



Teams of Our Lady

NEWSLETTER



IRISH REGION Autumn 2011 (Issue 87)



Pat and Carmel Cunneen

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From the Regional Couple IMPORTANT DEADLINE BRASILIA 2012

The place: Brasilia

The dates : 21/26 July 2012

The title: To dare to live the Gospel.

The gospel chosen as the theme: The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10, 25-37)

The Brasilia Animating team

The Brasilia Animating team capped registrations from Brazil at 5,400 to ensure that people from other countries had a fair crack of the whip. There are many Brazilians on the waiting list desperate to go to Brasilia; the organisers have options on bedrooms up to the capacity of the venue. Sadly, bookings from the rest of the world leave the organisers with a problem. They need to either confirm the hotel rooms or release them.

They have set 20th October as the deadline for bookings from the rest of the world after which time they will release places to the long Brazilian waiting list.



XI Encontro
Internacional
Equipos de Nossa Senhora

So, there is only one conclusion to be reached. If anyone wishes to go to Brazil, they really do need to get their booking form in (with 10% deposit) by 20th October. It is not to say that there will be no places after 20th October, but there are more than enough Brazilian couples to completely fill the venue several times!

In our Super-Region, Paul and Helena are the contact couple for information and

registration and have set up a special email address for all communication about Brasilia -
TA.Brazil2012@gmail.com.



Members of the new
Sligo Team

Together towards Brasilia

In the previous article, we talked about the deeper significance of pilgrimages and the meaning of our international gatherings. Here we are going to spend some time on the first three meetings: Lourdes in 1954, Rome in 1959 and Lourdes in 1965.

It is important to talk about them because they form the first part of our Movement's history that could be defined as the intuition phase.

Father Caffarel had many qualities, but the one that characterizes him the most is that he was a man of intuition that resulted from a profound life of prayer and consequently, a great intimacy with God. He was a man of vision, who was capable of grasping the signs of the times.

When the Movement began its expansion towards other European countries, and more particularly, when it began to cross the Atlantic and settle in Brazil, Colombia, Canada, the US, Father Caffarel had the intuition that something had to be done to cultivate the international nature of the Movement without losing its unity.

Gatherings must communicate the most perfect sense of unity, because on the spiritual plane there are no frontiers..., he said. You have experienced the sense of unity throughout these days spent in Rome. We have used this occasion to mix nationalities in your teams precisely so that this fraternal feeling amongst couples may become apparent, he explained to couples at the pilgrimage.

In order to accentuate the unity of the Movement, he insisted that the leading team be made up of a priest and of couples from different countries and that international gatherings be held to allow for the sharing of experiences and research.

Stemming from this intuition, big international gatherings began and their occurrence gave a certain rhythm to the Movement. The original tiny grain was now able to blossom to its full potential.

But there is something else in Father Caffarel's intuition. He insisted that a gathering is always an occasion and opportunity to stop and take time. To take the time to think, reflect and discriminate.

Indeed it is fundamental, for movements as well as for couples, to take the time at certain moments to reflect on their vocation. For the Teams, these special moments are the international gatherings, times when we try to understand more fully the vocation of our Movement and its mission within the Church. Novelties are not introduced into the Movement, but rather we seek to deepen what we discovered at gatherings of previous years.

So, as we move forward from the initial intuition of what an international gathering should be, what its spirit and goals are, we seek to build on those aspects which were special to each of the three first gatherings, aspects that help us perceive the hand of God who is behind the destiny of our Movement.

1st International Gathering at Lourdes, June 5-7, 1954, 850 team members present

This gathering was instigated to ensure the unity of the Movement that already had an international dimension, right from the beginning. Please note the 'coincidences dictated by the Holy Spirit'.

THE INTERNATIONAL LEADING TEAM (ERI)

This was a happy coincidence, since the Pope declared 1954 to be a Marian year, celebrating the centenary of the Immaculate Conception dogma.

Father Caffarel had already placed the Movement under the protection of Mary in the 1947 Charter and believed that it was not possible to praise Mary without knowing her more deeply. He suggested therefore that all teams study his booklet on Our Lady that year.

