

Equipes Notre-Dame

Newsletter Teams of Our Lady – Irish Region



Issue 115

Winter 2018



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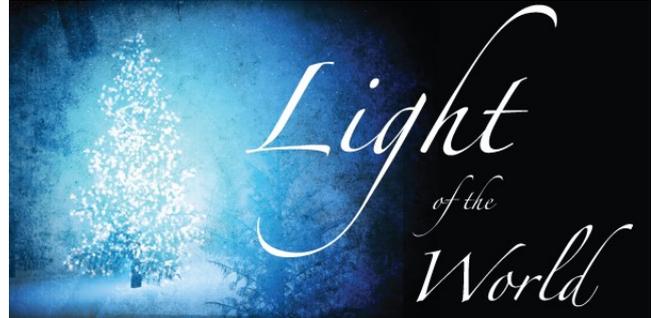
Around the Region



The Apparition chapel, Knock, audience at RC weekend, Fr. Gerry Cassidy and Billy Hyland, Declan Coyle ‘between sessions’



From the Regional Couple



Dear Friends in Teams,

As we are coming to the end of the year and about to enter into the Advent season let us step aside from the hustle and bustle of Christmas and pause for a moment and reflect on our journey throughout the year as we wait for the coming of our Saviour.

“Father, at this special time as blessings all increase, the Angels gather round about with Christmas hope and peace. Now help us, Father, once again, to seek your star above, as reaching out across the world, we share your Christmas love.” Iris Hesselden

The RC weekend took place in Knock in early October and it was heartening to see such a wonderful turnout of Responsible Couples and the couples who were representing their Teams. It was a great blessing to have been in Our Lady’s Shrine in Knock and our thanks to Fr Michael McGrath from Longford who was warmly welcomed together with our Chaplains, Fr Paddy Dundon and Fr Gerry Cassidy who concelebrated the opening Mass in the Apparition Chapel and Fr Paddy who celebrated the closing Mass. Our thanks to the organising Team who did wonderful work in helping to make the weekend a success, to all who made presentations, our musician and soloist and a special thanks to our main speaker Declan Coyle who was an inspiration to us all and left us with a lot to think about.

We welcome new Sector Couples, Stephen and Marguerite O’Neill for Galway and Brendan and Rosemarie Gavin for Dublin and wish them many blessings in their new roles of responsibility and our thanks and appreciation to the outgoing couples.

One of the presentations at the weekend was on our Vocation and Mission for Teams of Our Lady at the dawn of the third Millennium given by Pat and Carmel Cunneen (please see report in this Newsletter) and we would ask all Team members to think about how we can respond to the real challenges facing us all . We have listed below details of the current situation of Teams in Ireland in 2018 for your information.

Teams

In Piloting	0
0 – 5 years	7
6 – 10 years	1
11 – 20 years	2
21 – 30 years	5
+ 30 years	15

Sectors

Belfast	3 Teams
Dublin	18 Teams
Mullingar	6 Teams
Galway	3 Teams

Total: 30 Teams

The future of the Teams of Our Lady will always be based on greater communion with others. Evangelisation is not an optional invitation but a constant duty and it is to recognise the call of God. If, we light up marriage and the family with the true light of the Gospel, a new path will open which will be a reason for hope and joy for us all. Nothing is accomplished without prayer, work and sacrifice. May we take this opportunity of thanking each and every one of you for your dedication and commitment to the Teams of Our Lady during the year and may the light of Christ shine bright in your families this Christmas Time.

