



Equipes Notre-Dame

Newsletter Teams of Our Lady – Irish Region



Issue 102

Autumn 2015

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Teams Outing to Slane 20th June 2015

Team members from Dublin, Meath and Mullingar took part in a very special summer outing to Slane on 20th June. The group gathered across the Boyne from Slane village where the leader, Fr. Declan Hurley, chaplain to team 38, Navan, set the scene, giving some of the history of the area. We began with some prayers and then Fr. Declan led us across the bridge and up through the village of Slane, where we paused in the beautiful oratory of the local church. There we recited the *Magnificat* and continued our journey up the hill until we reached the summit which has the ruins of a monastery and a statue of St. Patrick. Fr. Declan had a reading and more prayers before we returned to the parochial hall where we were warmly welcomed by the Meath teams. The hall had been decorated with vases of fresh flowers; tables set, and tea/coffee along with treats were provided.

From the Regional Couple



In the Gospel of Matthew 24:42-51 Jesus tells us to “Stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.” In telling us to ‘Stay awake’ Jesus is reminding us to keep our hearts and minds in tune with and focused on him and our Father. We must not let ourselves forget where our true treasure lies, in heaven. Jesus even compares the coming of our Lord to the unexpectedness of a thief coming in the night! By this Jesus wants to awaken in us a sense of urgency and preparedness for his coming. He wants us to be as awake as we can to his Word and Truth at all times as we have no way of knowing when our Lord will come!

There are many ways to ‘stay awake,’ as Christ told us. We can read and listen to the Word in scripture, we can celebrate the Sacrament of the Eucharist as often as we can or, we can work to further God’s kingdom on Earth. In Teams we have the awareness and the opportunity to ‘stay awake’ and close to Christ in all of these ways. Our journey in Teams provides us with invaluable opportunities to grow in faith and understanding of Jesus’ teaching and to celebrate His Eucharist together. We also have the great benefit of growing in wisdom as Christian married couples and of sharing that wisdom with our families and friends.

Important Teams Event

The Responsible Couples’ Weekend is being hosted by the Galway Sector this year on 3rd and 4th October. The venue is Croí Nua, Rosary Lane, Taylor’s Hill Galway City and the theme is “*it is not good that Man should be alone*” - *Genesis 2:18*. The key speaker is Dr. Kathleen Heavey, who is a Catechist and Liturgist and holds a Doctorate in Sacramental Theology.

While the Weekend is designed primarily for Responsible Couples, all Teams couples are most welcome. We would therefore, encourage everybody who can to attend this important event in the life of Teams. In circumstances where the Responsible Couple cannot attend the Team should nominate another couple to attend in their place. The costs incurred by the Responsible Couple should be borne by the Team as a whole. In particular circumstances however, assistance will be provided if needed to ensure that all our Responsible Couples have the opportunity to attend what is our most important annual Teams Event.

The role and presence of the Priest/Spiritual Counsellor in Teams is a fundamental element that cannot be changed because it is an integral part of the charism of our Movement (International Leading Team May 1993). We would therefore encourage all of our Chaplains to attend the Responsible Couples Weekend in Galway if at all possible.

The cost per person (excluding Chaplains) for the weekend is €60 and it will be greatly appreciated if the completed application forms are returned as soon as possible to Peter and Anne Costello, 18 Rockhill Ave., Salthill, Galway by post or email to 18costello@eircom.net. The closing date for receipt of applications is Friday 18th September 2015.

The Super-Regional Couple, Antony and Janet Denman will also be attending and we are looking forward to seeing you all there and to a wonderful and uplifting Teams Weekend.

God Bless
Breda and Tony Preston

From the Leading Team



TEAMS OF OUR LADY, A PRODUCTIVE PRESENCE IN AMERICA

Dear brothers and sisters of the Teams of Our Lady,

This message is the fruit of our reflections and what we experienced during our service within the Church as Liaison Couple for the America Zone.

The scope of the 'liaison' function is such that it demands limits, and so we chose to highlight the expansion of the America Zone on the continent and to give you some information about our Super-Regions and Regions.

