

# Trans Atlantic


## The Transatlantic Super Region



**Autumn 2007**



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# The Super Region

Dear Friends

2007 will be remembered by us for one thing – water. In the run up to Swanwick serious flooding had occurred in Yorkshire and there were worries about whether the Transatlantic Conference in Swanwick – just a few miles to the south – would be affected. Thanks to the global media, couples arriving for the international college in Durham just two weeks later were all expecting rain. And rain we had for the first three days; we did however manage a beautiful sunny day on the Thursday when we visited Durham Cathedral.

Just a day later, the heavens really opened and the water level in the rivers around Tewkesbury and Gloucester rose inexorably. We live in Cheltenham, just a few miles away. At the college we were blissfully unaware of the outside world. The theme for the college for the next three years is taken from St John's Gospel about the woman at the well and we were thinking about Jesus' thirst for water, His thirst for us to know more about what He is offering and our own thirst (need) to seek answers and to put them into practice.

Fortunately for us our older daughter Maggie texted us about the flooding and the closure of the M5 motorway and we were able to plan our journey home avoiding the worst of the flooding.

We had managed to arrange for Fr Ignatio from Malawi to be in Durham at the same time as the college and he was travelling back with us to Cheltenham. After several detours, expanses of flooded fields, and passing many abandoned cars, we arrived safely home on the Saturday evening.



On Sunday we learned that the water pumping station that supplies our drinking water had been flooded. We just had time to get the washing done (including Fr Ignatio's who was flying to Germany the next day) and to fill the bath with water before our taps ran dry. We then survived by visiting the modern equivalent of the well – the bowser. We were totally without water for ten days. When the water did

come back it would still be another fortnight before it was OK for drinking.

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For Swanwick, we had put together a slide show to illustrate the diversity of Transatlantic and one picture now stands out. Just like the woman at the well in Samaria, fetching water is a daily necessity for many people in Africa. We trust that we have learned from this experience and will never again take water for granted. We intend to install a water meter, which will hopefully encourage us to be more sparing in our usage of water.



To cap things off, we have the builders in at the moment and we are now using the same buckets to catch the rainwater coming through the roof!

But 2007 was not just about water, it was also about hospitality and service. Swanwick was the last official engagement for John and Elaine Cogavin whose six year period of service on the Leading team (the ERI) came to an end at Durham. They have worked tirelessly for the Movement, undertaking pioneering missionary work in places like Korea, Japan and Vietnam to start teams there. John & Elaine have also been incredibly supportive to us during the whole period of the formation of the Transatlantic super region. We wish them well in their retirement.



At the international college in Durham each outgoing couple handed their successors aprons, which symbolise the call to service. This is the first time that this particular way of conducting the handover ceremony has been used and we feel it encapsulates so much of what the Movement is about. The picture shows John & Elaine with their successors Peter & Jan Ralton from Australia and we look forward to our time

working with them.

Both the conference in Swanwick and the college in Durham depended on Teams hospitality for the people coming from afar. Thank you to everyone who played a part; we have had some lovely feedback from the couples who were hosted in the London and Durham areas.

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As Fr Ignatio was travelling to England for Swanwick he was invited to Germany by a couple who had visited his parish in Zomba some years ago. Once this was arranged, Fr Ignatio wondered if it might be possible to meet some German Teams couples. Needless to say it was. Agnes & Karl Dyckmans the German Regional Couple 'just happened' (!) to be organising a Teams event less than 30 kilometres from where Fr Ignatio was staying. They had read about Malawi and the death of Mavutu in the GB Newsletter so it was a delight for them to actually meet someone from Teams in Malawi. They also organised a bucket collection to support Christina and the teams in Malawi. This is a great example of the international solidarity of the Movement at work.

Finally, we have been in contact with Fr Callisto, the original Teams chaplain in Malawi. He is now doing a sabbatical in Montreal Canada. He is learning French and, via Robert & Lucie Dallaire the Canadian Regional Couple, we have put him in touch with the teams in Canada. Part of his latest email is below, including his contact details; it sheds more light on the start of Teams in Malawi.

"Life is good for me and I am happy to let you know that I received the parcel you sent containing the Teams Newsletter. I am also happy to let you know that I have been contacted by a Team called Notre Dame. They will invite me when they have a Teams meeting soon. I feel good. I read all the newsletters with great interest as it is some time already that I did not read such. One thing I would like to mention is about late Mabvuto. He read first about Teams of our Lady when he came to my parish in Zomba with a priest friend of mine and a doctor. He found a copy of the Tablet. As they were going back he asked if he could take one copy with him. I gave him without knowing that it was the beginning of something new and good for Malawi. I do remember him and his wife and children in my prayers."

Fr. Callisto Augustine Baluwa smm  
Les Missionnaires Montfortains



**Paul & Helena McCloskey**  
Super Regional Couple

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## *From Our Super Regional Chaplain*

(from his homily at the opening Mass of the Teams of Our Lady, College Meeting, 15th July 2007)

Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan tells us something of the nature of love at the heart of all spirituality.

The priest and Levite 'passed by' probably because they were afraid. "Safety first" was their motto. Fear wars against love and one of Jesus' most frequent cries is "Do not be afraid". The Samaritan, on the other hand, had compassion on the one in need – and we were to do likewise. There are three areas in our lives where this may be possible.

Firstly, our neighbours may be the people we meet through media (TV, Internet, etc.) or perhaps those with whom we have a more personal link in the Third World. I am reminded of my visits to downtown Kingston, Jamaica to help with the work of the Missionaries of the Poor, when I met Kenneth. Kenneth had been found by two of the Brothers lying on a pile of rubbish in a side street of Kingston. The Brothers could smell him as they approached. He was nearly dead. His hair and head were partly eaten away with maggots that had collected there. The Brothers gathered him up in a sheet and took him to their home to be cared for where he very slowly recovered. They told me that when they first saw Kenneth they saw Jesus – in the circle of maggots around his head they saw Jesus with the crown of thorns.

We are called to see Jesus and to help him in the poorest of the poor. Pope Benedict has reminded us that when the rich nations of the world spend vast amounts of money on armaments, warfare, nuclear warheads, etc. they are "thieving from the poor" – we are "passing by on the other side".

Secondly, our neighbour may be someone closer to us: a member of our extended family, a member of Teams or our parish or place of work, who is in need. Help can be given through the Teams 'Prayer Line', or sometimes in a more practical way.

I am reminded of Father Renato who lived in the suburbs of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, and one evening a young boy rang his doorbell wanting food. Father responded to his request. Later that night just as Father was going to bed he

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looked out of his window and saw the boy asleep on his doorstep. Father went to bed, but couldn't sleep. He went down, opened the door, woke him up and let him in. That was the beginning of Father Renato's care of many of the street children in Rio. It is now a great organisation that helps and cares for many hundreds of children from the streets, gives them basic training in various skills and sets many of them up for life.

Then, lastly, our closest neighbour is our friend, wife, husband, parent or child, and here again there are times when our eyes need to be opened. The old saying "familiarity breeds contempt" may be true. It is not the man found on the rubbish dump or the young lad asleep on the doorstep, but the wife who is tired and irritable after a heavy day with obstreperous children or the husband pressurised by colleagues at work or the teenager who wants to sleep with his girlfriend. Awareness of the needs of those closest to us is also following the Lord's command, "Go and do the same yourself".