Father Caffarel wrote that the highpoint was the consecration of the Movement to Our Lady. One understands that the Movement was not dedicated to Our Lady by chance, but that we have been led directly to Mary's maternal arms and that is why we can always count on her intercession.

No Brazilian team member was present that year in Lourdes, but a pilgrimage was organized simultaneously in June 1954 to the Sanctuary of the Aparecida, Brazil, as a means of participating in spirit with this first International gathering.

Second International Gathering at Rome, May 1-8, 1959, 1000 couples present

Why Rome? Because it marks the centre of the Church. The idea behind inviting the team members to come to Rome was for them to discover an undervalued even neglected Church. And even today, we could say, perhaps, that we still know rather little about our Church.

Father Caffarel told us about a time in his youth, when he was still a student. He and his friends went walking in the Pyrenees Mountains. When they arrived at the summit, they read a passage from the Gospels and started talking about their love of Christ. The priest, who was with them listened, but seemed not to agree with them. So they asked for his opinion and he said, If you want to understand the solidity of your inner life, ask yourself how deep is your love for the Church! You can love Christ for purely human reasons, because he is an attractive man. With the Church, it is not the same thing. To love the Church is a conclusive sign of grace within the soul, but you probably cannot understand that now. Maybe you will later on.

The perception that the Movement would not last if it claimed to move ahead in parallel with the Church was another fundamental intuition. The proposed reflection was very serious and Father Caffarel's recommendations to pilgrims were incisive. No cameras, no money, no buying of souvenirs. And complete silence in the bus to and from the various meetings in the churches or at the Coliseum. And they obeyed him-to the Italian bus drivers' great surprise!

At this gathering Father Caffarel gave one talk, 'The Vocation and Itinerary of the Teams of Our Lady', that we believe to be extraordinary in its perceptiveness. It is one of his most important pieces that help understand the essentials of our Movement. Over and above a historical retrospective and an analysis of the situation of the time, Father Caffarel envisaged various perspectives for the Movement in the years to come.

At this gathering, he provoked thought about our Movement: is it a movement for Christian initiation in marriage or is it a movement for Christian improvement? And his conclusion was that Teams ought to be simultaneously initiators and improvers. It is really important that couples, once they have been prepared and initiated, then turn deliberately towards evangelical perfection, taking up their cross and giving in freely to the demands of love, moving gradually toward the total gift of themselves.

REGIONAL NEWS

Mullingar

For our Summer Outing this year we selected Maynooth College, Ireland's National Seminary, where we were given a guided tour commencing with a visit to its Museum which was very interesting with memorabilia of scientific projects carried out there and many souvenirs of historical importance. We were delighted to welcome Father Patrick Moore, a Team Chaplain to join us who had attended Maynooth College as a seminarian and who shared his experience with us. We were joined also by the Regional Couple, Pat and Carmel Cunneen who brought along a visiting priest from Africa, Father Henry.

We visited the College Chapel, an architectural gem, which has been magnificently restored recently. It is a national treasure as well as a devotional and inspiring Chapel. It is our hope to attend Mass there on another occasion. Later we went for a leisurely walk to the peaceful graveyard. The grounds were looking superb in their summer glory and the College buildings most impressive, all combining to make our visit a rewarding experience. Towards the end of our tour we were shown the spectacular Millennium Garden and some of the accommodation that is available to guests. All-in-all Maynooth College would be an ideal venue for a get-together. Visit the St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, website at www.maynoothcollege.ie for further details or Tel. 01 7083533.

Our evening concluded with dinner at Carton House, quite close to the College. We were enthralled with our visit to this beautiful place, formerly the home of the FitzGerald family who were generous to the founding of Maynooth College. Later we were treated to a guided tour of Carton House by a particularly charming member of staff, Kelly Scales. She was most generous to us with the effort she made on our behalf, making our visit enjoyable and memorable. All returned home happy with our visit to Maynooth. Now it is time to prepare for our new season of activities. We look forward to meeting you at Galway R.C week-end and pray that God will grant us all success in our efforts and peace and joy in our homes.