America has the greatest number of Catholics in the world. The Church is facing a very great pastoral challenge that has evolved out of the intense urbanisation of its population that began in the middle of the 20th century and has brought about cultural uprooting, the loss of family customs and the neglect of religious traditions. In this context, the Church has sought to give new life to evangelisation by spiritually uniting the American peoples, by encouraging them to be united and by helping them to strengthen the family as the cornerstone in the building of society.

Teams of Our Lady crossed the Atlantic and arrived in Brazil in 1950, then in Canada in 1956, the US in 1958 and Columbia in 1961.

Today they are in 19 of the 35 countries of America, with almost 5500 Teams, 30500 couples and 3300 Spiritual Counsellors. Altogether they make up about 42% of the Movement. These Teams are divided into 3 Super-Regions (USA, Hispano-America and Brazil) and 1 Region, Canada.

Typical of the **America Zone** are the great distances (14000km from north to south) and the territorial dimensions of some countries, like Canada, the US, Brazil and Argentina.

In certain situations, such great dimensions hinder the expansion and setting up of Teams.

God's grace has allowed the Teams of Our Lady to flourish and to renew themselves in America, because there are still lots of couples waiting at the edge of the road for 'Samaritans,' who will sympathise with their hardships and will supply them with the happiness to become Christian couples.

The **Canada Region** has French-, English- and Spanish-speaking Teams. Their challenges include expansion and training, which would allow them to be independent from outside resources. Up until now, the solution has been the presence of people from outside doing the training and the financial support of international solidarity within our Movement. In 2014, the number of Teams increased by 10%, thereby awakening the hope of a renewal in the Region. The **USA Super-Region** is one of the largest Super-Regions in the Movement and has English-, Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Teams. Currently it is going through an 'aggiornamento' with the support of the International Leading Team (ERI). Provinces have been created and will be effective as and from the Rome Gathering this coming autumn.

Simultaneously, service teams at all levels of the Movement have been revitalised and in particular, the liaison service in the Sectors has been restored. At the moment, the launch of the New Teams Gathering is currently being prepared.

The **Hispano-America Super-Region** is spread over 16 Spanish-speaking countries, from Mexico to Argentina. Its difficulties include distance and the decentralisation of the Teams over its vast territory. The Teams there try to overcome this by making management training a priority. The Super-Region has also successfully concluded the 3rd stage in the training of its Sector Responsible Couples, thanks to the financial support of international solidarity within our Movement, which will also help with the implementation of a new Training Plan across the whole Super-Region.

The **Brazil Super-Region** has only Portuguese-speaking Teams and its challenge is to follow up on the implementation of the new Training Plan. Initial and Specific Training have been established and now the Super-Region is preparing to launch in 2016 the 1st stage of the Permanent Training (Teams on the way). The richness of the expansion in Brazil is based on the service teams' faithful implementation of the organisation project across all levels and zones of the country.

We are grateful to God for the opportunity He gave us to share in the lives of the couples and priests in the America Zone, who bear witness to the joy of serving and making the Teams of Our Lady, Father Caffarel's marvellous work, a reality.

GRAÇA & ROBERTO

COUPLE FOR THE AMERICA ZONE

From the Spiritual Counsellor



MY DEAR TEAM MEMBERS,

In my previous letters to you, the background theme over the years has been concentrated on two Endeavours touching on the spirituality of our movement. Namely, the *Sit-Down* and *Married Prayer*. I hope that all of you have managed to internalise these two points and that you have put them in to practice, because in truth, they are terribly important for your growth as couples as well as for your growth within a *Team*, since the Team is a community whose spiritual and human life develops in direct proportion to each couple's commitment to be faithful to the methodology of holiness that is characteristic of our Movement. In the current conditions of our society and the Church and in the context of the celebration of the extraordinary synod on the family and new evangelisation, our Movement's contribution is essential and the Church expects much of us, so that it may be the catalyst and the efficient sign of hope for the world, a hope that is truly concrete and alive.