The theme chosen for Teams throughout the world concerns another Samaritan – one who was in need: the woman at the well. As part of the Orientation launched at the Lourdes International Gathering, it is suggested that we ponder in depth on the three phrases in John 4, through a series of study topics :-

"If only you knew what God is offering"

"Lord, I see that you are a prophet"

"That is who I am, I who speak to you"

**Father Ken Payne**  
**Super-Regional Chaplain**



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## *Introducing Our New ERI Liaison Couple*

We were delighted that this year's International College meeting was held in Durham and that the Regional Couples from the Trans Atlantic Super Region were the first to have the opportunity to present to the International Leading Team (ERI) a detailed profile of the successes, challenges and future plans within each of their regions. The presentations were comprehensive and greatly appreciated by the members of the ERI for the insights they provided. Indeed the whole College meeting was a great success and a credit to the Super Region.

Taking over from Elaine and John Cogavin as the Eurasia Zone liaison couple, it was a wonderful opportunity to meet each of the regional couples and start to learn more about your Super Region.

To introduce ourselves, we are Jan and Peter Ralton. We were born, raised and live in the south east of Australia in Melbourne. Although reliably informed by our parents that we first met at the age of four, it was not until some fifteen years later that we began going out together and were married in 1972.

Peter is a property valuer by profession and had taken early retirement 4 years ago when we were the couple representing the Oceania Super Region. He was working from home as a subcontractor to a valuation firm until earlier this year, when he was enticed back into a greater workload and an office on the other side of the city.

Since the birth of our children, Jan has worked from home as well as being involved in a number of committees. The most time consuming of recent times has been that of supporting refugees and asylum seekers. While our children have all left home we are now learning the joys of grandchildren. Jan's mother is now 89 and needing more and more support at this stage of her life so caring for our 14 month old grandson helps to bring an overall balance to our days.

We have three adult sons Simon, Dominic and Sam. The older two live and work in Sydney. Simon is a construction lawyer and is married to Odile who was born and raised in the UK. They have a house close to the centre of Sydney and are expecting their first child very soon. Dominic is a divisional manager for a large firm in the clothing industry and this involves quite a bit of travel interstate and overseas. He has recently bought an apartment close to his brother. The youngest Sam and his fiancée Melissa are the proud parents of Archie and live

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close to us in Melbourne.

Our team life began when we were expecting our 3rd child and we have been in the same team for 30 years. Of course there have been changes of membership over that time and each time our team has grown with the experience. Three of the original couples including ourselves are still in the Team. We have experienced many joyous times together with weddings, births (children and grandchildren) and other momentous events. Needless to say we have also shared deeply with each other during illnesses, deaths and personal crises.

We have always enjoyed our involvement in the Teams Movement and have met some really wonderful and inspiring people. Although we have found the work is at times demanding and time consuming, the rewards in friendship and mutual support are amazing and have brought a whole new dimension to our lives.

Our “Call to Service” on the International Leading Team came as somewhat of a surprise - we had not dreamt that a couple from as far away as Australia would ever be considered for such a role. On reflection though, it is a genuine indication of the truly International nature of the Movement that has developed over recent years.

**Jan & Peter Talton**  
ERI Liaison Couple



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## Reports From The Super Regional Gathering

### Opening Homily - Father Ignatio

*In his homily* at the opening mass, on the feast day of St Peter and St Paul, Father Ignatio set the tone of the conference.

Today we are celebrating the feast of Peter and Paul. This feast from the early church was celebrated in Rome on the 29th June, as early as the 3rd or 4th century. Peter is our leader in faith, Paul is its preacher. We rejoice that through the leadership and preaching of those two apostles we have received the authentic living tradition of Christ – a message which is passed on by their successors to this day. Through them the Church received the faith.



Peter and Paul shed their blood and helped the Church to grow. By sharing the Cup of the Lord's suffering, they became the friends of God. The word "apostle" comes from a Greek word which means "to be sent." Just like Peter and Paul we are apostles of today. We are sent to preach the Good News to the whole world. Peter and Paul preached the Word of God to different people including the Gentiles.

Peter and Paul were two different characters – like us in Teams. They had their differences (as we do) but they were united in the service of the Lord in faith and in love, and furthermore, they adapted to the situations they were in. For example : Peter went to the house of Cornelius in Caesarea where he found a large gathering of people and he said to them, "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean." This is the spirit we should have in the Teams of Our Lady. We are different. We come from different countries, with different cultures. Yet all of us have come together for this Conference here in Swanwick. All of us belong to one body, the body of Christ. In preaching the Good News we have to adapt to the situations we are in just like Peter and Paul.

I think, just as Peter and Paul did, we also have to learn to visit Teams in other

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countries. We should not be confined to our own local Teams. We have to travel to different countries in order to make the movement of Teams of Our Lady known in other countries. Peter and Paul had a missionary spirit, we also have to be missionaries in Teams of Our Lady. However, preaching the Word of God is not easy. We are bound to meet all sorts of difficulties. This is the first meeting of the new Super Region – Teams from different countries, with different characters and cultures - very simply stepping out in faith together.

If we look at what is happening in the world today – there are a lot of problems. Even in Malawi where I come from there are a lot of problems –

- A lot of Christian marriages are falling apart. Many young couples do not understand the meaning of Christian marriage, and many of them do not go to Church at all.
- In a family you find a husband beating his wife severely, even to the extent of chopping her arms and burning her face – violence against women.
- A lot of people are suffering from HIV/AIDS.
- There are a lot of orphans
- There is poverty
- A lot of people commit abortion
- There is a lot of prostitution

Sometimes we may feel that we are living in a hostile world and it is not a time of visible success for growth and expansion for Teams of Our Lady. However, the chances of success for the expansion of the Church looked even less likely at the time of Peter and Paul – the martyr's death for both seemed like the end not the beginning. The key to understanding the first reading is what Peter says when he realises what has happened : “Now I know for certain that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod.” What happened to him is a lesson for all of us : God never abandons those who endanger their lives for the sake of the Gospel. This is what Peter and Paul experienced in Rome, during the persecution of Emperor Nero. They were not spared death but were freed

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from the fear of losing their lives for the sake of the Gospel. Faithfulness to our Christian vocation may land us in a variety of difficulties.

We are going to face all sorts of difficulties as we try to make the movement of Teams of Our Lady known to different people. As we preach the Good News we will meet all sorts of problems. We should not lose heart. The first reading today invites all who suffer for Christ to remember that even if all seem to be against them, they always have, “the Angel of the Lord” on their side. Surely the Angel of the Lord is on our side. When we are in problems we should not think that God has abandoned us. He is always there with us.

Surely we must preach our Christian faith to other people. I usually think of the future of Teams of Our Lady. We must catechize young couples on what Teams of Our Lady is all about, they must know the importance of Christian marriage. God is Love and this love must be shared with other people : Love your neighbour as you love yourself.

Today Jesus is asking each and everyone of us : “who do you say that I am ?” “What influence do I have in your life and what change has faith in me brought in your behaviour ?” Belief in Christ is to have understood who he is, to accept his way of life and to trust him. We are shown today how two disciples following different routes came to believe in him. The believer is not for an easy life, he will be persecuted, but – as we read in the first reading – the Lord always stands by his disciple.

As we celebrate the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, the two great apostles, let us pray that we realise that we apostles of today, we are also sent to preach the Good News to other people, to make the movement of Teams of Our Lady known to different people.

As we have gathered for this conference for Teams of Our Lady here in Swanwick we pray that the Almighty God should send the Holy Spirit to inspire us so that we may have a fruitful and memorable Conference. After this Conference we go to preach the Good News just as Peter and Paul. We pray for all those people who took the names of Peter and Paul that they may follow the good example of those two great apostles. We also pray that all of us should learn from the good example of Peter and Paul.

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### The South African Experience



With the work of the Lord in 2006, after the Lourdes Gathering we were asked by Air France to remain an extra night in Paris. We were compensated with travel vouchers. These vouchers were a definite yes for us to attend the 1st Transatlantic Super Regional Gathering in Swanwick. We arrived in London on Friday 22nd June 2007 and were hosted by Michael & Kay Vadon (Regional Couple for Central Britain).