Frank and Margaret Fagan

From the Regional Chaplain - Fr. Gerry Cassidy

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE SENT HIS ONLY SON

We are very familiar with the story of the Incarnation, spending time immersing ourselves in this mystery with Mary and Jesus can help us speak out our joy, our thanks, our sense of wonder, and our praise of the Divine Persons. We pray for the light of God's grace so that we come to know Jesus as a pattern for our own living.

October 2011

How can I deepen my love of and commitment to Jesus who in becoming human has embraced weakness?
Luke 2:1-4.

How do I respond in moments of vulnerability and powerlessness?

November 2011

How do I allow the remembrance of the birth of Jesus to deepen my love for Jesus who shares my humanity?

Luke 2:22-40

Who and what has taught me to be gentle with myself and with others? How is my life linked to caring for people?

December 2011

How am I challenged in my life and work in contemporary culture by what I see as God's choice of poverty and powerlessness in the birth of Jesus?

Prayer Intentions

Your prayers are asked for the following people who have been ill

Jim and Lynn Jordan

**Paddy and Anne Scott's daughter Clíodhna,
and their grand daughter Caoimhe**

REGIONAL SECTOR NEWS

BELFAST

Retreat

Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.

So said St. Catherine of Siena whose festival day this is. Marriage is intended to be a way in which man and woman help each other to become what God meant each one to be, their deepest and their truest selves. These were the opening words from the Bishop of London's sermon at the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton; and it was in this way that Fr Paddy O'Keeffe CSsR opened our one day retreat in the Passionist Retreat Centre, Tobar Mhuire, Crossgar Co Down on Sunday 15th May. The theme of the retreat was Prayer - Personal and Conjugal.

All three teams were well represented; and Fr Ephrem Blake CP, chaplain to Belfast 5, attended the morning session, and concelebrated Mass with Fr Paddy at 4pm. Fr Paddy commenced the day by giving each of us a copy of the sermon mentioned above. As we heard it being read aloud, we realised that it really captured what marriage and spirituality is all about. Someone praying the Hail Mary or the Our Father could be in perfect contemplation. We cannot judge. It depends on the person and where they are at that particular time. You cannot arrive at the perfect prayer and stay there for the rest of your life! Afterwards Fr Paddy elicited some of our own ideas about personal prayer. Then he talked of the different kinds of prayer - like saying prayers we know by heart (vocal prayer), or the Rosary, the Jesus Prayer, meditation, contemplation, etc. People are inclined to look on themselves as being on different rungs on the ladder of prayer. But Fr Paddy showed us that we could be at different levels of prayer, back and forth, depending on what we are doing or on our energy level, or at what stage of life we are. We can change to and fro. One form of prayer is not necessarily better than another. The old adage Pray as you can still holds. Fr Paddy also gave us interesting new insights into couple prayer, e.g. being together in a prayerful situation or attending a beautiful liturgy where both spouses feel a sense of awe is a kind of couple prayer, or discussing spiritual values etc. Afterwards Fr Paddy elicited some of our own ideas about personal prayer. Then he talked of the different kinds of prayer - like saying prayers we know by heart (vocal prayer), or the Rosary, the Jesus Prayer, As the day went on we had two sessions in small groups and there was an open session at the end. There was a quick slot for an update on Regional News before the day concluded with Mass. We thank Crossgar Monastery for letting us use their beautifully renovated facilities, and for the tasty lunch they provided.

Meeting of the Regional Team of Ireland Sunday 29th May

This was hosted in Belfast at the Monastery of the Poor Clares. All local teams provided catering. Paddy and Anne Scott attended the meeting on behalf of Belfast Sector. The venue was very suitable for the event, so there is a possibility that we might use it for our December 8th celebration this year.

Brendan and Moyra Bunting

GALWAY

We were so lucky with the summer outing. The weather was really fine and the celebration of the Eucharist was uplifting. The team members and Fr Colin OFM were very happy with the day. Coole Park was at its best as usual in the month of June. Bhain gach duine sult as an l. We look forward to the Responsible Couples' Weekend in Galway on the 1st and 2nd of October. We have the programme planned for the two days which we hope will be a good experience for all couples. The theme of the weekend is "With Joy you shall Draw water from the Wells of Salvation." Fr Paddy Greene S.J. will facilitate on Saturday and Sister Frances Canavan will give a talk on Sunday morning. We welcome the visitors from near and far to Galway and hope that we have a fruitful weekend in the West.

