia.

Team members from the Super-Region first met under the same banner at the Xth International Gathering of Teams at Lourdes in 2006. The First Gathering of the Super-Region took place at Swanwick in Derbyshire, UK, in 2007 and the Second took place there in 2010.

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### **Letter to Editors**

**WHAT'S IN A NAME?** A heart-felt plea to remedy a glaring omission.

While celebrating the feast of St Joseph on the 19th of March, the following question came to me, in relation to Teams:

Why isn't St Joseph mentioned in the name of our movement? We are a movement for married couples, and yet our movement makes no reference to him. It refers to Mary alone.

We are the Teams of Our Lady...but what about her loving and beloved spouse, Joseph?

Is he so inconsequent we can make him invisible?

What are we saying about relationships if we do not include the couple Mary-Joseph in the name of our movement?

Mary's marriage to Joseph is not a marginal part of her life.

Why not honour the tender love they share in the name of our movement?

I know St Joseph is represented in the icon of the Holy Family associated with Teams....

but isn't it a great pity his name is left out and is not beside that of Mary?

JOHN XXIII included Joseph's name in the canon of the Mass...., 50 years on we could give him and his relationship to Mary the honour they deserve by including him in the name of Teams. There is a message in this.

I would be interested to know what other members of Teams think.....

Soline Humbert            Team 26, (Dublin) on the feast of the Annunciation.

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## ***RESPONSIBLE COUPLES' WEEKEND***

***SATURDAY AND SUNDAY 6th/7th OCTOBER 2012***

***Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre, Newry, Co.Down BT34 IRH***

Dear Responsible Couples and Chaplains,

We invite you to attend the Responsible Couples' Weekend, organised this year by Belfast Sector.

The theme for the weekend is: ***The Road to Emmaus. "Did not our hearts burn within us as He talked to us on the road...?"***

This year's gathering will be held at the Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre, which is near Newry, Co Down. We look forward to meeting you at this annual Teams RC Weekend, which this year is a two-day residential weekend.

The total cost will be £80 per person sharing (or £95 for anyone not sharing a room). This includes all meals and breaks for the entire weekend and overnight stay on Saturday night. It also includes conference fee. **The equivalent amount in euro will be acceptable.**

*If anyone wishes to stay on Friday night also, the total price for the whole weekend (including a Friday night meal and breakfast Saturday morning) will be £130 (or£140 for those not sharing a room).*

The starting time on Saturday for registration will be 9.30.

**Moyra and Brendan Bunting, 46 Strathmore Park North Belfast BT15 5HR**

**Email: [brendan\\_bunting@hotmail.com](mailto:brendan_bunting@hotmail.com) Phone (048)90775048 (Republic of Ireland)**

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## From The International Leading Team



Dear Friends,

It is rather strange for us to be writing this Letter from the International Leading Team (ERI), a letter that we have been used to reading for over 30 years. Our entry into the International Leading Team last August has given us the opportunity, that we are terribly pleased to avail of, to talk to you all, couples, Spiritual Counsellors, as well as your children and all those who are fortunate enough to read these lines. We therefore send you our fraternal greetings from Portugal where we were born and where we live.

Let us begin with a short presentation of who we are: Ana (1955) and Vasco (1957). We have been married since 1976 and have three children, Ana Rita (1979), André (1980) and Sara (1984). We also have three grandchildren, Beatriz (2009) and twins, Guilherme & Gonçalo (2011). In 2005, our daughter Ana Rita married André Filipe (1979) and they are the parents of our three grandchildren. Sara got married last January (2012) to Luis Pedro (1980). Our son, André is not yet married and lives in his own house. Consequently, our nest is empty since the beginning of this year and this is a new situation to which we are trying to adapt. Fortunately, we all live in Lisbon and so can see each other regularly.

Ana is a qualified technician in the Ministry of Agriculture and works on a project of electronic purchasing. Vasco, trained as an engineer, works in his own company as a consultant in management, innovation and technology transfer. Our children and sons-in-law are all employed, which in this day and age, makes us very grateful to God.