The Vadons opened their hearts and their home to us. Michael and Kay imparted valuable information on Teams to us. They gave us lots of literature on Teams for us to take back to South Africa.

On the 25th June we went to stay with Andrew and Marysia Maryniak. Again hearts and home was opened to us. We are ever so grateful. On the 26th we attended a team meeting in Ealing with a Polish English-speaking team. The team members were so hospitable and friendly. Father Darius with his few words of English made us feel so special and welcomed at the meeting. We have gained lots of valuable information about the Team meeting that we will impart to our teams in South Africa.

On the 27th we were invited to dinner at the Riley's home. We spent a wonderful evening chatting about South Africa and England and our different cultures, and then travelled to Swanwick. It was a very scenic drive from London to Swanwick. We arrived at Swanwick in the afternoon. We were greeted by Helena, Di and Jimmy at the reception desk. It was great to see Helena and Jimmy again. We met Di Wordsworth for the first time, her friendliness and kindness was overwhelming as she took the time to escort us to our room. We set our bags down and then took in the scenery; during the walk we met Michael and Betty McGovern. We shared information about our countries as we took in the beautiful garden of the Hayes. On our return from our walk we met Gregory and Shamagne Bertrand and John and Elaine Cogavin whom we had met in Lourdes and were happy to see again. The programme that was drawn for this weekend was so well planned that we had time to mingle and get to make new friends. The Masses, the all night Vigil and the talks were so spiritual. We especially

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enjoyed the team meetings where we shared as well as received information and ideas. The sharing of the meals with the different couples gave us the opportunity to make new friends. At the end of the meeting on Sunday we had to rush off to the airport in Manchester, driven by our Grand Prix driver who made sure that he got us to the airport on time despite the downpour.

A great big THANK YOU to the following people who made our stay in England a memorable one:

Michael & Kay Vadon, Andrew & Marysia Maryniak, Barry & Anne Riley

Father Darius & the Polish Team, Steve (Grand Prix Driver) & Sally Hawkins.

May the Lord Almighty bless and Guide the Teams from Strength to Strength.

**Claude & Romal Michael**

**Chatsworth 5, South African Sector**

*“What future might we not hope for the Church if Christ’s shining message on marriage could reach the four corners of the world, if it attracted large numbers of young couples, if it inspired an even greater number of families in which God was loved by all and above everything else?”*

*Father Cafferel, Rome 1959.*

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### A Personal Reflection On The Conference

At the dawn of most relationships, we either stood at the curb of the road kissing passionately, snogged behind a parent's borrowed car or right in the middle of Leicester Square or near the Eiffel Tower, with 1000's of people walking by and it felt so right! It seemed so long ago now that we have had our 2 children and witnessed 1 too many rows or misunderstandings or deep hurts. We still love each other of course but AGAPE, unconditional, solid as a rock and heavenly inspired remains with us. Has EROS taken a nose-dive we ask ourselves? That sensual feeling, flutters in my stomach, deep passion rising as I gaze into my lover's eyes seems to be replaced by perpetual tiredness, chores & a frenetic life-style. What does God make of all this ? Is the marriage journey destined to become all AGAPE as we grow older and little of EROS? Was that the plan?

Following a rather tiring weekend with family and young children trekking around the favourite sites of the City of London, on and off a big red bus, there was no EROS at all in our camp and no wonder I have a "grumpy husband" to begin the week. I shall threaten to set up a grumpyhusbands.com, if this "grey cloud" does not lift soon!

I am reassured and hopeful when I think back to Swanwick which seems so long ago that EROS & AGAPE are 2 faces of the same love coin which must be enjoyed at different stages of our lives. Deo Gratias. Our God inspires us to be passionate no matter how long we have been married and he paints lovely erotic pictures in the book of Hosea as he describes his undying, vibrant, passion for each of us. He encourages us to do the same with our

"I DO" partners and I am not sure he meant that should only happen during courtship! This was our 1st blessing at Swanwick! The presentation by Father Gerry, who drew references from Jack Dominion and Pope Benedict, was most definitely refreshing news! I guess that's the first time we brushed the surface of the sexual side of marriage during a TEAMS meeting - Alleluia!



It was certainly inspiring to hear about Father Caffarel, the period in which he lived and his vision for TEAMS. What struck me most was how similar the period in which TEAMS was born is to our current world situation, where marriage and family life is concerned and how we therefore need to desperately spread the word about TEAMS. Blessing no. 2! We praise God for the Cogavins, they presented marvellously well!

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Meeting with other people in a TEAM structure opened our eyes to how “far away” we are in our home TEAM, in terms of how things can be done. However, interacting with other couples and hearing about their challenges was comforting because we recognised some of their warts to be our own.

Blessing no 3 was indispensable. We learnt in that presentation by the Laverys, about all the holy things we thought we did with our hands at home and what we actually do with our hands that is holy. The premise was simply: because the Lord lives within us and wherever he lives is holy, our home is a holy place. So of course, our hands must be holy as well as the many things we do for others on a daily basis which we too often fail to recognise as holy. “What you do to the least of my brothers...”.



As a full time mum & self-employed dad of small people, we often think of our home as the domestic church where many duties of love happen. We try to invite the Lord in daily; and this presentation by the Laverys has given us wings to “fly through” long telecons, business travel, scrubbing the toilets, cooking supper, wiping a snotty nose or simply caressing a tired husband (I need more grace to fulfil that holy duty, which does not sit well with tiredness)!!!! The Lord lives at our address despite the pile of ironing, the cobwebs and the sheer din between 17h & and 18h30. We cannot simply forget the generosity of the De Souza girls who could have been partying and painting the town of Epsom red, but decided instead to come along to Swanwick with their parents to baby-sit our girls and the Harrison children. We pray that in about 10 years time we can provide the same excellent service to other families. Our time in Swanwick would have definitely been tried and tested without our Baysitters: Anna and Mariella. You are both a juicy blessing we will remember for a long time. Blessing no. 4!

Hosting Patrick and Rebecca after Swanwick was such an interesting “adventure” for me, an African sister, from the WEST side of the Continent (Ghana). We only had English as our form of communication, but sharing our thoughts about living abroad and living at home (in the company of a large extended family) which I miss, was lovely. We shared a little more after supper and prayed the rosary in both English and Chichewa, harnessing our wishes to talk more, dreams for each other and all our loved ones in Teams and beyond, before our blessed Lady. Blessing no 5!

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Gregory and Sharmagne, were here for 1 night and we shared until midnight from the moment they arrived at around 21h30. What a feast of news and I have been inspired to check out study topics from the Aussie Teams website. I wish I lived in Trinidad. Their meetings carry on for up to 6 hours sometimes. What a banquet and, of course, the sun is on tap!!!! For some of us we have to order the sun, several months in advance only to be saddled with all the 4 seasons in 1 day in our most unpredictable Angleterre. Moaning about the weather is definitely part of our British heritage so.. need I say more? Well, they certainly gave me much food for thought and now that I have mulled over it, I cannot wait to meet my own TEAM next month. My poor David had to hear almost all the news on arrival from his business trip in Europe which began even before Swanwick conference ended ! Sharmagne & Gregory, I'll remember all your advice or try to. You are both our Blessing no.6, straight out of Trinidad.