Jim and Elaine Keogh

Some Special Gifts

Source Unknown

Here are a few suggestions for special gifts:

- a firm handshake to a shaky soul,*
- a kind word to a lonely person,*
- a warm smile to the disheartened,*
- a sincere concern for someone troubled,*
- a feeling of compassion for the neglected,*
- a comforting thought for the bereaved,*
- a respect for the dignity of others,*
- a defense of the rights of individuals,*
- a word of witness to help a seeking soul,*
- a Merry Christmas to all.*

New Sector Couples



The new Sector Couple for Dublin, Rosemarie and Brendan Gavin and the new Galway Sector Couple Marguerite and Stephen O'Neill



From the Regional Chaplain, Fr. Peter Sexton SJ

An Advent reflection on humility:

Thomas Merton, the American Cistercian author, wondered once whether there were as many as ten free people in the whole world - that is people who saw things as they really were, without adding or subtracting anything. He thought then that it was too much to expect there were as many as 10 such people - but he said there must be at least two or three free people - otherwise the whole world would fall apart!

There is of course only one who absolutely sees things thus, and that is God, and Christ Jesus, God-made-flesh.

What is radical and unique about Christianity is that God is our Father, and we are all sons and daughters of the Living God, and because of Christ we are brothers and sisters of Christ Jesus, and consequently our dignity as human beings with one another is absolutely equal - no one, but no one is more significant than another in the eyes of God, the only eyes that really matter.

Needless to say, that is not the prevailing outlook in our world and in our societies: our world is obsessed with the distinction of importance, not the equality of dignity- where what matters is the haves and the have-nots; those in and those out; those with titles of distinction and those without; 'I can do what I like because I have the power - and you don't!' That is not the way of Christ, and Christ is the Son of the Living God - the only one who sees reality as it really is.

When Jesus talks about humility he is not talking about low self-esteem or thinking little of oneself - this is a psychological problem not a Christian virtue. Christian humility is about recognizing the reality that everything we have and are comes from God - that all is gift. But this is easier said than done. The Master said with a sigh: 'The trouble with the human race is that people refuse to grow up. 'And when', asked the disciple, 'can people be said to have grown up?' 'When they no longer need to be lied to about anything', was the reply.

Humility is the willingness to be called into question, to not need to be lied to about anything. The comment of Dom Helder Camara, the late archbishop of Recife in Brazil, that 'if you criticize me you have a gift to give me', does not sit easily with us - we are so touchy, so defensive, so quick to anger - all signs of unfreedom in us.

Jesus, in his dealings with the Pharisees, said they have a right to teach, but not a right to be hypocrites! Titles have their place in living in society, but they are not to be taken too seriously - as they have down through history, including in the Church, where in following the Master they should be taken least seriously of all! 'You know that among the pagans their so-called rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you ...' Unfortunately this has often happened among us, and has led to the most appalling and un-Christian abuse of authority.

The real block to humility in our society is fear of weakness, fear of vulnerability, fear of showing any sign of brokenness - and yet all the spiritual teachers will say that the only path to humility is through broken-heartedness, when it is revealed that our only help to freedom is in God's grace.

Our society is terrified of this vulnerability - hence the constant stridency in debate, where you shout down those who disagree with you or try to bully them into submission in a climate of oppression or of political correctness.

Everyone has experienced something of the beginnings of humility, that precious freedom, in failure or grief or depression or being passed over, when our defences are down. But the good news of the Gospel is that it is precisely then that we are close to God, and close to reality, and this is the beginning of mature Christian freedom, where we begin to be afraid of nothing. 'Unless you become like a child you will never enter the kingdom of God.' It is the gift of the Christ child from the crib.

Texts: December: Matthew and Luke - the Infancy narratives
January: Philippians 4, 4-9
February: Romans 8, 31-39

Prayer Intentions

For those who have died:

Fr. John Moore SJ, former Teams chaplain

Tom Bailey, brother of Una Moore, team 13

Michael Seery, father of Rosemarie Gavin and Pat Seery, team 38

Michael Healy, father of John Healy, Team 34

Gerry O'Reilly, father of John O'Reilly, Team 34

Michael Cummins, brother of Elaine Keogh, Mullingar Sector

For those who are ill:

Dermot Bunting, Belfast

Jim and Lyn Jordan , Belfast

Dominic Clenaghan, brother of Michael, Belfast

Etienne and Louw, grandsons of John McCarrick, Galway Sector

Shane McCarrick, son of John

Vocation and Mission for Teams of Our Lady in the light of Amoris Laetitia, Pope Francis' urgings to Teams of Our Lady and Teams Fatima Gathering

Vision and Mission

It's happened. Teams of Our Lady have always had an 'orientation' or a 'direction of travel' and particularly after the publication of 'The Second Wind' in 1994, an output, from each Gathering of Teams. What is special about the Vocation and Mission document issued at the end of the recent 2018 Fatima Gathering? How does this link with the urgings of Pope Francis in 2015 to Teams of Our Lady and the exhortation, Amoris Laetitia.

Amoris Laetitia is at the heart of the message of spirituality for all Families including Teams. There is a great resonance between what our founder, Fr Caffarel, urged for Teams Couples and Amoris Laetitia. What is the Teams movement asking of us in its Vocation and Mission statement and does it link with the legacy challenge posed by Amoris Laetitia, WMOF and the Pope's exhortation to the Church in Ireland?

Teams Pedagogy

Pope John Paul II, Pope Francis have positively commented on Teams pedagogy and the endeavours being a vital cog in our pedagogy, our way of walking on our spiritual journey. (We can use all sorts of images 'concrete blocks' 'cement' 'glue' to describe the core and indeed the mystique of the endeavours.) Fr Caffarel in his long journey with Teams, his development work with couples, always stressed the importance of the endeavours.

Figure 1: Pedagogy of Teams

Our pedagogy, our charism includes not only our endeavours but the Team Meeting and Mission. The fruits of the endeavours are living in Communion, Love, Seeking God's will, discovering the Truth about ourselves. Fr Caffarel described Teams of Our Lady as 'married couples striving for holiness, nothing more, and nothing less.'

Mission

Mission as stated above is also an integral part of and fruit of our pedagogy. It is natural for us firstly to look to our founder Fr Caffarel for mission, but we will also look later at Amoris Laetitia, what the Popes have challenged us to do and what the Fatima Gathering seeks from us.



Fr Caffarel was clear on the essential aspects of Mission;

- 1 To make God known and proclaim his love
- 2 Being close to our children and being prophets of love
- 3 The third aspect, apostolic mission in the Church

Fr Caffarel saw the 'Christian Couple and the family practicing an apostolic mission of welcome and hospitality and must be able to mediate between the world and the Church'. In practice he saw 'couples being intermediaries on the path of the Church for people or couples who are fragile, isolated, discouraged, traumatised, and for newcomers'. He described the Christian home as 'an extremely effective instrument of apostolic mission'. Fr Caffarel does not want us to be comfortable in our mission, our spirituality, by just focussing on family and friends. Oh No. He sees the charity, the love breathed into us, radiating widely and being a sign of unity in the world. Fr Caffarel reminds us that the tree will be judged, as in the Gospel, by its fruit; 'not only its beauty but its fruits.' Fr Caffarel seeks action, but 'action rooted to its divine source'...

‘Through the words of Christ in the Gospels, the couple becomes a community of love and it is this that nourishes the missionary strength for the couple’.

He says ‘shared prayer and shared mission are like the front and back of the same coin the community of love in the home ...’ as with Christianity, the family weakens when it does not continually draw from the Gospel. ‘God calls us to live this great love; we cannot keep silent about the way we live and it is our duty to bring others into this love.’

Challenges of our time

We are conscious that even more fundamental changes have taken place since the foundation of Teams 75 years ago. Fr Caffarel felt that he should alert Teams to the threat of atheism during his years of leadership. *Amoris Laetitia* too highlights the big challenges including individualism and relativism for Christian couples trying to live their lives.

What are these challenges highlighted in our Teams; Vision and Mission document 2018?

From the economic viewpoint it sees more globalisation, more exploitation, more inequality of income and wealth, migration, pressure on resources and lack of care for the environment.

