



Equipes Notre-Dame

Newsletter Teams of Our Lady – Irish Region

**Looking Forward to
the Transatlantic Super-Regional Gathering and
Celebration of 50 Years of Teams in Ireland, 2014**

Issue 94

Autumn 2013



Inside this issue:

<i>From the Regional Couple</i>	2
<i>From the Leading Team</i>	3
<i>From the Spiritual Counsellor</i>	4
<i>Responsible Couples' Weekend</i>	5
<i>Regional News</i>	6
<i>From the Regional Chaplain</i>	9
<i>Prayer Intentions</i>	9
<i>Teams and Faith Sharing</i>	10
<i>Notice Board</i>	11

Photos taken at Fundraising Event held in Joe and Áine Clayton's beautiful garden on Saturday 29th June. The purpose was to raise funds to support childrens' activities at the Gathering.

From the Regional Couple



Jesus and Women

Most women seemingly empathise with Martha rather than Mary. Jesus, totally breaking with the culture of the time had Mary, Martha's sister, sit at his feet. Women in those days never sat close to the Rabbi/Teacher or in the front of the temple. Jesus using the words 'Martha, Martha', could be seen, not as a rebuke, but rather an affectionate address in the context of reminding her of the importance of The Word, fellowship over food. Throughout Luke's Gospel, in particular, Jesus is seen as sensitive, respectful, accepting and above all counter cultural towards women. Through our prism Jesus's actions might be seen as part of an equality agenda, but could be interpreted more as infinite goodness, justice and love. In His encounter with the Samaritan woman (John Ch 4) Jesus treated her as a person who was worth his offer of the 'water of eternal life'. The woman in the early exchanges, reflecting the historical conflict, sees Jesus as a 'Jew', a stranger. Jesus is having none of this 'ethnic argument'. Later, on the return of the disciples (Peter), Jesus challenged them for questioning His interaction with a woman, the 'gender' context of the time. The accepting words of the woman at the well grew as her address to Jesus changed from 'Sir' to 'Prophet' to her final word of 'Messiah', reflecting the acceptance, love, understanding and forgiveness she had received from Jesus. And the final act was the woman, parched in her life with a lack of real love, returned to her village, convinced of the message, witnessing to His love.

Jesus countered the hypocrisy of the religious leaders in the temple at Capernaum, cured a woman on the Sabbath (Luke 7 36-50). Against the mould he called the crippled woman forward to the front of the temple, interrupting the teaching. He shocked those around by speaking to a woman, and laying hands on her. He affirmed a status to this woman, against the tradition, by calling her a 'daughter of Abraham'. By breaking this mould, by challenging his opponents, Jesus was in his mission of love setting himself up for the Cross.

Jesus included women in His disciples and in His circle, including women of questionable backgrounds. Mary Magdalen, one of those women, was privileged to be the first to see the risen Lord and to relay the message of the Resurrection to the other disciples and to the world. At that time a woman's evidence was far less credible than that of a man. The daughters of Jerusalem were portrayed in Luke as courageous, staying with Jesus at Calvary, returning with spices to anoint His Body, when the (male) disciples were hiding behind barred doors. Jesus, teaching about discipleship (Matthew 12;50) said; 'Behold my mother and my brother. For whosoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother'. Obedience to the will of the Father, not gender, was important. Women were granted fully fledged discipleship by Jesus.

Mary, our patron in Teams teaches us through the Word. In Luke 1 .41 we have the wonderful encounter of Mary and Elizabeth. 'The babe leaped in her womb' to which Mary responded in our familiar words, The Magnificat; 'My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour.' What is the relevance for Teams of Our Lady? The message and example of Jesus is still relevant. In Teams, our 'sit down', our 'conjugal prayer' manifest our mutual acceptance, our empathy, our recognition of The Father in our lives, our mutual sharing in the service of one another and God, our sense of discipleship. We can look around us though and see new variants of inequality; lack of respect, exclusion, subjugation, enslavement in its various forms. Our lives, our witness, however small, need to reflect the grace and joy of our covenant in this world.

We take this time of handover to express our thanks to you all in Teams. Serving you in Teams over the past four years has been a great blessing for us as a couple, enriching our life. We wish every blessing on our successor couple.

We wish on your behalf, Paul and Helena Mc Closkey, former Transatlantic Super Regional Couple, well in their new role on the ERI , representing the Eurasia Zone (English speaking teams world wide; embracing our Super Region).

Pat and Carmel Cunneen



Living the Contents of Faith

Dear fellow team members,

As we journey through this *Year of Faith*, promulgated by Pope Benedict XVI in his Apostolic Letter “*Porta Fidei*”, it is in the latter sections of his letter that he reminds us that while faith is important, so too are actions.