Billy and Ann Hyland

REGIONAL NEWS

Dublin

Youth 2000 Festival August 2011

The Youth 2000 Festival was held in Clonmacnoise from Thursday 4th to Sunday 6th August. It was a wonderful gathering of primarily young people from all over the country. The main speaker this year was Fr. Bernard Murphy CFR (USA). Fr. Bernard was the head of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. This is a new religious order which is committed to the renewal of the Church, to radically serve the poor and homeless and to the Church's mission and evangelization.

The Dublin Sector Team took it in turns to attend and to provide personal witness of the great benefits of developing couple spirituality through the Teams Movement in Ireland. It was a hugely uplifting experience to witness so many marvellous young couples and young people generally seeking God with great enthusiasm and commitment. The Holy Spirit filled the air and the feedback from those hearing for the first time about our Movement was very heartening. A number of priests were in attendance and they were greatly encouraged to hear about Teams and how the Movement has developed and expanded since it was founded some 70 years ago by Fr. Henri Caffarel.

Many of the couples we spoke with were actively searching for a means to develop their spiritual lives together and gave us their contact details. We are to follow up with further information and we are looking forward to meeting with them and helping in every way we can.

Celebration

Since the summer issue, we celebrated a special Mass of Thanksgiving in St. Joseph's Parish Church, Terenure on the Ordination of Br. Columba Maria Jordan, CFR (son of Robert and Maeve Jordan of Team 11). Fr. Columba was ordained to the priesthood on Saturday 14th May in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York by Archbishop Timothy Dolan. He has been assigned, along with brother friars to their Friary in Derry and we ask that you keep them in your prayers.

New Teams

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the direction of the Regional Couple, three new teams have been formed. Two new teams were formed in County Meath and one in County Sligo. There was no Teams representation previously in either of these counties. The team in Sligo was piloted by the Regional Couple, Pat & Carmel Cunneen. The two new teams in Meath were piloted by two couples from the Dublin Sector Team, Joe and Aine Clayton and Kevin & Martha Wade. For the Piloting Couples, this involved significant time and input, however, we are delighted to report that their commitment and hard work has been rewarded. All three teams have now committed to joining our Movement and the Piloting Couples have agreed to continue as their Liaison.

Teams Social Evening

As the Social Evening was enjoyed so well by everybody last year, we decided to run it again this year. The sing-song, recitations and music were great with no shortage of talent in Teams from the youngest to the oldest. Robert Jordan from Team 11 has agreed to be our M.C. again this year and it will be a great opportunity to meet and enjoy a relaxing evening. We hope you will be able to join us there at 7.45pm on Friday 16th September. As last year, the venue is St. Patrick's Boys National School Hall, Holly Park, Newtownpark Avenue and the Directions are as follows: Proceed from the N11 down Newtownpark Avenue, turn right into Holly Park (Third Turn on the Right immediately after the Pedestrian Lights) and St. Patrick's Boys National School is on your right.

Breda & Tony Preston

WHO MADE THE WORLD?

We now apparently know from physics that the world had a beginning (what a lovely opening at the beginning of the gospel of John) and will have an end. Don't worry about the end; it is billions of years away, well let's hope the theory is correct. So the big question is why there is a universe or universes, or to put it in different words: something rather than nothing? As a scientific question this is not too helpful, so it needs to be rephrased something as follows: How did it all begin? Now to be fair this is not the same issue, but it does have the merit that it can be approached with an answer at the level of science. This Stephen Hawking has addressed in his recent book and television programme, and it appears that it all began with 'spontaneous generation', and therefore a god is not required. I think the concept of spontaneous generation used to be a theory in biology before it was replaced by the theory of evolution. Science never stays still! So when I am next asked Who made the world? I now know the answer. I bet you all thought that God made the World. Well apparently the answer should have been: Because there is a law such as gravity, the Universe can and will create itself from nothing. Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the Universe exists, why we exist. I can hear that marvellous electronic voice as I write this! This all begs a number of questions, not least how a law caused this to happen, not to mention the agency for the law. (This should not be taken to mean that something very profound, in terms of science, is not being said.)