It sees too a culture of rejection, reflected in the rejection of migrants (economic or refugee). Those who cannot produce are rejected in society,

Social pressures exist too which militate against Christian values. Housing, a fundamental aspect of the family is less available or affordable... There is a pervasive culture of individualism in society. This culture of individualism, intrudes, to the detriment of the family into couple relationships leading to marriage difficulties or breakdown. Society seems to give little value to the monogamous union between a man and a woman based on fidelity, permanence and openness to life.

Single parents and their children are becoming a bigger and bigger cohort of our population in Ireland as in the rest of the world. Predominantly single women, they struggle economically, socially, and very probably spiritually leaving huge challenges for the traditional or even adapted family model. Practice of religion has fallen away.

But on a positive note we should reflect that since 1994, and with all the changes recorded above, the number of Teams globally in terms of members including spiritual counsellors has doubled to 150,000.

The Popes’ Reflections on Teams of Our Lady

Pope John Paul II in January 2003 extensively praised the pedagogy of Teams.

In respect of the missionary aspect he focussed; that ‘we become more actively involved in life of young people in the Church, especially at time during engagement or in the first years of their marriage’; (accompaniment)

And that ‘we continue to witness to the greatness of human love against a background of suffering and discord.’ Pope Francis put a stronger and sharper message before Teams when he addressed them in September 2015, on the eve of publishing *Amoris Laetitia*.



‘I invite Teams couples to a missionary commitment, as the image of the family is being deformed through powerful contrary projects supported by ideological colonisation’. I invite; ‘Teams to commit yourselves, in a more concrete way and with ever renewed creativity, in the activities that can be organised to receive, form and support in the faith young couples particularly before and after their marriage’

‘I exhort you to continue to be close to wounded families, numerous because of lack of work, of poverty, of health problems, of mourning or worry caused by a child, or lack of balance caused by estrangement, or absence, or a climate of violence.’

‘Be instruments of mercy to those whose marriages have failed Bring your testimony and your experience ... receive them with their wounds and help them to walk in faith under the gaze of Christ, to take part in an appropriate way in the life of The Church’

‘Do not forget either the unspeakable suffering of youngsters who live these painful situations, you can give so much’

So after all that we ask you what is our calling ... What are the appropriate action points?

Teams response to the challenge

The Teams Movement states that in this new environment; it will ‘support and encourage’. With its organisation and animation of practical programmes it will support couples in the new situations they encounter in contemporary society.

The Teams movement in response to Pope Francis and Amoris Laetitia, says that ‘its charism is at the service of the Church’

It recalls that Pope Francis ‘calls us to be missionary, otherwise our spirituality could be ineffectual’

The Teams Vocation and Mission document says ‘The New Evangelisation implies a new commitment of each and every team member and not just from qualified individuals. The awareness of our limitations will be a constant motivation not to remain mediocre but to continue to pursue holiness. Mission opens up a path of formation and maturity’

We are challenged too to welcome the stranger. Too often we seek out ‘likeminded’ Christians and avoid fishing in waters that we perceive to be alien.

Discernment; in what areas should Teams be missionaries?

We are reminded in the Mission opus that the couple is a work in progress that grows gradually thanks to the gifts received from God. This resonates with Pope Francis ‘There is no such thing as the perfect family’ or the words of Fr Caffarel (with an emphasis on ‘striving for holiness’).

The Fatima document highlights a number of missionary areas for Teams

We comment below on 4 of these missionary challenges



ACCOMPANIMENT

1. Education / Transmission of Faith
2. Preparation for marriage /accompaniment
3. Couples in crisis
4. In respect of couples in new relationships
5. Elderly
6. Education of Youth
7. Spiritual reflection and dissemination

1 Education and Transmission of Faith

What can we do here for our /other children? Teams have c 4000 in its Youth Movement (YTOL) What Parish / Youth Programmes can we look to? Dundrum Parish has a Youth Pastoral Council.