Today, I would like to draw your attention to the importance of *personal* or *individual prayer*. Personal prayer is truly the *breathe of the soul*. Father Caffarel set the example, since he himself devoted a large amount of his day to prayer and he was in the habit of saving three months of the year for meditation and prayer, because he knew that if his life was not well anchored in prayer, his spiritual and apostolic life would be seriously compromised. Jesus told us that we ought to pray ceaselessly and the liturgy also invites us to raise our hearts to God: the opening dialogue to the Preface of the Eucharistic prayer, *sursum corda! Habemus ad Dominum! Lift up your hearts! We lift them up to the Lord!*

According to Tertullian (160-220), a Christian ought to recite the *Lord's Prayer* at least three times a day: morning, noon and night. St Therese of the Child Jesus was so moved by the prayer that she was not able to go beyond the opening words of the *Our Father!* Have we ever managed to fathom the depths of what it means to have the possibility of addressing God as a father, in the same manner as Jesus does, he who introduced us to this Trinitarian intimacy?

That is why in this letter, I urge each of you to cultivate the spirit of prayer, by setting aside a moment in your daily life when you can speak to God in the intimacy of your soul. Sometimes people regret that they are not eagerly awaited in their prayer. St Augustine had a very interesting explanation for that. We are not expected or awaited either because we are *bad*, or because we ask for *bad things*, or because we ask *badly*. Following in Jesus' footsteps, let us restrain ourselves and only ask that we not be led *into temptation, but deliver us from evil*. (Mt 6:13) In the end, we ought to ask the Lord to deliver us from *sin*, the single bad thing that can happen to us! Ultimately, let us ask the Lord that his will always be done, because we do not know whether health or sickness, life or death is better for us. Let the Lord make the decision and let us ask for the grace to see a *sign* of his visit to our house in everything!

I beseech the abundance of God's blessings upon you during this time of grace, given over to the synod on the family, the catalyst of hope and peace. My very personal greetings to each and every one of you!

FATHER JOSÉ JACINTO FERREIRA DE FARIAS, SCJ
SPIRITUAL COUNSELLOR TO THE INTERNATIONAL LEADING TEAM



Jose Antonio and Amaya Marchén-Echandi, Liaison couple on the ERI, with Super-Regional Couples from the Eurafrica Zone

News from around the Region

Dublin

Summer Outing :

Our Summer Outing to Slane on Saturday 20th June was a beautiful experience from start to finish. A coach brought members from the Dublin region, including a young couple (and baby), Filipa & David, who in their native Portugal were members of Teams and are now living in Ireland. Beginning near the Slane Bridge on the River Boyne, Fr. Declan Hurley - chaplain of team 38 in Navan, transformed our outing into a pilgrimage, with reflections and prayers in the footsteps of St. Patrick. A helpful handout gave us much information:

“According to 7th Century monk and historian, Muirchú, it was on the Hill of Slane that St. Patrick lit the Paschal Fire in the year 433 AD, in defiance of the order of the King Laoire that no other fire was to be lit before the festival fire was lit on Tara. The chief Druid on Tara, observing the fire at Slane, is said to have prophesied that if the fire was not extinguished, it would burn to every corner of Ireland.

Our pilgrimage today is therefore a journey towards the Light of Christ. We echo the words of Patrick himself: We, however, believe in and adore the true sun, that is, Christ, who will never perish” (Confession #60), and our journey today recalls the journey of the Irish people to faith in Christ, and prompts us to ask how, today, Patrick is again calling us to be in our own time and place “the people of the Lord” (Confession #41)

As we crossed the bridge, the leaflet reminded us of “...divisions in our history as a people, divisions that have left scars on our national psyche. As we cross over the Boyne, we pray that we may find the courage to cross into a new future, to leave behind the hurts of the past, and allow scars to heal”.