To truly understand and live our faith it is important to first understand the contents of the faith: “*In fact, there exists a profound unity between the act by which we believe and the content to which we give our assent.*” (*Porta Fidei*, 10)

“*Porta Fidei*” goes on to suggest that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is indispensable in arriving at a systematic knowledge of the content of the faith, since it contains the essential and fundamental contents of doctrine. How are we able to give fuller assent to our faith and beliefs without knowing and practicing the content?

By analogy we might also suggest that it is in the fundamental documents of the Équipes Notre-Dame and the writings of Father Caffarel that we, as team members, come to understand fully the charism and mystique of what it means to be members of Teams, thereby enabling us to faithfully follow our path to holiness.

Pope Benedict also reminds us that faith needs to be expressed in acts of love and service to others – these acts of charity are the fruit of the faith. Many team members already give freely of their time and energy to help their neighbour. They do this in many forms, both within society and privately, but always with a genuine sense of faith, charity and care for the other.

“*It is faith that enables us to recognize Christ and it is his love that impels us to assist him whenever he becomes our neighbour along the journey of life.*” (*Porta Fidei*, 14)

We were reminded of the parable of the Good Samaritan at the International Gathering in Brasilia, 2012 and we personally have been constantly reminded of the care and hospitality of team members throughout the world. It is a true act of charity to take complete strangers into your home and allow them to share and to be part of your life. For us this defines the universality of the Teams Movement. While language and culture might vary, the one constant is that we are readily welcomed and accepted as members of Teams in a similar way to which we all welcome and share with the other members of our own team each month. When we have been fortunate enough to attend a team meeting throughout the world, we instantly feel part of that team since we all share a common bond based on the “content” of our team faith.

Pope Benedict calls on us to not only live the faith but also to be authentic witnesses of faith: “*What the world is in particular need of today is the credible witness of people enlightened in mind and heart by the word of the Lord, ...*”. (*Porta Fidei*, 15)

It is indeed prophetic that more than sixty years ago the founder of our Movement, Father Henri Caffarel, echoed similar sentiments when he wrote:

“*Christianity needs your witness; ... you must feel responsible and want to be responsible for our Movement and its mission. You must believe in what you are doing and do it with enthusiasm.*” (Father H. Caffarel, Editorial, April 1949)

Therefore we all have an obligation, be it by living the content of our faith in our everyday actions or by being enthusiastic witnesses to others of the benefits and joys of our Teams Movement. The two are not mutually exclusive, since it is through a desire to deepen our faith as a couple that we were drawn to Teams and it is through Teams that we reach out to other couples so that they too may experience the spiritual richness and fullness of their marriage.

As we come to the end of our period of service on the International Leading Team (ERI), we give thanks to all those who, by their faithful inspiration and enthusiasm, have been witnesses to us and encouraged us to live and grow in our team faith and understanding over the past years. May the Teams Movement continue to grow and flourish as an example of authentic and lasting faith, love and charity!

Jan and Peter Ralton
Eurasia Zone, ERI



From the Spiritual Counsellor

My Very Dear Team members,

Since the very beginning, the particular appeal and charisma of the Teams of Our Lady Movement has been to promote the holiness of couples and this is what Father Caffarel used to mean when he used his favourite expression, *let us seek together*. In the Forties, this idea that we are all called to holiness was not yet totally accepted. It was as if holiness was the prerogative of only a few, those who were called to evangelical perfection either through the priesthood or the religious life. It was called the theory of the *two ways*: the way of the evangelical advice (obedience, poverty and chastity) for some and the way of instruction for others, who were, in truth, the majority.

This doctrine of the two ways was based on a certain interpretation of the well-known story of the Rich Young Man (Mt 19, 16-22). Of course, you know the text well. When the Young Man asks him what he should do to have eternal life, Jesus begins by saying, *fulfil the commandments*. But since the young man has been practicing them since he was a child, Jesus suggests *If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor...and come, follow me*.

The Church Fathers and spiritual theology have interpreted this text according to the two ways: instruction for all; evangelical advice for the few, for the perfect ones.

Today the understanding of this episode has moved in a different direction. What is called into question, according to the Gospel's logic, is the relationship between the *Law* and *Grace*, between the *Old* and the *New Testament*. It is true that the Law already comprises within it the ideal of holiness, according to Scripture: *You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy* (Lev 19, 2). But now holiness and perfection—*You shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect* (Mt 5, 48)—are achieved by following Jesus Christ—obedient, poor & chaste—and by putting God, beloved above everything, at the centre of all life. St Benedict used to say in his Rule that nothing must be put before God.