Since Swanwick, we have had our personal SIT DOWN and we feel encouraged that there is a challenging structure to our TEAMS way of life. Teams for marriages, is the mirror of how the clergy ought to live, to sustain the vows they have made and thereby remain effective ambassadors of the Gospel. The EROS part of our marriage does not come to us easily after only 2 children and we need grace to make it happen! It is probably easier to focus on the AGAPE but we too are ambassadors of God's passionate love for humankind. We, married couples of the church have a duty to our immediate families, the communities we live in & beyond, to look happy & content about being in love, and passionate about each other not only in the bedroom but as we walk around and go about our normal business. We now know more about how we can each grow closer to God and to each other through the 7 Endeavours. We believe, that in our world where, marriages are at the brink of collapse and/or stale existence, with even Christian marriages faced with just as much pressure, the TEAMS way, could be the answer to busy couples' prayers. TEAMS is for busy people. It is for all of us who "struggle" to keep EROS alive. It is for couples who wish to find a way of sustaining their EROS & AGAPE. Our TEAMS journey continues to be a blessing. Since Swanwick, we pray that, our very own growing experience of EROS & AGAPE will sustain us. Together with our chaplains, may we all be living testimonies of Christ's faithful & passionate love for humankind, in both the sacrament of Marriage & that of Holy Orders.

**Carlien Shields**

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### Deus Caritas Est

*Unfortunately, Jack Dominion, who was to speak at the Gathering was recovering from an operation, so Father Gerry Cassidy, the Irish Regional Chaplain stepped in. He spoke on Pope Benedict's first Encyclical issued on 25th December 2005, and how it fitted in with Jack Dominion's views on married love.*

Pope Benedict XVI in this Encyclical is appealing to the Church to return to the roots of its Christian faith, that is, Agape – unconditional love - in all its expressions including the practice of love in charity. “God is love - he who lives in love lives in God and God in him.” (1 John 4:16) If we can love God it is because God loved us first. If we love each other it is because God's love extends among us.

The Christian faith has retained the core of Israel's faith. Pious Jews prayed “Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord alone, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might.” (Deut 6:4). Jesus added that You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

We live in a world where the name of God is sometimes associated with vengeance or even a duty of hatred and violence. The Encyclical is a timely and significant message. In the first part of the Encyclical, Pope Benedict wants to clarify some essential facts concerning the love which God mysteriously and gratuitously offers to us, together with the intrinsic (belonging naturally) link between that love and the reality of human love.

Jack Dominion responded to the Encyclical (The Furrow, May 2006), “In my opinion this is the most important and timely encyclical of recent times. I would like to be bold and say it contains some of, if not, **the** most important theology for the Church today. I would recommend that the Encyclical be read in full because every one of its sentences is so rich.”

Love has become one of the most misused of words. We speak of Love of Country, profession, family, friends, work, parents, children, neighbours and God. The love that stands out is the love between Man and Woman where body and soul are inseparably joined and human beings glimpse an irresistible promise of happiness.

There are a number of traditional Greek terms for love:

Philia - the love of Friendship.

Eros - associated with human love and sexual love – worldly love.

Agape - Freely given, unmerited love which seeks the good of the beloved and is willing to embrace sacrifice and renunciation as in the case of Jesus on the cross.

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The Greek Old Testament only uses EROS twice. It is not used in the New Testament, where AGAPE is preferred – a new understanding of Christian Love.

Ancient Greeks considered EROS as a kind of intoxication – called it DIVINE MADNESS and said it was a divine fever giving supreme happiness. In the temples this gave way to “sacred” prostitution and fertility cults. The misuse of EROS reduced temple prostitutes to mere things. The Old Testament firmly opposed this type of Religion – declared war on a warped destructive form of it that strips it of its dignity and dehumanises it. Without rejecting the word EROS the old testament showed that it needed to be disciplined and purified – otherwise EROS is just a fleeting pleasure rather than a foretaste of the happiness for which we all yearn.

When EROS is purified through the path of renunciation, it is healed and restored to true grandeur. This is so because the human person is body and soul – flesh and spirit. It is neither the body or the soul alone that loves. It is only when both are united that love – eros – is able to attain true grandeur.

Christianity is criticised for opposition to the body – this tendency existed in the past. Yet today, EROS can often be reduced to mere sex - the body beautiful – I can do what I like with my own body — a commodity – a thing – bought and sold – that hardly means a great yes to the body. The authentic EROS leads us beyond ourselves and tends to rise “in ecstasy” towards the divine – for this reason it is called the path of ascent – renunciation, purification and healing, exulting conjugal love – as in the Old Testament Song of Songs – Love Songs heard at Jewish Wedding Feasts.

How can love be experienced so that it can fully realise its human and divine promise ? Two different words in Hebrew are used to describe love. DODIM describes a love that is insecure, unclear and searching. It is later replaced by AHABA which expresses a love that is a real discovery of, and care for the other. It seeks the good of the one loved through willing sacrifice of oneself. In the New testament AHABA is translated as AGAPE.

AGAPE love grows towards higher levels and inner purification in 2 ways :-

1. Exclusive love for one person – for ever – a journey from inward looking self to the freedom of self giving.
2. Leads to true self discovery and discovery of God.

Jesus followed this path from self-sacrifice to resurrection. The grain of wheat that falls onto the ground and dies, bears much fruit. This is the essence of love and human life itself.

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Jack Dominion (in *The Furrow*) says that Pope Benedict approaches brilliantly one of the central issues of love – is there opposition between AGAPE and EROS? This alleged opposition can be traced throughout the Christian era leading to interpretation of “AGAPE as good, and EROS- sexuality in general - as bad”, and has bedevilled our understanding of love (think about our negativity and unhealthy attitudes about sexuality.) Dominion says that he has constantly seen, aided by Psychology, that love is unitary.

Fundamentally, love is a single reality but with different dimensions. At different times, one or more dimension may emerge more clearly.

Dominian wrote, “Hopefully we can bring down the curtain of two thousand years of this utterly destructive and false war between EROS and AGAPE. As Pope Benedict wrote, ‘The more the two, in their different aspects, find a proper unity in the one reality of love. The more the true nature of love in general is realised.’ – a point echoed in all my writings.”

EROS and AGAPE can never be completely separated. Consider the journey of falling in love. Even if EROS is at first possessive, it is accompanied by need for real happiness in drawing near to the other. It gradually becomes less concerned with itself, and seeks to be present for the other. At this moment the element of AGAPE is entering into love. If it does not EROS remains impoverished. On the other hand, one cannot live AGAPE alone, we need to be able to receive love. In order to be a source of love, one must keep in contact with Christ, from whose heart flows the love of God.

The bible revealed a true image of God in the Shema - “Hear O Israel – the Lord is our God, the Lord alone.” All other Gods are not god. His love chose Israel and he loves her with a view to healing the whole human race.” The prophets, Hosea and Ezekiel, described God’s passion for his people in images such as engagement, marriage, adultery and prostitution. God’s love for Israel was shown by giving her the Torah - the law which opened people’s eyes to man’s deepest nature, and also guided humanity’s path to true humanness and happiness. God’s EROS for people is totally AGAPE.

Pope Benedict focuses on the love between man and woman. Biblically, in Genesis, Adam is the seeker in order to find woman. Only together do the two become complete humanity and one flesh. From the stand-point of creation, Eros directs mankind to marriage based on exclusive definitive love.