We belong to Team 89 (1981) in Sector K of the Lisbon 2 Region, Province of Lisbon in the Super Region of Portugal. There are 7 couples in our Team and our Spiritual Counsellor is Father António Jane-la, who has been with us since the beginning. Indeed, it is because of him that we joined the Teams movement and became involved in the Church. He has always been the one who encouraged us to become involved. He invited us to join a team affiliated with the Centre for the Preparation of Marriage, and our Team 89 emerged from this too. This priest has had an impact on our lives and our future, filled with numerous commitments in the Church. Each time we accepted the invitation to be in the Lord's service, we have been blessed with numerous graces. This incites us to continue on our way, to go further, as His instruments.

We are members of the International Leading Team (ERI) and are the Responsible Couple for the Eurafrika Zone. We replace our good friends, Maru and Paco Nemésio, with whom we worked for many years when we were responsible for the Super Region of Portugal. We are in learning mode with the other members of this Responsible team, who have been in service for the past 6 years and are integrating and welcoming us with great patience. We are particularly indebted to Maria-Carla and Carlo Volpini, the Responsible Couple of this Team and to Tó and Zé Moura, the next Responsible Couple. We have already worked with Tó and Zé for many years and we will continue to work with them until 2017.

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The International Leading Team only meets 4 times a year, but it takes up a large part of our holidays. It occupies the largest part of our lives after our professional activity. Furthermore, at this stage when our grandchildren are beginning to make their appearance, we need to have time with our family. Each International Leading Team meeting lasts 6 days in Paris, but also in other places so that we can see the other members. Added to that is the International College that also lasts 6 days with all the Super Regional Couples and Responsible Couples of the Regions attached to the ERI, together with their Spiritual Counsellors. The year of the International Gathering, like this summer, is even more difficult because 6 more days for the Gathering need to be added.

We have to travel in our Super Regions and Attached Regions in order to establish direct contact and this becomes an almost impossible equation with the number of holiday days that we are allowed. We are not complaining. We know that solutions will be found. Our children know us and know that we do not underestimate them. It is merely another period, a mission that we must accomplish, a service for the Church, the answer to a new calling. Personally, we are deeply convinced that the testimony that we show them, by making ourselves available for these services, even if they are difficult, is stronger than any words. And we pray a lot and we try to improve the way the two of us pray together. We know that it is only with God's help that we can be His good instruments.

In the service of the Eurafrika Zone, we would like to help the Movement to grow, not only in terms of numbers, but in terms of helping each other to mutually progress together as a couple in Christ within the small community formed by each Team. The Eurafrika Zone comprises (data from Jan 1, 2012) 37 859 members, that is couples and Spiritual Counsellors from 22 countries, contained in 4 Super Regions: Portugal (1 214 Teams), Spain (931), Italy (752) and French-speaking Africa (443) and one Attached Region: Syria (67).

For logistical reasons this Region will integrate the Central Europe Zone, at Brasilia, but we will always be linked by what we learnt on this path together. In terms of Team numbers, the Eurafrika Zone has increased from 2820 teams in 2006 (date of the last International Gathering) to 3407 Teams in 2012. This 21% growth is above all tied to the tremendous expansion in Africa, both in French and Portuguese-speaking regions, and to the maintaining of the Super Regions, whose age is beginning to be felt with the natural disappearance of the more elderly teams. Indeed, we notice that Africa, together with Latin America, have been the two great driving forces behind the Movement in the past few years (there are some other cases, Poland for example, with high growth percentages, but that are still in the initial phase and with few Teams, in comparison, for now).

We will be particularly attentive to Africa and will try to adopt the pragmatism of Constanza and Alberto Alvarado, the same pragmatism followed by our predecessors, Maru and Paco Nemésio, by encouraging mutual help between the countries in the Eurafrika Zone and within the Movement.

We are particularly worried about the situation experienced by Team members in Syria, Mali and in countries in the world where being a Christian is not an easy thing, where peace and serenity are not givens. Our prayers go out to all these people and for all these Team members.

We finish up by asking you to pray that God may help us by sending the Holy Spirit to guide and accompany us on Christ's path. We too, we keep you all in our prayers.

“My soul magnifies the Lord

And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.”

May 2012

Ana and Vasco

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