The views from the top of the Slane Hill were magnificent, especially as it was such a beautiful day. Everyone seemed to enjoy the walk and gentle conversation ensued. We eventually arrived back at the local Parish Hall where the teams of Meath really excelled with their preparations. The hall was ready for our picnic lunch: tables set, vases of fresh flowers, tea/coffee along with treats were all provided with warm hospitality and expert service. Wow!!! Well done to all.

New Responsible Couples: With the summer comes the changeover of Responsible Couples for the coming year. Most teams have informed us of the new RC. If not already done, please phone or email us. We have responsibility for keeping the Register up to date.

Responsible Couples' Weekend: The Annual Regional Conference for RCs is to be held in Galway this year – Sat 3rd & Sun 4th October. It is the new Responsible Couples, for 2015/16 who attend at the start of their term. For our younger teams, a few RCs may be attending for the first time. It is the main event in the Teams year, when Responsible Couples benefit from training and update on the various aspects of teams life, experiencing the wider movement and meeting couples from all sectors in the region.

Further details are elsewhere in the Newsletter.

Joe & Áine Clayton

Belfast

Fr Gerry Cassidy CSsR is stepping down from his post as Regional Chaplain of Équipes Notre-Dame (Teams) in Ireland after many years of service. He has faithfully encouraged and inspired Regional Teams led by Regional Couples including the Quigleys, Buntings, Cunneens and Prestons. This must amount to about 15 years! His calm and attentive presence has greatly enriched Teams in Ireland and in the wider movement. We appreciated his contributions in each Newsletter. Happily he is still chaplain for Belfast !! We welcome and thank Fr. Peter Sexton S.J. who will take over the position.

Some teams in Belfast have had their summer outing. This usually takes the form of a meal in a restaurant and a get-together afterwards in someone's home or a walk around a scenic area. Each team does its own thing. This is always a relaxing and enjoyable occasion which helps get us ready for the new Team year.

We are looking forward to the RC Weekend in Galway on the 3rd /4th October. Teams there always give us a great welcome, and always provide a very special weekend in Croí Nua, which is an ideal setting.

Moyra and Brendan Bunting

Galway

Galway Sector is looking forward to welcoming Responsible Couples from all the Teams in Ireland and their Chaplains to the RC weekend on the 3rd and 4th October in Croí Nua in Galway. If for any reason the RC is unable to attend they could send another couple to the weekend. Chaplains are very welcome. It would be a great opportunity for them to meet other chaplains in Teams and exchange views, ideas etc. We would appreciate early booking as it would greatly help us in planning the weekend. We are very pleased to have Dr. Kathleen Heavey who is very experienced and a great communicator to give some talks at the weekend.

We had a lovely Teams Outing in Coole Park on the last Sunday of June. Fr Colin said Mass for us in the Walled Garden after which we had a lovely picnic followed by a walk in Coole Park. Tony and Breda Preston joined us and we really appreciated their encouraging presence.

Emmie and Eddie Lloyd celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary on the 4th September. They have been blessed with seven wonderful children and grandchildren. Galway Teams all send them their warmest good wishes at this very special time and thank them both for the great service they have given, and still give most generously to Teams in Galway. We wish them well in every way.

Joan and Enda Colleran of Team 3 are looking forward to welcoming their new grandson Cathal, son of Eoin and Heather and brother to Aoibhinn and Saoirse from the U.S. He will be christened in the Jesuit Church in Galway on Sunday 13th September.

Máire and Manus Duggan enjoyed a wonderful fortnight's visit from their new grandson Daniel from Oslo.

On Saturday, 25th July, on a beautiful summer day, Jean Costello, daughter of Peter and Anne, (Team 2 Galway) married Rob Heraty in St. Joseph's Church, Galway. Fr. Ciary Quirke S.J. celebrated their marriage. Jean has known Fr. Ciary for over 20 years since the time she sang and played the keyboard at Ciary's Children's Mass in the Jesuit Church in Galway. It was a joyful day and Jean has extended her Western connections by marrying a Mayo man.