Jack Dominion wrote about marital love, “Marital love begins with the ecstasy

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of falling in love which gradually subsides followed by many decades of what I call loving. Loving for me constitutes four words - namely, sustaining, healing, growth and sexual intercourse. By sustaining I understand the moment-to-moment cement of loving effect. It consists of a modified repetition of the first intimate relations of childhood and GOD IS LOVE ....It includes availability (togetherness), communication, demonstration of affection, affirmation which for the child is the oxygen of love when it hears repeatedly: 'good boy', 'good girl'. Spouses, indeed all of us, need affirmation no less. The tragedy is we keep our mouth shut when things go well and open them to criticize. And finally resolution of conflict where the forgiving part of agape is prominent. After our initial idealization of a spouse, we find they have what the world calls 'faults' and I call 'wounds'. These may be lack of confidence, lack of trust, difficulties in loving and being loved, insecurity, excessive aggression, excessive fears of rejection and many others. All these are the bread and butter causes of potential marital breakdown. Now comes the second aspect of marital love, namely healing; hardly recognized in the Church. Healing is very complex to describe but couples do it unknowingly all the time. In simple terms, they accept these wounds, do not criticize or reject their spouses as selfish, self centred and egoistic, language which reverberates all over the world in marital homes. Instead they give to their spouse the opposite characteristic. For insecurity, buckets of security; for lack of confidence a plenitude of reassurance; for feeling unlovable endless reassuring love and so on. It is little realized that there is more healing in good marriages than in all the psychiatric couches of the world. Then comes the third dimension of love, namely growth. It is thought that because IQ intelligence and bodily growth come to an end at adolescence, all growth ceases. This is totally untrue. Emotionally we grow into maturity, from insecurity to security, from dependence to independence and in the second half of life into all sorts of new creativity. I need hardly add that spiritual growth coupled with growth of love goes on until we die. All this needs the active support of love of the spouse.

Finally there is sexual intercourse, which underpins all the other three. Sexual intercourse is the channel which ultimately directs and summates all the elements of sustaining, healing and growth. It is not easy to illustrate, but after a couple have an enjoyable walk, talk, a hug, a kiss, an affirmative sentence of approval, make up successfully after a quarrel, they want to celebrate and they do this by the 'unique act' of coitus. Thus for me every act of sexual intercourse gives LIFE and occasionally NEW LIFE arises. In making love, couples enter the very essence of God's love. This is not the place to detail why *Humanae vitae* is

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wrong, which I have done elsewhere, except for one aspect, namely, that sexual intercourse goes on for decades after the menopause, sealing the creativity of the couple's life, expressed with a type of love which God opened in his initial love of creation and continues to maintain it.

### The Sacrament

The Catholic Church had the brilliant insight in recognizing marriage as a sacrament in the middle ages, doing very little for it afterwards until the Second Vatican Council and then relapsing into inertia. I have no space to analyse the sacramental structure of marriage except to say that its essence is to be found in the monogamous, faithful, committed relationships of the spouses. The key of this sacrament is situated in three words: spouses, relationship and love. Thus the couple encounter Christ in each other through the twenty-four hours from the cup of tea brought in bed in the morning to making love at night.

Seen in these terms the twenty-four hours of marital life are a liturgy of prayer expressed in love through sustaining, healing and growth and sexual intercourse.

The encyclical, having pointed the way to the supreme importance of marriage does not analyse marital love as I do. The Second Vatican Council expected the married and the experts to do the work. Having done it to the best of my ability I take the encyclical a further step forward. The encyclical clearly points out that love is at the centre of Christian life and selects the primacy of the obvious, where 80% of Catholics find their salvation, namely in marriage. For me this is an indication to move this sacrament from the second-class status it has held in the life of the Church to first class and replace the single state dedicated to God."

*Father Gerry used as source material for this talk " God is Love – A simplified and abridged version of Deus Caritas Est", Desmond O'Donnell, OMI, The Columbia Press (2005) ISBN1-85607-537-0, and an article by Jack Dominian in "The Furrow" which is a Pastoral Monthly magazine of the Irish Church. It is based at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co Kildare. The issue quoted from is May 2006.*

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### Father Caffarel



In November 2005, we had the pleasure of visiting the House of Prayer run by Fr. Caffarel in Toussures in France from the time he left the responsibility in Teams in 1973 until his death in Sept. 1996. The house in this small village, north of Paris, is striking for its prayerful environment, its rural setting and its sense of peace. Father Caffarel's request was to be buried in the remote graveyard looking out over the rolling hills in the quiet countryside. What remains strongest in our minds is the simple headstone on his grave which simply gives his name and dates of birth, ordination and death and the quotation: "Come follow Me."

Since then and in the months that followed, when we were helping in the preparation of the process for the Cause for his Beatification, we grew to know and to love this quiet and prayerful man who lived through most of the last century 1903 – 1996. Today we want to share with you something of our understanding of Fr. Henri Caffarel. We will try and uncover something of this man, as a prophet, and as a person, while understanding the challenges he set before us, and the solutions he offered through his guidance of Equipes Notre-Dame and through his suggestions to Church and to society.

### The Prophet

Our absolute conviction is that this man, Fr. Henri Caffarel, was truly a prophet and we would like to share the reasons why we believe this to be so. In the dictionary there are two definitions for the word 'Prophet' - both seem to describe him well :-

1. "A person who speaks by Divine inspiration or as the interpreter through which the Will of God is expressed."
2. "A person gifted with profound moral insight and exceptional powers of expression."

We have found everything he said to be as relevant today as it was when he wrote them. The prophetic nature of Fr. Caffarel's work started with that first encounter with those four young couples in Paris in 1938 when they told him: "This human love which is our joy and treasure, God must surely see it as something very beautiful and very great. We want to know about it – you must reveal it to us." (reported in his talk at Rome 1959.) This was the start of a

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journey developing an understanding of married spirituality and evangelising the sacrament of marriage with this group of couples.

As their early meetings progressed he wrote: “Little by little, the eminent place of marriage in God’s great design unfolded. It seemed to us to be totally ordained to the glory of the Lord. Its ends are the multiplication of sons and daughters of God and the mutual help of the spouses in the pursuit of holiness. There is no need to look elsewhere in order to progress towards the Lord: marriage is a sacred way and the Christian family is a living cell of the Church.” (Rome 1959)

Pope John Paul II spoke of Fr. Caffarel at a Meeting of Leaders of Teams of Our Lady in 2003: “Fr. Caffarel taught the greatness and beauty of the vocation of marriage, and, anticipating the fruitful orientations of the Second Vatican Council, he highlighted the call to holiness linked to married and family life. He knew how to bring out the major aspects of a specific married spirituality that flows from baptism and that underlines the dignity of human love in the plan of God.” (John Paul II Rome 2003.)

This term ‘married spirituality’ was used by Fr. Caffarel and those early Team couples from the very beginning, even though it was almost 20 years later during Vatican II that the Church began to use the term, which is common terminology today.

For thirty-five years Fr Caffarel served Teams of Our Lady, overseeing the growth and development of the Movement across all continents. Through this growth he guided the spiritual development of the Movement whose aim he described as: “Equipes Notre-Dame has as its essential aim, to help couples to strive after holiness – no more, no less.”

In 1965 Pope Paul VI described Equipes Notre-Dame as “the smiling face of the Church.” and in 1976 he gave a reminder to all of us of our responsibilities when he said: “Innumerable couples will be grateful to you for the help you bring to them; in fact most couples are in need of help.”

Father Caffarel was described by the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris in 1996 as: “One of the great figures given by God to his Church in the course of this century.”

## **The Person**

To understand any prophet and to make sense of the challenges he set before us, it helps to have some appreciation of the person. Father Caffarel strikes us as a visionary, a listener with great inclusiveness, somebody who is competent, honest and outspoken in his search for the truth – somebody who is persistent in his determination to see his vision fulfilled. Above all we see a prayerful priest answering God’s call.

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### **As Visionary**

With this new phrase 'married spirituality', Father Caffarel shows an understanding of the importance and need for development of married love as a path to holiness. After the war much growth of new groups had occurred throughout all of France. However, at this same time, he observed some who were missing the true charism, some others who were becoming just social groups, who were losing the purpose which had brought them together. "Had the wonderful enthusiasm which had animated the first groups been already exhausted?"