2 Preparations of Marriage and Accompaniment

We had an interesting experience in Ballymun some 25 years ago where we saw ‘locally adapted’ pre-marriage courses with active accompaniment probably helped greatly by the mutual location of ‘trainers/accompaniers’ and newly-married couples. The process looked very good (and forward looking) in the light of Amoris Laetitia and where we are now in our ‘Mission’ discernment.

Accord are re-formulating their pre-marriage programmes in the light of Amoris Laetitia and good tangible experience from the English Church (Marriage Care, (Accord in the UK) are working actively now with a number of small groups in the Marriage and Family arena including Teams Of Our lady)

Is it time for us to open up a dialogue with Accord on how we can work together? Using our charism in accompaniment is one possible route (See Amoris Laetitia Ch 6 (217-246).

The Teams movement in other (larger) countries has different programmes for those not married but in relationship such as ‘Tandem Teams’ ‘Mas Pareja’ ‘Reliance’. These outreach movements in Teams do not set out to ‘convert’ but to testify to Marriage as a path to holiness.

3 Couples in Crisis

Clearly Accord and Retrouvaille are the experts in the ‘crisis’ marriage. We can learn from them. Equally we have much to offer in the ‘pre crisis’ (discernment; before the marriage becomes irreparable) aspect of marriage. We have the embedded fruits of our charism, that are there to be used and equally the Movement is keen that practical training be undertaken. Fr Caffarel said ‘I would like Teams of Our Lady to have marriage counsellors, not to have a monopoly, but to ensure that they act in line with the founding charism’

4 ‘Couples in new relationships’

This was covered already in the context of September 2015 Papal address. The spiritual counsellor is a vital cog in this initiative to provide guidance and discernment. The sub movement in Teams, Reliance covers this area.

The Bishops’ Conference (Marriage and the Family) has been doing a lot of work with Marriage and Family Groups over the past 3 years. This includes not only allowing the Groups to inform the Conference of their pedagogy but to work in respect of the World Meeting of Families. An example of the ‘fruits’ of these exchanges was at the World Meeting of Families. At a workshop at WMOF, Accord outlined the marriage and family organisations including Teams of Our Lady, that are providing marriage enrichment for couples.

‘Do not be afraid ...’ ‘Let’s go’

This exhortation embedded in the Mission statement is clear. Successive Popes have exhorted us. We in Teams are already ‘initiated’ in the art of accompaniment with discernment, welcome, listening, compassion, care, patience, mutual understanding. We have to step out in faith. Teams couples have a long tradition in ministry (Ministries: Eucharist, Word,); with organisations such as Accord, V de P. More of us Teams couples are now called to witness and to ‘accompany’ in the Marriage Sacrament context. In 2014, for Teams 50th celebration we illustrated the ministries in Ireland that Teams Members were engaged in.

These Teams members/couples were (individually) led by the Spirit of God to engage in these ministries, in line with the urgings of Fr Caffarel. So God is calling you. The Teams movement is with you.

Pat and Carmel Cunneen Team 25

Elizabeth O'Hegarty RIP;



An Appreciation

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of Elizabeth O'Hegarty on the 6th of January of this year.

Elizabeth was an enthusiastic member of Team 11 for over a quarter of a century. At pooling, her comments very often reflected her involvement with and support of dysfunctional or marginalised members of the community.

Elizabeth was very much a social animal. She loved parties and was happily involved in team, parish, and community affairs. She was married to Diarmuid and though they had no family, she always referred to her stepchildren and step-grandchildren as 'her children'.

When Diarmuid died, all of us in Team 11 demanded that she remain as a member. She not only remained, but continued to attend meetings regularly, despite her increasing ill-health.

We miss her keen intellect and her input into Team 11.

Jim and Mary Boylan on behalf of the team.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Because of the recent change in EU law on data protection, Equipes Notre-Dame must comply with regulations about the personal data it holds about its members. Information held and processed are names and contact details. We do this to keep you informed about news, events and activities in Teams.