From the early days of modern science God has been the refuge of scientists who could explain just so much, and the bit that couldn't be explained was the 'hand of God' (and you thought that was just a football term). Today your insurance company might also inform you that some act or other was an act of God, so therefore you cannot be paid. God is really a get-out clause, and to claim that he is no longer required for this or that bit of science appears to sell books better than the amazing science itself, so much for the idea that we don't need God. In science one must make assumptions, and not all of these are testable, so one might use the God concept as a possible explanation for something that has to be assumed in order for the theoretical model to work. This is fine, but it is not a theological statement and as work progresses this or other assumptions may not be required, and this is well understood. Unfortunately, the God assumption became an easy way of explaining the relationship between God and the world. One no longer needed Christ as the explanation, or at the very least one had an extra reason for asserting faith. This God of the gaps, which is described in Wikipedia as referring to a view of God as existing in the "gaps" or aspects of reality that are currently unexplained by scientific knowledge has been popular, probably more so in scientific discussion than in the religious practices of people, but no doubt the idea figured in a right few sermons. We now have Stephen Hawking, one of the few people who could probably make sense of a conversation with God on creation, offering to fill in one of the gaps. He claims, with the impressive credentials of mathematics, that it is all to be explained by the laws of physics.

If nothing more, Stephen Hawking might help us to get rid of the God of the gaps; science appears not to need it, and this is fine, and we certainly shouldn't. Our God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Jesus Christ; and my belief in Jesus Christ as God has nothing to do with any explanation(s) for the working of the universe, or for that matter why my bicycle works in the way that it does. I might stand in awe before the creation described by Hawking and others in the same way that I have stood before Michelangelo's painting of God touching the hand of man, but I don't for one second think that I am looking at the face of God or that the painting existed without a creator, nor do I think that the painting could not be described at the level of chemistry.

One thing that surprises me is the level of certainty with which one level of analysis is used to dismiss another non-competitive perspective. No quiver of doubt, only certainty! On what set of 'a priori' assumptions is that confidence based, and just how were these assumptions tested? We are now well outside the sphere of science. Science, that great achievement of an ordered universe, has in the words of Terry Eagleton its high priests, sacred cows and revered scriptures, ideological exclusions, and rituals for Science, that great achievement of an ordered universe, has in the words of Terry Eagleton its high priests, sacred cows and revered scriptures, ideological exclusions, and rituals for suppressing dissent.

An all too familiar story!

Brendan Bunting

THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

Reflections on the feast of the Assumption

A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pangs, in the agony of giving birth. Then another portent appeared in heaven: a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was snatched away and taken to God and to his throne; and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, so that she can be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

This passage (Revelations 12 v1-7) is read on the Feast of the Assumption. I love the Book of Revelations. It is a theatre of colourful characters; the Living One, The Elders, the Animals, The Four Horsemen, the Harlot, the Lamb and of course the Woman and the Dragon. It invites the reader to explore his own spiritual experience, using his imagination and emotions rather than his reason, becoming personally involved as the drama unfolds.

Revelations or the Apocalypse probably dates from near the end of the first century A.D. and was written by someone called John, possibly with links to the Johannine community, who had been exiled to Patmos and whose writing displays a deep knowledge of Jewish scripture and symbolism. The writer whoever he was, belonged to a community that was being persecuted for their faith. There are many good explanations of this passage by Wilfred Harrington, Bill Riley and Jean Pierre Prevost, whose books I list below. Simply put, the woman represents the people of Israel, daughter Sion, who after the death of Jesus becomes the Church, the dragon represents Satan and the child is of course Jesus the Messiah. A passage from scripture, especially one as vivid as this can have many layers of meaning. I want to explore a little and find out what it is saying to me in my life in 2011.