On another sunny day in Caceres, Spain, Donal Kelly, son of Brendan and Máire (Team 1 Galway), married Lara Sanchez Arevalo in La Iglesia de San Juan Bautista in Caceres. Donal's uncle Fr. Ali Kelly S.M.A. officiated at the wedding. A large contingent of family and friends came to share the couple's special day and new links were forged between Ireland and Spain. The occasion was a great celebration of families coming together.

Galway Teams wish both couples every blessing as they begin their married life.

Billy and Ann Hyland had an adventurous holiday this summer. They walked 125km of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela from Legrono to Burgos and cycled 500 km from there to Santiago. It was a wonderful experience. They even succeeded in selling the bicycles at the end. Many very special Masses and meeting other pilgrims made the journey so uplifting.

Again, Galway Sector extend a warm welcome to all RCs and Team chaplains to the RC weekend and would ask them to send in their applications as soon as possible.

Le gach dea ghuí,

Brendan & Máire Kelly

From the Regional Chaplain

Fr. Gerry Cassidy



God's love shines down upon me like the light rays from the sun, or God's love is poured forth lavishly like a fountain spilling forth its waters into an unending stream. Just as I see the sun in its rays and the fountain in its waters, so God pours forth a sharing in divine life in all the gifts showered upon me. God's delight and joy is to be with the ones called God's children To be with me. God cannot do enough to speak out and show love for me ... ever calling and inviting me to a fuller and better life, a sharing in divine life.

October

Isaiah 65:17-25

When have I been part of a project or effort in which I could sense my heart "burning within" from God's presence in and around me?

November

John 20:19-31

Lamentations 3: 21-26

How has my faith grown into a more personal relationship with God?
What continues to be the riskiest part of faith and hope for me?

December

Colossians 3:1-4

1Corinthians 15:51-58

What events in my life have been the occasions of developing a greater confidence in God's care for the world?
How have I experienced God's peace and promise of faithful presence through a friendship in my life?

Prayer Intentions

For those who have died:

Mary Molumby, Dublin

For those who are ill:

Pauline Flanagan, Belfast

Caoimhe Wills, Belfast.

Rebecca Haughey, Belfast.

Responsible Couples' Weekend

Saturday and Sunday 3rd-4th October 2015
Croí Nua, Rosary Lane, Taylor's Hill, Galway.

Cost per person (chaplains free) for the weekend is €60.

The weekend is not residential so Team members will need to arrange their own accommodation of which there is plenty available in the city and Lower Salthill and the Ardilaun Hotel is nearby too. Some Team members will be able to offer accommodation in Galway. Please let us know if you need accommodation with Team members and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Bookings to and information from:

Peter and Anne Costello, 18 Rockhill Ave., Salthill, Galway

email to 18costello@eircom.net.

The closing date for receipt of applications is Friday 18th September 2015.

Some Rules for a Happy Marriage

- 1- Make time at least once each week to sit down and communicate with one another at a deeper level than just conversation. This means being willing to discuss positive and negative feelings and remember that feelings are neither right nor wrong.
- 2- Try to spend a little time each day to pray together to thank God for one another and the many blessings in your lives.
- 3- Avoid criticism of one another as criticism destroys love. Keep praising each other.
- 4- You may hurt one another occasionally and if you do seek to forgive as quickly as possible. Don't be afraid to say sorry even in front of your children. Never let the sun go down in your anger.
- 5- Although love is essentially a feeling it may be necessary sometimes to make "a decision to love" when you don't feel loving.
- 6- Remember to give each other little surprises from time to time.
- 7- It is very important to remember that sex is a loving act and not simply an activity or a performance to perfect. It can bring healing and forgiveness.
- 8- Marriage is a sacrament which you live out every day and not just on the day of your wedding.
- 9- God wants us to be loving persons. To be a loving person we must – Think loving thoughts, Speak loving words, Do loving deeds.
- 10 - The greatest thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.

Charlie and Maureen McMullan, Belfast

Editors: Paddy and Jacinta Quigley jacintapaddy@eircom.net

Please note: Deadline for submissions for Winter Newsletter is Wednesday 25th November