Vatican II validated and blessed this interpretation of the Gospel story by proclaiming with great clarity that all Christians in all walks of life and from all social strata were called to holiness. This means that couples and Christian families are called to the perfection of holiness, and this way is not optional, it is the only way that we are all called to follow. This way is Christ, who is the way of the Church, as John Paul II liked to say. I think that it is above all in this way that we ought to understand the expression that accompanies us since Brasilia, *Dare to live the Gospel*, that is to say, we need to take seriously the evangelical calls about the demands of holiness in our condition of disciples of Christ and children of God. And so marriage is, according the evangelical ideal, made up of two disciples who love each other in the Lord—*For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh* (Mt 19, 4-6).

Pope Francis insists that it is urgent for us all to put God completely in the centre of our lives. In our Movement, the Endeavours and most particularly, conjugal prayer and the Sit-Down, are precious but simple means that enable us to pursue the way of holiness. Therefore, the Teams of Our Lady Movement, faithful to its charisma and its mission in the Church, will be a prophetic sign of a new world that we all, with the grace of God and the protection of Our Lady, hope to build where justice, peace and fraternity will truly reign.

Yours faithfully in the Lord,

Father José Jacinto Ferreira de Farias, SCJ

RESPONSIBLE COUPLES' WEEKEND*

Date: Saturday 12th & Sunday 13th October 2013

Venue: Dominican Retreat Centre, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

Theme: Leadership in Teams

**The Annual Regional Conference (RC Weekend) is a most important event
in the Teams Calendar.**

However, it is not confined to Responsible Couples.

Other team members are welcome to attend.

COST of WEEKEND: €70 per couple - inclusive of meals.

In the spirit of solidarity, members of each team share costs of the Responsible Couple attending the Conference on their behalf. It signifies that the team recognises the importance of having their Responsible Couple at the Conference, and builds a spirit of community within each team.

This year expenses are being subsidised from central funds to help ensure that every Team in the country will be represented.

**If the R/C cannot attend, the team is consulted and another couple attends in their place.*

Responsible Couples' Weekend

HOSPITALITY

**The RC WEEKEND takes place in Dublin on
12th, 13th October next.**

**We are seeking offers of hospitality
to Couples from other Sectors.**

There are two ways in which you can help:

- (1) Bed & Breakfast accommodation.
- (2) HOST a Team Meeting in your home on the
Saturday evening (12th)

Please contact: Joe & Áine Clayton, Mob: 086 0561497

Regional News

Dublin

Our summer outing was on Saturday 25th May to Malahide Castle. We were blessed with a beautiful day in lovely surroundings – well-kept grounds, panoramic views and great facilities. After the meet and greet, we enjoyed lunch in the Avoca café. Next was a tour of the historic house. Everyone was then free to meander through other areas, including two gardens, a larger one with trees and walks and a walled garden with unusual shrubs, plants and a pond. Social occasions in Teams are always enjoyable and this was no exception. A special word of thanks to our Sector Team for all their help.

A COFFEE MORNING was organised on Saturday 29th June in Claytons' Garden. There was great support for this event, both from Teams people and neighbours and friends in the Lucan area. We were surprised and delighted by the generosity of all. This was a fundraising event for the 2014 Celebrations. There is a need to have funds for accommodation and activities for families with children who will come to this event. Does anyone have suggestions for further Fundraising events? Don't be shy – let's hear from you!

The Dublin Sector is hosting the **Responsible Couples' Weekend on Saturday & Sunday 12th & 13th October. Venue: Dominican Retreat Centre, Tallagt.** Details on another page.

See also separate Notice requesting hospitality as we prepare for this R/C Weekend. We have had a couple of offers of venue for Teams meetings on the Saturday evening. Thank you very much.

Similar offers of help still needed. Please contact us at fanadclayton@yahoo.co.uk

There have been significant Wedding Anniversaries in the Dublin area this year. The ones we know about are:

John & Bernadette Blayney were 60 years married in March; Úna & Brian Moore celebrated their 50th Anniversary in August and Mary & Hugo Gallagher had their 40th in July. Congratulations to all!

Joe & Áine Clayton

Belfast

There was a distinctly international flavour to the holiday period of Belfast team members this summer! Deirdre and Declan Kennedy hosted a French couple, Pierre and Annabel, and their family, for 3 days. They had met the couple at the Teams International Gathering in Lourdes in 2006, and kept in touch since then. And Brendan and I stayed overnight with Cynthia and Peter who belong to the Grosse Pointe, Michigan Team in the USA; and then we all had dinner together with two other couples from their team. We first met some of these people in the 1980's!