The fact that this passage has been chosen for the Feast of the Assumption is important. The figure of the Woman clothed with the sun, standing on the moon and crowned with stars is reminiscent of the great mother goddesses; I would think particularly of Cybele, the Phrygian goddess with her turreted crown. It conveys a sense of the nurturing, caring, intuitive, creative, Divine Feminine which expressed itself beautifully in Mary. She was so open to whatever God seemed to want from her no matter what it cost, that the Word was able to take flesh in her. Though it is clear from the Gospel stories that she complied with Jewish law and practice, she was prepared to go outside the prescribed norms in becoming pregnant while she was unmarried because her love of God made her put Him first.

The Woman is giving birth in agony. The Divine feminine expressed in human experience by its very nature often suffers as Mary did. St. Paul in Romans 8 v22 talks of 'Creation groaning in labour pains'. The Divine Feminine is constantly threatened by the great red dragon. For John, the written of revelations, he represents Imperial Rome which demanded worship of the Emperor which was anathema to Christians. However, this vainglorious, self-seeking monster lives not 'out there', but 'right inside every one of us. He is there ready to devour our own Divine Child, who offers new beginnings and possibilities. Let's look at him more closely. He is red, the colour of anger, of passion, of blood and of danger. He is very destructive in that his tail sweeps down a third of the stars from Heaven. I wonder if I delved deep enough I might discover this dragon within myself. Am I raging at something or someone? Anger can be a healthy emotion but if not attended to it can become corrosive. Am I jealous? Jealousy has been described as a healing poison if one seeks diligently for its cause, but this work has to be done honestly and effectively or again it becomes destructive. Do I grab at glamour or quick fixes because my life is starved of meaning, like the girl who craved the Red Shoes (1) which in the end destroyed her? Does my ego lead me to want to be crowned with diadems like the dragon with his seven heads and ten horns so that I am the object of

THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

of admiration. The dragon as an image can be helpful if only to highlight these parts of myself that I would prefer to bury and which while remaining in shadow can be very damaging. However, if I can identify them I can possibly begin to deal with them and move on like the Samaritan Woman in John's gospel (John: chapter 4) who in naming her failings was able to become apostle to her own people. Perhaps this is a good starting point for the Teams' Rule of Life. If we see where the Lord is asking us to change and grow and if we respond, we can drink of the living water which He offers and which only He can give.

Many of us find the couple 'Sit Down' difficult if not impossible. Is it because the monster with seven heads and ten horns sits between us as self appointed referee, ready to devour any creative impulse that might issue forth from our better natures? The knowledge of our own dragon makes us very fearful of our partner's! It is as though the two merge and a larger one takes shape. This is not very helpful for he is a master of the negative; one might as well throw a lighted match into a can of petrol! Wearing the diadems of self righteous victim is very easy. This dragon needs to be hastily decommissioned by dethroning him and removing his seven crowns. Seven in the bible is often symbolic conveying a sense of magnitude. I would then suggest the monster be given a saucer of milk or whatever it is dragons drink and hopefully he will go to sleep and my partner and myself can do some really creative work together, valuing what is good in our relationship and bringing out the best in one another.

The dragon is at his most dangerous and subtle at institutional level. After all, an institution is only a grouping of people joined together for a particularly purpose. Each person brings along his own dragon and the result is one enormous corporate dragon who sees himself as the sole reason for the existence of the institution. Like the seven heads and ten horns, structures, rule, regulations, hierarchies, regalia appear, which are not bad in themselves but quickly become so if the dragon makes use of them for his own glorification. Abbot Mark Patrick Hederman has dealt with this topic in a very thought-provoking way in his book 'Dancing with Dinosaurs' (2) It is very difficult for the Divine Feminine to operate in this environment. The dragon thrives on the status quo because it suits him; the feminine ponders and questions. This has a price. Mary Magdalen's love for Jesus led her to search for Him, ready to brave whoever stood in her way. Apostle to the apostles as first witness of the Risen Christ, she was very soon denigrated to the status of a reformed prostitute, for which there is no scriptural evidence. Joan of Arc was burnt as a witch because she insisted on putting God before church and state politics and nurse Edith Cavell faced a firing squad rather than collude with a brutal regime. Most of all, Mary of Nazareth, having given birth to the Divine Child, watched Him die in agony on the Cross because his message did not suit the establishment and threatened the Roman authorities. This death however was the birth of the new order and victory over the dragon.