At the Regional Conference Weekend, Consent Forms seeking the signature of all members were circulated to the Responsible Couples present in Knock, or posted to absent R/Cs the following week. Clear instructions accompanied every pack. By signing the form, each member is confirming consent that Teams of Our Lady, Irish Region, may hold and process his/her personal data for the purpose stated above. Your personal details are not shared with any third party without your consent.

A big 'Thank You' to all Responsible Couples who have already returned forms to us, and we are hopeful that we will get the remainder before Christmas. Almost half of the completed forms have now come back. We advise that ALL forms from a Team be sent together.

If you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact us.

***Joe & Áine Clayton, 43, Beech Grove, Lucan, Co. Dublin
(086 0561497) fanadclayton@yahoo.co.uk***

Father Henri Caffarel – A Founder in the Church

In 1936, after several years as a priest, Father Caffarel asked his Bishop for a break to recharge his batteries spiritually. He expressed the desire for a year of prayer and calm meditation after five years of hyper-active ministry. He was driven by a deep conviction, one that Vatican II would remind us of almost thirty years later, that all men/women are called to holiness. “All” meaning the laity too, who seemed to have been rather neglected in that regard.

During his ministry he had always been inviting men and women, particularly married couples to come back to spiritual life. He told us: *“I am convinced that each human being should reach full bloom (full self realisation) and I think that Man cannot reach full accomplishment until all parts, all faculties develop to reach completeness.”*

The foundation of the first ‘Team’ came about through Father Caffarel having been spiritual counsellor to two women, who later with their husbands and other couples became the first group (not yet called a ‘Team’). They invited him to become their guide. At their first meeting on February 25th, 1939, Father Caffarel expressed his vision for the group: *“Let us seek together.”*

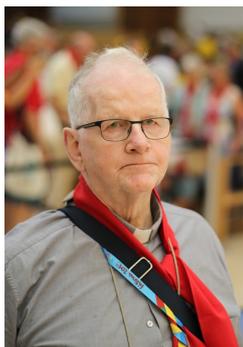
Speaking of his preoccupation with the spirituality of married couples he tells us that:

“Christian spirituality seemed to infer for quite some time that searching for God in one’s life, entering into the mystery of God was just for priests, monks, and nuns and that poor married couples might just be saved, if they were lucky! And all my preoccupations.....were to help people to discover that human love is a way towards God. But then we must be aware of the type of love we are dealing with, we have to place milestones along the way, we have to help people to proceed on that road! This is my deep belief: human love speaks of God’s love, it is a kind of parable.”

It seemed clear that Father Caffarel responded to a calling. He already knew the problems faced by couples that he accompanied spiritually. He entered into the process with them gathering together and seeking collectively. Speaking in Rome in 1959 he said: *“I have endeavoured to understand the needs and aspirations of Christian couples and to perceive in them the movements of grace, in order to help them to correspond joyfully and generously.....What are the desires and aspirations that must be fulfilled because they lead to progress and spiritual growth? And what are those that must be halted because they lead to mediocrity and sloppiness?”*

Speaking of the first couples in the Team he observed these young couples were confirmed Christians, who did not believe in living their love on the periphery of their faith and they believed that: *“This human love is our wealth and our joy. Is it not possible that God does not believe it to be something that is very beautiful and very great; we want to get informed about it; you must reveal it to us.”* Father Caffarel convinced that, since love came from God, and since marriage was a Divine institution, the Divine idea of love and of marriage ought to be infinitely more exalting than anything that these young men and women could imagine. His answer to them: *“Let us seek together. Let us unite and go off and discover.”*

John and Elaine Cogavin.



A Reflection on the 12th International Gathering of Teams of Our Lady – Fatima 2018

Fr. Paddy Dundon

This year I missed the Retreat of my religious Congregation and so I made the Gathering in Fatima my annual retreat. We started each day with morning prayer followed by meditation – each day Archbishop Tolentino de Medonca guided our meditation based on St. Luke 15 (11-32) the parable of the “compassionate father”.