Teams in Belfast get together at this time of year for an 'annual meal out' in July or August in a restaurant. Each team does this separately, which ensures that the date suits all of the members. This helps to get us ready for the new Team year ahead!

There will be a meeting of the outgoing Sector Team with the incoming team on Monday September 24th.

As mentioned before, there will be a Diocesan Congress for our diocese of Down and Connor on Friday and Saturday 27th and 28th September in Belfast's Waterfront Hall. Friday is youth centred, but Saturday is the day for members of all the parishes in the diocese. We will have a stand in the exhibition hall for Équipes Notre-Dame, which we hope will help to make Teams better known, and help to recruit new members. Paddy and Jacinta Quigley have generously volunteered to help out.

Moyra and Brendan Bunting

Mullingar

Our Retreat was held at St Camillus Killucan and was led by Father Frank Monks, M.I. Everyone deeply appreciated the spiritual contribution of Fr. Frank and his great support to Teams of Our Lady that he has always generously given.

This year's summer outing took place at Clonmacnoise at the end of June. We were blessed with a good day. On arrival we were shown a film about the history of Clonmacnoise which greatly helped us to understand the importance of this site. Our guide, Michael, was better than excellent and succeeded in making our tour enjoyable and interesting. The evening ended with a get-together at The Wineport, on the shores of Lough Ree, where we chatted about Teams, our family members and holidays!

Florian and Dermot Leavy's daughter, Maree had a baby boy in June.

Joe O'Meara's mother celebrated her 100th birthday on the 8th of June.

We were greatly honoured to be invited to attend the installation of Father Denis Nulty, a former Regional Chaplain of Teams of Our Lady, as bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. It was a memorable and joyful occasion. The ceremony was inspiring – full of prayer, music and liturgy. Carlow Cathedral community answered the call to warmly welcome their new Bishop. Fifty six banners representing the parishes of the diocese, entered the Cathedral to celebrate the occasion. A spectacular cloth, consisting of work done by the children of the parishes was ceremoniously displayed for all to see. A most moving recital of *Veni, Creator Spiritu* was sung.

Come, Holy Spirit, creator come
From thy bright heavenly throne,
Come, take possession of our souls,
And make them all thine own.

We all wish Bishop Denis Nulty an abundance of blessings at this very special time in his life.

His Episcopal Motto- 'Serve the Lord with gladness' is taken from Psalm 100. We have circulated the new Study Topic from Brasilia to the R.C.s and hope that the Team members who wish to avail of it during the coming year will find it available to them. If there is any difficulty please let us know.

God bless,

Frank and Margaret Fagan

Galway

Like so many parts of the country we are all glowing here with the benefits of such a fabulous summer, the best in years. We had an especially blest Annual Teams Mass and picnic in Coole Park on the 23rd of June even though it was a cool wet day. Fr Colin Garvey OFM, Chaplain to team 2 celebrated.

Our special guests, Gregory and Shamagne Bertrand, Regional Couple of Teams in Trinidad and Tobago and their family Amanda and Joseph as well as Shamange's sister Florie, brightened our spirits as they wrapped themselves up to fight the cold damp conditions. It certainly did not feel like summer that day at all but the sun eventually came out and all was well.

A fair number of Galway Teams people came too. We were further uplifted by the presence of a lovely Polish couple and family, Julian and Maja Drapiewski and their son; Paula Murphy and her family from Limerick were there.

Team 1 welcomes Fr. Martin Reilly as chaplain. Fr Martin ministers in Bushypark in Galway and we are delighted to have him as part of our Team.

The good news on the Lloyds' front is that Eddie and Emmy Lloyd's son Barry and his wife Yvonne have their second child, a boy, Aaron Daniel, and all are delighted and they are keeping well. Congratulations to them both.

Brendan and Máire Kelly



Group pictured at Galway Teams Summer Outing at Coole Park.
Included are Gregory and Shamagne Bertrand from Trinidad and Tobago



From the Regional Chaplain

Responses and choices are part of our everyday life.

Is it my desire to be free enough to make choices which are in harmony with God's will as it unfolds in my life?

When we are trying to follow the loving invitation of God in our life, we will find that the good spirit tends to give support, encouragement and oftentimes even delight in all our endeavours.

On the other hand, the evil spirit, arouses good feelings so that we might be drawn to focus our attention on wrong things, or to pursue a more selfish motivation, or to get our own way before all else.

In prayer I ask the Lord Jesus to open my heart that I might not be deaf to his call in my life and help me to be ready and willing to do what he would like from me.