He still lurks however and the battle rages. Escape into the wilderness is sometimes necessary for only in that solitary landscape, is it possible to find what is easily important for ourselves and to rediscover and energise the Divine Feminine which exists in all of us, man or woman. On the Feast of the Assumption we honour Mary in the image of the Woman crowned with the stars. However, Mary is not a queen up in the sky for she is one of us. She lived an ordinary life as we do but because of her loving obedience to God, became extraordinary. She inspires us as individuals, as couples and as members of institutions to do likewise. Mary, assumed into Heaven, pray for us.

1. **The Red Shoes** by Hans Christian Anderson.

Interpreted by Clarissa Pinkola Estes in **Women who Run with Wolves**

2. **Dancing with Dinosaurs** Mark Patrick Hederman, OSB.

Further Reading

The Spiritual Adventure of the Apocalypse by Bill Riley.

Sacra Pagina ed Daniel Harrington SJ **Revelation** by Wilfred Harrington OP

How to read the Apocalypse by Jean Pierre Prevost.

Elizabeth Roddy,
Corcullen, Galway.

THE SPIRIT OF LIAISON AND THE ROLE OF THE LIAISON COUPLE

When the Movement began some seventy years ago, there was only a small number of Teams and the arrangements were that Fr Caffarel met with the responsible couples each month. These monthly meetings ensured an effective link between the teams and the commitment of each team to the Movement. As the Teams expanded both in numbers and geographically, new methods of communication and support for the base teams became necessary. Teams today are grouped into sectors, regions and super regions and are spread across some seventy countries. Effective links and good methods of communication between the base teams and the Sector Couple and between the Sector Couple and the leaders of the Movement are essential for the continued spiritual wellbeing and spread of the Movement.

Liaison in Teams is a mutually beneficial service that provides this essential link between the base teams and the Sector Couple and the leaders of the Movement. Where it is impractical for the Sector Couple, to maintain a close link with each team, a Liaison Couple is appointed and given responsibility for a number of teams in the sector. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the Liaison Couple is not overburdened by the number of teams transferred to their care.

Much has been written over the years about Liaison in Teams and in particular the role of the Liaison Couple. Varying degrees of reservations have been expressed and these are well recorded. As with any responsibility in Teams, the call to serve as a Liaison Couple is a call to do the Lord's work. Prayer and discernment is the focus of the Liaison Couple that the Holy Spirit may act with and through them in the carrying out of their work. Great care is exercised by the Liaison Couple to fastidiously safeguard the sanctity and privacy of each team in its care. Liaison in Teams' is not a means to 'inspect' or to provide 'feedback' to the leaders of the Movement, it is about providing encouragement, sharing our charisms, providing pastoral support, good communication and above all, safeguarding and protecting the very personal and spiritual relationship between the members of our teams. Liaison encourages acceptance, openness and hospitality among teams. It is a spiritual and caring role carried out throughout the Movement under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Liaison Couples speak of the great benefit to their spiritual development as they share their faith with the team. There is a joy of acceptance. The Liaison Couple affirm the many varieties of team meeting formats which see the diversity of charisms and the work of the Holy Spirit. The teams are encouraged always to have Christ at the centre of their meeting and to try as best they can to be faithful to the endeavours of Teams.

The following is taken from the Liaison Couples Manual published by the Australasian Super-Regional Team: 'A two-way listening encouragement and friendship are the means by which a special relationship may be built between the Liaison Couple and the Team; a relationship which will enable all to progress within the guiding principles of the Teams Charter and the spirit of its life. It is a commitment to 'sharing experiences', to offering support and guidance to the teams for the benefit of the whole movement. Experience over the years has shown that isolated teams have difficulty in surviving and flourishing without some mainstream contact, ideally through a Liaison Couple.