I had heard this Gospel so many times, and indeed preached on it, but this man gave new and relevant insights on the text.

On Tuesday July 17th his opening text was “The younger son said give me” and he spoke of our seeking of liberty and how the father let him go.

The next day the text was “He wasted all his goods” and this led into Pope Francis’ encyclical “*Laudato Si*” and how we are wasting and destroying our inheritance, our planet.

When it came to repentance and forgiveness, on Thursday – Archbishop Emeritus Georges Casmussa, and Apostolic Visitor to the Gathering, who had been kidnapped in Iraq, imprisoned and beaten, asked the question “Have I forgiven them?” – He said “Not to forgive does not solve anything” and “We cannot live in hate”.

On Friday and Saturday his theme was “And there was a great feast”, “There was Joy”.

He suggested that we do not have enough joy in our lives and religion.



Abbot Martin Shipperlee, Super-Regional Chaplain, Pat, Carmel, Dzidzia and Jacinta Jim and Elaine bring offerings at mass, “The Prodigal Son”,

Around the Region

Dublin

Receiving the Baton!

Heartfelt thanks to Gerry and Grace Mangan, outgoing Sector Couple 2015-2018.

Together with their Sector Team, Tony and Noreen Lawlor (Team 39), Pat and Maureen Seery (Team 38) John and Ireneus Shortt (Team 26) and Fr. Joe Clavin (Team 39) they have given generous and faithful service to the Sector. For this and for smoothing the path for the new Sector Team, we express our sincere gratitude.

We were humbled and excited to accept the invitation to serve the Movement as Sector Couple but knew very little of what was practically involved! Gerry, Grace and others came to the rescue with experience and advice.

We began to pray, asking God to show us the couples and chaplain whom He had chosen. Once again, He has graciously provided the Sector with a wonderful team, all of whom accepted His invitation to serve with faith and enthusiasm. Your new team is: Ilaria Furlan and Pierpaolo Dondio (Team 36), Anne and Mark O'Leary (Team 37), John and Bernie Healy (Team 34), Brian and Úna Moore (Team 13), Fr. Richard Sheehy (Team 36) and Brendan and Rosemarie Gavin (Team 38). We entrust the new Team to your prayers.

We look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the upcoming Mass for the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Friends and families with children, especially welcome. Mass will be held in Avila Carmelite Centre on **7th December 2018 at 8pm.**

The Dublin Sector Retreat will take place in Avila also on 2nd March 2019. Further details in the New Year through your Responsible Couple and on the Teams of Our Lady Ireland, website, <https://www.equipes-notre-dame.ie/>

Reflection on Knock as venue for R.C. weekend 2018.

The Responsible Couples' Weekend was held in Knock this year and was a wonderful opportunity to get together with others from all over Ireland to renew our commitments to Teams spirituality as well as to our various Teams.

For us, the blessing of being in Knock during this gathering was immense. Having the opportunity to arrive early on Friday afternoon helped us make the most of the being present at this beautiful shrine. With others, we availed of the sacrament of reconciliation, prayer in the various chapels and the Basilica. We were invited to participate in the monthly parish vigil which included a healing service, short procession and mass.

Even before the weekend programme started officially, we already felt blessed and prepared by Our Lady to receive more!

Brendan and Rosemarie Gavin

Belfast

At this moment our three teams are still intact. We plan to meet together in St Gerard's Parochial House on Friday December 7th at 6.30 pm for Mass at 7 pm. Fr Brendan Mc Convery will celebrate Mass and we hope to have a light supper afterwards. All welcome.

In our own team Moyra and Brendan request continuing prayers for their son Dermot who has been ill for some months now. He is doing well but is not 100% yet.