September 2013

Galatians 5: 16- 26

What are the key temptations in my life and what happens within me when I allow myself to be controlled by them? What happens when, through grace, I resist?

Have I developed a way of praying that includes asking Mary, the mother of Jesus, to help me become a more faithful disciple?

October 2013

Luke 9: 57-62

What is my desire to do God's will when it means setting aside or giving up my own cherished dream or plan?

Am I aware of any fears that prevent me from moving forward in freedom?

November 2013

Luke 9: 23-25.

How far am I willing to go in sacrificing my own satisfaction or pleasure in order to love as completely and as selflessly as Jesus did in laying down his life?

What did Jesus do when afraid, and what can I learn from his pattern of behaviour?

Prayer Intentions

For the deceased:

Mary Conway, Mullingar.





Teams and Faith-Sharing

Brian O'Toole Cssp (Chaplain Team 25 Dublin)

Sharing in Teams gives expression to the urgent contemporary need to provide environments in which the spiritual dimension of life can be explored in conversation. Conversation is about 'living with' and not just 'talking with'; a sharing of hearts and minds where personal truth is shared and nurtured. Such a conversation is a place of safety where what is going on below the surface of our lives, where what is considered important has the opportunity to be spoken without fear of judgement but received with reverence.

Teams are more and more seeing, there is ample evidence to support the view, that in and through the life experience of 'ordinary' people the Divine presence is being disclosed. A faith-sharing team is fuelled by the willingness of participants to share something of their personal journey and their on-going discovery of the Divine Presence accompanying them on their way.

Everyone has something of value to bring to the conversation about life and death. Each one possesses a collection of rich and unique experiences about human living through which, at times, they have begun to notice the silent loving presence of God. What is being shared is not a set of intellectual propositions, but an experience of life and the journey of the heart. Our disposition is that of the disciple, 'the one who learns', following in the footsteps of his Master, the carpenter's son from Nazareth. What is shared is the product of that relationship, however consciously or unconsciously the person speaking may be aware of it.

What is essential for faith-sharing is the creation of a certain type of environment. A Team setting needs to be established which is characterised, among other things, by group safety, trust, non-judgemental acceptance and openness to the perspective of others. For such an environment to exist it needs to be supported by a number of factors. These include:

- A clear methodology and pattern to the meetings
- Stability of group members
- A shared commitment to the keeping of confidences
- The maintaining of an appropriate level of self-disclosure
- The avoidance of personal criticism
- Proper evaluation procedures at regular intervals
- Conscious acknowledgement of the silent presence of God.

Instead of being simply on the receiving end, each member of Teams is invited to share ownership of the process and take responsibility for the way things develop. This elicits from each member an 'adult behaviour' which among other things involves:

- Examining your own assumptions
- Making your own decisions and accepting the consequences
- Taking the opportunity to offer your own creative contribution
- Being prepared to challenge the status quo
- Allowing yourself to be forgiven when you make a mistake
- Struggling to find your own way.

Through reflecting on and sharing their own experience of life and faith team members are encouraged to take responsibility for their own personal and spiritual development. What is helpful is when members in-between meetings are praying and interceding for other team members. When the team comes together it is the quality of the conversation and the experience of the Divine, which makes it productive and life-giving.

What emerges in the course of a meeting both from individuals and from the team as a whole is both unplanned and unpredictable. Having said this, what occurs is neither random nor haphazard. It does seem to be, that what happens at a certain time is for that particular moment. Such times of consolation may be for the team as a whole or for particular individuals or couples; occasions when they discover something both necessary and appropriate to their own personal journey of faith. Often the sense of recognition that accompanies such an experience is so specific and intimate that it is common for an individual or couple to express their belief that God has used the meeting to speak 'uniquely' to them. Such happenings can indeed be ascribed to the active presence of the Holy Spirit.

Notice Board

- **From the Treasurers**

If you have not yet sent in your Annual Contribution please send to the Treasurers, Michael and Sheila Foley, 46A, Leopardstown Grove, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. Do not send cash by post.

- **13th-15th September**

Faith of Our Fathers Conference, Diocese of Ossory

The Hub, Cillin Hill, Kilkenny.

Ph 0598627268

- **28th September**

Irish Episcopal Conference

Council for Marriage and the Family

Conference on **Marriage at the Heart of the Church**

Saturday 28th September 2013

Glenroyal Hotel Maynooth

For further information and booking details contact

cmfconference@iecon.ie

- **27th-28th September**

Diocese of Down and Connor

Living Church Congress, Waterfront Hall Belfast, Friday and Saturday 27th and 28th September 2013. Ph 02890 690920