Couples who provide this link between particular teams and the Sector Couple, and thus to the movement as a whole do so, not in a controlling way - one that imposes decisions - but rather in a supportive way - guiding rather than directing; suggesting rather than ordering; seeking a truly two-way exchange. They help to create unity and communion throughout the Movement, recreating the community that was apparent in the early days of the Church. "See those Christians, how they love one another"

The Dublin Sector is the largest sector within the Irish Region and has fourteen teams. In 2006, the then Dublin Sector Couple and now the Regional Couple, Pat & Carmel Cunneen, had begun the task of reviving Liaison in the Sector. Great progress was made by them and Liaison is now working very successfully throughout the Sector. When Breda & I took over the role of Sector Couple in 2009, one of our greatest concerns was in relation to Liaison; how would we manage it, where would we start, would all of the good work already done be lost. to a new Sector Team. and we are indebted to them for their help and guidance.

The Liaison Couples gained tremendously from their experience and felt very privileged and blessed to be present at and to share in the teams meetings. For Breda & I it was our first involvement in Liaison and it was a wonderful and very spiritually rewarding experience. We felt at ease and an integral part of each meeting. We got to know each of the Responsible Couples and most of the team members as well. A strong mutual trust developed, which greatly helped us, both in our role as a Liaison Couple and as Sector Couple.

THE SPIRIT OF LIAISON AND THE ROLE OF THE LIAISON COUPLE

Liaison was on the agenda for our first sector meeting and each of the Sector Team Couples was allocated responsibility for 3 to 4 teams, selected from the Sector Register as they appeared in it. Each Liaison Couple contacted the respective Responsible Couple for each of the teams' allocated to them. They inform them that they would be their Liaison Couple for the coming year. The Liaison Couples invited the respective Responsible Couples to contact them at any time on any matter of concern to them or their team. They asked if they could attend at a team meeting at a time that would be convenient for the team. They received an invitation to a team meeting from all but one of the teams in the Sector.

We have no difficulty liaising with the team that did not invite us to attend at a team meeting. We have an excellent relationship with all of the team members without exception. While being invited to attend at a team meeting as a Liaison Couple is a great privilege, it is not, in our view, essential. The priority must always be to fully respect the wishes of the team and to ensure good communication with the Responsible Couple and so far as practicable, with all of the team members.

2010 and 2011 have been good years for Teams in Ireland. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the stewardship of the Regional Couple, three new teams have been formed outside the current sectors. Two new teams were formed in County Meath and one in County Sligo. There was no Teams representation previously in either of these counties. The team in Sligo was piloted by the Regional Couple and the new teams in Meath were piloted by two couples from the Dublin Sector Team. For the Piloting Couples, this required a lot of travelling and significant time and input. For the Regional Couple, it involved travelling to Sligo to attend each meeting, a journey on each occasion of more than 100 kilometres in each direction. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the commitment and input by the Piloting Couples was rewarded. All three teams have now committed to joining Teams and the Piloting Couples have agreed to continue as their respective Liaison Couples.

From The Regional Couple

The responsible couple is a vital 'link in the chain' of the community of Teams. They 'ensure that all participate effectively in the life of the community'. The Responsible Couples' Weekend recognises this by bringing each of our RCs together once a year to be renewed and refreshed by the charisms of Teams. We all benefit from the full participation of our RCs and any financial cost, in these difficult times, should be shared. We will try to keep these costs as low as possible. This year we will have four newly piloted responsible couples attending. We have also a revised Responsible Couples Handbook for all RCs which will be distributed in Galway. Dublin Sector had a very successful 'stand' at the Youth 2000 conference held in August. Many priests and young adults were very interested in what we have to offer in Teams. Our Super Regional Couple are presenting in the Teams College in Rome topics on, Liaison; in effect the paper written by Tony and Breda Preston included in this newsletter and Bereavement; arising from discussions held in Ireland on that subject in February. The community of Teams continually calls us to areas of service: RC, sector team/couple, liaison, hospitality, and many more. We need to be generous in responding to that call. God bless.

Pat and Carmel Cunneen

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**"Marriage is the best way"
to live the true love
of a couple
and to be happy**

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