He thought then of how holiness in religious orders never ceases to blossom and re-blossom. He saw that the essential factor for the long lasting quality and vitality of these orders was their rule. He asked himself: "Why, then should we not offer a rule to married Christians who want to progress spiritually? – not a rule for monks, but a rule for married lay men and women." This rule became the Charter of the Teams of Our Lady presented to the Movement on December 8th 1947 and changed the name from 'Caffarel Groups' to 'Equipes Notre-Dame'. The Charter sets out in its first part the objectives we must strive after and in its second part the means of working towards these objectives – the methods and the endeavours.

### **As Listener**

Throughout his 35 years of service, Father Caffarel always worked with groups of couples in the search for the truth of married spirituality:-

- With the Leading Team, he developed the Charter in 1947.
- In 1970, with the then Leading Team, they prepared and presented additional endeavours:
  - to spend time each day in quiet contemplative prayer
  - and the daily study of Holy Scripture.

In presenting these he said:- "Everything withers when prayer is missing, everything is reborn, ripens, when prayer is present." (Rome 1970.)

His openness to the Holy Spirit in guiding Teams had its roots in his response to those first young couples in 1938, "Let us seek together; let us join together and set off on a journey of discovery."

### **Competent & Honest**

His whole ministry, his service to the Teams Movement, and then to the Troussures House of Prayer, and now the process for his beatification, which was accepted

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in April 2006, are real testimonies to his competence, to his honesty and to his outspokenness. His many documents, editorials and talks at conferences are further testimonies. Father Caffarel was always held in high regard by Cardinals and Bishops throughout the world and was listened to and acted upon by Pope John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II and strong echoes of his vision are paralleled in Pope Benedict XVI's first encyclical "Deus Caritas Est."

### **Persistent & Determined**

Father Caffarel's most outspoken comments were in pursuit of the ideals of married spirituality. He persistently challenged the Institutional Church. However, his most determined comments were directed at ourselves, the members of Teams, exhorting us to move forward in our own area of expertise and in the fulfilment of the essential aims of the Movement. Responding to the risk of us becoming lukewarm or citing a lack of time or other objections, Father Caffarel retorted: "You haven't got a guide? We will give you one, you can find some. You haven't got time? You have time to eat and sleep, do not let your soul die of hunger!" (Notes on Love and Grace 1955.)

Five years later, he challenged the members: "If Teams do not succeed in giving you the taste and hunger to know God, if, after a few months or years, working at the study topic has not led you to acquire the habit of religious study, there can be little reason for the existence of our Teams. We were created to know, love and serve God. If we do not know Him in a living and constantly sustained way, let us have no illusion: we will not love and serve Him truly." (February 1960 editorial)

He was always very clear about the phases that Teams go through and he identified two very different stages:- "I am convinced that our Teams should be both a Movement of initiation and a Movement of perfection. If Teams were only a Movement of perfection, couples would hesitate to enter. ...On the other hand, if Teams were merely a Movement of Christian initiation, they would soon disappoint the very couples in whom they had instilled a desire for more growth." (Rome May 1959)

For priests who came and asked about their role in Teams he told them that: "the Movement with its organisation and various methods – is essentially an instrument placed in the hands of a priest to help them to fulfil better their mission of spiritual educators of couples." (Conference 1959)

### **The Man of Prayer**

In 1970 with the Leading Team, he introduced the endeavour of personal

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contemplative prayer with these words:- “From now on it will be asked of each member of the Movement to consecrate a modest minimum of 10 minutes per day to reflective prayer, beginning with commitment.” A few years later when he was stepping down and in his last editorial in 1973, he spoke of the importance of prayer and the dedication of the rest of his life in these words:- “I believe now more than ever, in the irreplaceable importance of prayer, and it is in this way that I want to help you and remain present with you. All my time during the years that I am still to live will, to the extent that it depends upon me, be devoted to prayer and helping others to pray.” (A Dieu 1973)

### **The Challenges**

To understand the challenges which Fr. Caffarel encountered in those early days, we need as he would say: “To return to the source”, which finds a Europe at the brink of war. But the challenges they tried to respond to were similar to those that face us today or that we have experienced in our lives. This was a period of uncertainty, of fear and of concern for the future caused mainly by:

- Materialism which had started to dominate society. Its philosophy as anti-Christian, anti-marriage, anti-family. Already, this was being challenged by the young. Reflecting in 1970 on the changes of the 60's, he said:- “It is also true that the revolution of young people which has sprung up in the past few years and in numerous countries, indicates the pressing need of young people to escape from materialism which is suffocating them.”
- Atheism was then thought to be the philosophic thinking of more than one third of the population of the world. Today it continues to grow in parallel with agnosticism. He prophesied that “Future historians when speaking of the 20th century will no doubt call it ‘the century of the death of God’. He also warned that “formerly, atheism was the possession of the elite, now it has become an every day commodity.”
- Lethargy of Christians who seemed to find little happiness in their faith, who show no enthusiasm to talk about God. The image of God shown by Christians in their way of living and subsequently in their speech was hardly attractive. He quotes from Gaudem et Spes this harsh sentence: “In the origin and growth of Atheism, Christianity may have played a part which is far from unimportant.” This false image of God was so distant from the personal relationship with Jesus which Fr. Caffarel presented in his own

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life and which he hoped for, for every Christian in particular for every Christian couple.

- Separation - The Church saw spirituality as the speciality of the priests and religious – the celibate. Opportunities for involvement by the laity were offered to either men or women. There was often separation at Mass and other religious practices, such as retreats and confraternities. Speaking to Leaders of the Movement in Chantilly, France in 1987, he humorously spoke of organising the first Teams retreat. When he asked for facilities from a Jesuit House, they said fine but no women were allowed in a Jesuit House. He then made the same request to the Cenacle Sisters, who replied 'Yes' but no men would be allowed.
- Marriage Practice - As with religious and social practice, the role of husband and wife were different and separate. Family and marriage were being degraded in almost every country. Sexual relations were confined to pro-creation and still carried the stigma of 'soul-good' – 'body bad' thinking from many centuries.

Father Caffarel writing to the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council said:- "The errors and influences which are creeping into Christian couples and undermining them should be investigated and also the failure in the pastoral ministry which explains their vulnerability."

## Some Solutions

### Teams of Our Lady

Through his encounter with those first young couples in 1938, he embraced these challenges. He worked tirelessly for the next 35 years with so many couples in defining, experiencing, documenting, evangelising, refining and correcting the charism of our Movement and its framework and methods. This pedagogy has benefited each of us, as person and as couple in our journey to God – helping to awaken in one another the sacred.

The charism of Teams of Our Lady is as a Movement of married spirituality. It is considered as a gift from God to the Church and to the world. The pedagogy then, as today throughout the world remains the same. It is based on two pillars:-

- The Team meeting where we meet together, share, pray and support one another, discuss what we have studied and deepen our relationship with one another and with God.

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- The set of endeavours we take on during the month which, when we truly try to incorporate them into our lives, will strengthen our prayer life, deepen our couple relationship and increase our knowledge on the topic we choose to study as a Team.

These two pillars have created a learning environment to support 'Married Spirituality'.

We should look at our Movement and see how it benefits us and how it can benefit other couples to develop their Christian married spirituality. Our Team meetings create a learning environment of awareness, of dialogue, of meeting with Jesus through our encounter with other team couples and spiritual counsellors. Our pooling and our study topic educate us on the worldly challenges and the art of relationship as couple.