Margaret Lambe's daughter Róisín has given birth to a baby boy Ruairhi Christopher, a little brother for Eamon. Congratulations to Róisín and Sean and prayers of gratitude for safe delivery.

Moyra and Brendan, Fr Gerry and Margaret Lambe travelled to Knock for the RC weekend recently. They all enjoyed their day and benefited from the input on Prayer etc.

Team 2 are doing well although a number of members still struggling with health problems. Please keep Jim and Lyn Jordan especially in your prayers.

Team 5 Eithne Clenaghan is doing well with her new pacemaker. Michael's brother Dominic is terminally ill - they would appreciate prayers for a peaceful and happy journey.

We would like to wish everyone a peaceful and happy Christmas,

Love to all,

Deirdre and Declan Kennedy

Mullingar

November, the month of the Holy Souls is the 15th anniversary of the death of Kevin O'Grady R.I.P., late husband of Patsy, a member of Mullingar Team 1 from the beginning. Our thoughts and Prayers are with Patsy, her children and Grandchildren, at this time. Our thoughts and prayers are also with those members of the Team who were ill recently. We thank God for their return to good health.

Golden Anniversary celebrations are in the air in Mullingar Team 1. We wish to congratulate and pray God's blessing on Ann and Paddy Hanley who were married on August 14th 1968, in St. Pappan's Church Ballymun, and on Peggy and Aidan McTiernan who were married on September 14th, 1968 in the Church of the Holy Name, Beechwood Avenue, Ranelagh. An appropriate celebration was held in the Greville Arms Hotel, where Mullingar Team 1 were joined by founder members Anna Marie and Oliver Leavy. Anna Marie and Oliver also celebrated a significant anniversary this year, marking 54 years marriage.

Congratulations also to our Team Chaplain, Most Rev. Dr. Michael Smith, who recently retired and is now Bishop Emeritus; and has moved into his new home, St. Oliver's. We thank God for Bishop Michael, for his service to the Diocese of Meath, and for 40 years as our team Chaplain.

Team 4 Mullingar.

Team 4 wish to congratulate Fr. Paul Crosbie, our Chaplain, on his recent appointment as Administrator of Mullingar Parish.

We wish him many blessings at this time, and we pray that the Holy Spirit will guide and protect him in this new role. Congratulations and very best wishes are extended to Joe and Assumpta O'Meara on the birth of their Grandson, Rory David.

Team 6 Mullingar.

Congratulations to our Chaplain Fr. Patrick Moore P.P., V.F. Castlepollard, who recently celebrated his Golden Jubilee as a Priest The Team were delighted to mark appropriately this special occasion with him.

Colette and Jimmy Lambe

Galway

Congratulations to Marie and Manus Duggan on celebrating their Golden wedding anniversary, they were delighted to have all their family around them for this very special occasion. Manus goes for surgery on December 7th, so we will keep him in our prayers.

We are delighted that Eddie Lloyd continues to make a good recovery following his surgery in September. Continued prayers go to John McCarrick's grandsons Etienne and Louw who are recovering from an illness. Also John's son Shane who is now recovering at home.

The annual mass to celebrate the Immaculate Conception will take place in Croí Nua on 7th December at 7.30 pm.

The Galway sector look forward to welcoming Responsible Couples to Galway for the 2019 RC weekend next October – More information will be provided in the next edition of the newsletter.

Our congratulations to Jean Hutchinson (daughter of Anne and Jack) who succeeded in passing her Final Chartered Accountancy exams. Jean was born when Team B was set up and continued to be a presence with Team B for the past 25 years. Thanks to all for the many prayers said and candles lit for her effort.

Anne and Jack Hutchinson`



John Short, Tony Banks (GB), Mary Orr, Sean Kinsella, Helena McCloskey, Antony Denman, John Cogavin, Elaine Cogavin, Carmel Clare, Susan Walsh, Gerry Walsh, Liam Clare, Deacon Noel McHugh proclaiming The Word of God at Papal Mass



Images from Fatima

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