Jesus is present throughout our meal and time together but in a very special way as we pray His Holy Scripture. When we share on our Endeavours we are helping each other in a truly Christian way, to find new ways to deepen and develop as person, as couple and in our relationship with God.

The sit-down gives us an opportunity, as couple in the presence of the Holy Spirit; to affirm each other as persons and as couple, to review our progress in the light of Gospel values, and to map out our future plans as couple, and as family.

Father Caffarel's great wish for all of us was that:- "Your home will bear witness to God in a still more explicit fashion if it is the union of two searchers, where the intellect and the heart are thirsting to know and to meet God, to become united with Him, because they have understood that God is the great reality, because God interests them more than anything else." (May 1970).

## **The Church**

In the early 1960's Fr. Caffarel was appointed consultant to the Apostolate of the Laity and presented to the future Fathers of Vatican II his thoughts, experience and suggestions from his 25 years of ministry with couples. He spoke of marriage as:- "the only community founded on a sacrament". He spoke of the need for pastoral understanding and the ability to communicate and preach on: "God's thinking on all the realities of marriage: its sacramental character, its greatness, its laws: about love, fatherhood, motherhood, sexuality, procreation, education."

He asked that the Council give guidance on moral theology: "moral theology taught to the faithful is often no more than a thesis on sexual relations. There will never be a renewal of Christian marriage until married Christians are offered a morality based on spiritual progress in and through that 'state in life', sanctified

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and sanctifying, which is marriage.”

He asked that the Church develop a theology of marriage: “It is necessary to have a clearer idea of the sacramentality of marriage, not to confine one’s thinking to the moral conception of the union of the spouses, but to focus on its mystical aspect, that is to say, its connection with the mystery of Christ, so as to have a clearer idea also of the nature, the aims, the properties, “the permanence” of the sacrament, the place of the Christian couple in the Church”.

On preparation for marriage he said: “The lack of preparation is the cause of innumerable matrimonial tragedies.” On the other hand he highlighted the value of marriage preparation in its fullness which could: “enable that an adult religion be discovered by Catholics who, for the most part have learnt nothing since the catechism before their first Communion.”

To protect marriage and particularly the young: “It is necessary that the young should be capable of discerning their particular vocation and responding to it, fully aware of what is involved; that they be helped in procuring sound ideas about marriage, its nature, its purpose, its characteristics –.”

If these challenges are responded to he proposed that: “There is an altogether positive and uplifting aspect of marriage which one would like to see being made known to our world. Given that in our time, just as in every other era, the human heart remains inhabited by the irrepressible hope of achieving perfect love in marriage, the content of this doctrine, in all its richness and beauty would have a good chance of finding an echo with our contemporaries.”

Finally, we believe that to respond to the challenges of today’s society and to communicate clearly to diverse cultures and particularly to the young, we need a clearer, simpler language of love; a language which can communicate the beauty of married love and a deep understanding of married spirituality.

Pope Benedict in his first encyclical ‘Deus Caritas Est’ – ‘God is Love’ presents a new vision for our sacrament of love. He contradicts the old thinking which separated the two loves of ‘eros’ and ‘agape’ often suppressing ‘eros’ in favour of ‘agape’. On the contrary, he asserts that eros is ever reaching out towards its fulfilment in agape, stating: “Eros is thus supremely ennobled, yet at the same time it is so purified as to become one with agape.” (Benedict XVI ‘Deus Caritas Est’)

Perhaps in this Encyclical we have something of a response to another Caffarel challenge to the Second Vatican Council: “Married Christians are, for the most part, convinced that Christian perfection is not for them. This, once again, is the view of too many priests. That error is fatal: the person who is not aiming at perfection soon slides into mediocrity, into sin. One has here one of the explanations for the

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current decline of Christian marriage. As against this, what an impetus would one not create if one brought to the notice of couples Christ's call to perfection, if one taught them that the essence of this perfection is to be found in Love, and not in the vows of the religious life, and that in itself marriage not only is not an obstacle but is a means of arriving at the perfecting of that Love."

The Second Vatican Council may not have included all of Father Caffarel's suggestions. However, one of the great expressions of the Council was the invitation to us, the laity, to take responsibility for our own faith development and for the development of the Church.

### A Dieu

Vatican II speaks of the 'Domestic Church'. We have so much to thank those early couples and Fr. Caffarel and the Holy Spirit for bringing our first Team together and allowing this same model to flourish all over the world today.

To conclude, let us reflect on what Fr. Caffarel spoke of as he stepped away as Spiritual Counsellor to the Movement in 1973. When asked for his opinion on what was the most important aspect of Team Life. After reflecting on the many gifts, he identified the most important:

*"There is there, in the midst of these couples gathered together in a room in an apartment, the intense presence of the Risen Lord, alive, attentive to all, loving all of them, with their mixture of good and bad, and anxious to help them to become the kind of people they want to be. He is there, as on the evening of the Resurrection, in the upper room in Jerusalem, when He appeared suddenly to those other team members, the apostles. He breathed on them, saying: 'Receive – the Holy Spirit.' And they became new men. Jesus Christ, in the midst of couples, does not fail to impart His Spirit to them; and those who open themselves to His Spirit – this is something that people learn gradually – become people of the Spirit. And the whole meeting is animated by the Spirit. To these men and women who, in the evening, after a hard day, often arrive exhausted and weighed down with worries, this Spirit communicates Christ's twofold passion: His impatience for the glory of His Father, and His burning and gentle pity for the crowds 'who are like sheep without a shepherd.'*

*What I have just described is not what it always is, but how it ought to be. For a meeting of a team which is not first and foremost a joint effort to meet Jesus is something completely different from a meeting of a Team of Our Lady." (Lettre Mensuelle Equipes Notre-Dame March April 1973)*

**John & Elaine Cogavin**  
International Leading Team  
Equipes Notre-Dame

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## Home Is A Holy Place



*Peter and Pauline Lavery have been married for 32 years, and have been in Teams in the North East for nearly 20 years, including a stint as Sector Couple. Peter was ordained as a deacon in June 2005. Peter and Pauline are now Marriage and Family Life Coordinators in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. This year this includes the responsibility for promoting the “Home is a Holy Place” initiative in the diocese.*

Home is a Holy Place – this statement affirms that God lives and is present in every home, because of its very nature, just as we come and make our home in Him. God is inclusive in his love – it is for anyone. God living in the perfection of family life. God living in the ordinariness, messiness and brokenness of family life.

The Listening 2004 initiative in the UK asked families what they wanted from the church. From the responses a number of initiatives were developed, and each of the following years was given a focus.

- 2005 Everyone is welcome
- 2006 Home is a Holy Place
- 2007 Passing on the faith

We are enthused and passionate about presenting this message. Our task is to go around parishes to raise awareness of this theme, and encourage action. We have spoken to people who have influence – catechists, marriage preparation teams, the diocesan pastoral council, youth council, laity council, etc, and here at the Teams Gathering, so that we can make a difference, and cascade this information.

What is a family ? Traditionally, it is Mum, Dad and 2.4 children, but we asked those at the Gathering what other types of family group there were, and these were some suggestions :-

1. Traditional Mum coping while Dad travels
2. Step-children
3. Children living with Grandparents
4. Single Parents
5. Parents deceased; oldest child bringing up others
6. Fostering and transitory families

Some people responding to Listening 2004 felt unwelcome in church, and unwanted, because they were in a broken family, or had noisy children.

Where do we find God ? In heaven with the angels and saints ? On a high mountain, as in the Old Testament ? In Church ? In the wonders of creation ? In the lives of good people ? But the Bible says, “Look, here God lives among human beings. He will make his home among them. They will be his people, and he will be their God, God-with-them.” (Revelation 21:3) And if we believe that God lives within each one of us

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and makes his home among us, then our reverence and respect for Family Life will be transformed. Pope Paul VI said that home is the domestic church, and that the church has a tremendous amount to learn from families – the way in which families make up after divisions, how they reconcile, how they handle conflicts.

Good people do not see holiness in their every day lives. They know they pray, but do not recognise that everyday actions are holy. It is hard to believe that God is in our home, but we should remember that Jesus spent time with sinners, on the margins of society.

At this stage in our talk, we invited two Teams families to assist us in a dramatised reading of Matthew 25: 31 - 46. In this gospel reading Jesus speaks of the Last Judgement :-

*Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take as your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome, lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." Then the upright will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome, lacking clothes and clothe you? When did we find you sick or in prison and go to see you?" And the King will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."*



God is present in Family Life – not in the perfection or the ideal, but in the struggle, mess, ordinariness, brokenness, striving of everyday Family living. People have commitments at home, being busy means not being able to get involved with outside activities. Yes being busy, but still doing the work of God. Parish work – you can be doing it in your immediate family, and extended family.

How has God used your hands recently? What holy things do we do with our hands? There is the Sign of the cross, receiving communion, but also preparing food, cuddling children, shaking hands.....

We closed with Teresa of Avila's prayer –

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Yours are the only hands with which he can do his work.

Yours are the only feet with which he can go about the world.

Yours are the only eyes through which his compassion can shine forth upon a troubled world.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Remember – **Home is God's address** – where God wants to be known.

**Peter & Pauline Lavery**

# The Super Region

## Teams In Trinidad

### On Retreat 2007

This year's retreat took place in Emmaus, Arima. Approximately 23 couples along with over 26 children of all ages ranging from a few months old attended. The theme of the retreat was based on "Follow me" (Matt 9:9) – "Following Christ in everyday married life".

We began by thinking about contemplative prayer, which was compared to "Liming with God", with God as the driver, and we as the passengers who are always ready to go along and say "yes" to God and so follow his guidance. The vigil which followed consisted of silent meditation during which Father Chambers interjected with prayers for couples in different situations.

The next day Fr. Joe Harris renewed in each one of us the true spirit of married spirituality with concrete ideas to put into practice. He reminded us that there is a distinction between love and emotional attachment, and courtship, which is essential all throughout marriage and helps keep the emotional attachment intact. Love in its true essence is the intention to do the best you can for your spouse in spite of difficulties and lack of appreciation.



In peeling back the layers of the true meaning of Marriage, we reviewed the definition of marriage as "a partnership for the whole of life for the good of spouse and the procreation and education of children". In taking apart this definition we looked at the fact that men and women are created with equal dignity, hence marriage is not a democracy rather it is a partnership, with a spirit of consensus, in which even children are encouraged to participate in family meetings to address pertinent issues. "The good of the spouse", refers to the fact that as



a married person our prime concern should be to help (not hinder) our spouse to reach heaven by all our thoughts and actions. "Procreation of children", Father Joe delved into the fact that God's Love is a fruitful love and as such the Church is against selfish reasons for birth control, both artificial and natural as it goes against God's will. "Education of children" focused on religious formation of children, and this must be addressed in the home as it is the primary responsibility of the parent. Preparation of children to become parents themselves as well as living out the virtues is taught mainly by example. Habits such as loyalty and fortitude which are so uncommon nowadays have to be lived out for others to follow.

# The Super Region

We were challenged as lay couples/members of the Catholic Church to imbue the secular with Christian values, because when we withdraw, other forces come in and take over, and also to strengthen our resolve we should meditate on the Gospel together, for if we believe in God we also believe what God has said about marriage “It is the image of Christ’s love for the Church”. After this very fruitful discussion all the couples were encouraged to have a ‘Sit-down” on the question, “God’s love is faithful, forgiving, total and fruitful, how have we as a couple lived up to these aspects and how can we reflect them in society?”

The next session was team meetings, where we looked at following Christ and living the Gospel message in our daily lives in practical ways. We reunited as one group to share our responses and the following are a few salient points that were highlighted:

You can shape the world by:

- Choices you make
- Values you choose
- Right attitude

The five languages of Love

- Words of affirmation
- Quality time (with spouse)
- Receiving gifts (from spouse)
- Acts of service
- Physical touch

Also included was an interesting activity of writing and sharing what we each did with our hands over the past two weeks to minister God’s love to our family. This was an activity brought back by two couples who had attended the Super Regional Conference in England the previous weekend.

The closing Mass was solemn and joyful. We were reminded that the disciples were instructed to take almost nothing with them as a way to remember to place their trust in God. The presentation at the end was especially joy-filled as Fr. Neil Rodriguez was presented with gifts to celebrate his 45th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. He was given a standing ovation for his being a true Father to us as a Movement, having been the first chaplain and effectively bringing the Teams formation structure of married life to our shores over 23 years ago.

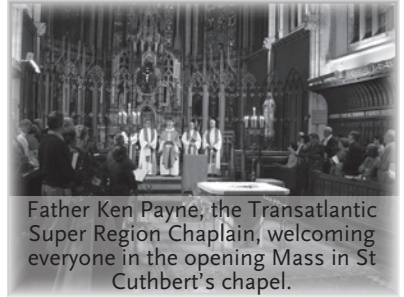
The weekend could not have been complete without the great meals prepared by the staff at Emmaus as well as the excellent job performed by the baby sitters who allowed parents to get the valuable quality time needed to share and get the most out of the weekend. Once again a truly memorable weekend retreat that was simple, yet truly inspirational.

# The Super Region

## The International College

### Ushaw

Each year the international college meets for five days; Transatlantic was chosen to host the 2007 meeting. This was a great opportunity to introduce the rest of the international movement to Transatlantic. After some deliberation Ushaw College Seminary near Durham was chosen. Peter & Di Wordsworth as Northern Britain Regional Couple were the hosts and the animating team was led by Tom & Maureen Hoban, who with their long experience on the international leading team (they were John & Elaine Cogavin's predecessors on the ERI) were the ideal couple. We would like to put on record our huge gratitude for all the work done by the animating team; everything ran like clockwork. As the college took place just two weeks after the Swanwick Conference, we were greatly relieved to be able to leave everything in such capable hands.



Father Ken Payne, the Transatlantic Super Region Chaplain, welcoming everyone in the opening Mass in St Cuthbert's chapel.

We had couples and priests present from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, France, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Syria and USA. During the week Mass was celebrated in English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Aramaic. We even sang in Polish on one occasion!

The Teams world is divided into four zones each with one member of the ERI as liaison couple. Transatlantic is part of Eurasia along with the Oceania super-



Rene & Vee from Oceania

region (Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines), the region of India and



Chacko & Susamma from India

# The Super Region

## The International College

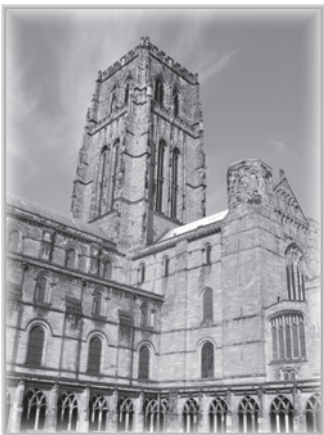
newly started teams in Korea and Vietnam. Much of the work of the college is done in the four zones and we are fortunate in Eurasia to have just the one language – English which greatly simplifies our discussions. But we all have a common need for good translations of Teams documents into English. We have now agreed a system to share the translation load so that documents are only translated once.



Joachim & Maigorzata Grzonka

The college provides a wonderful opportunity to network and we had a very fruitful discussion with Joachim and Malgorzata Grzonka, the Polish regional couple. Teams in Poland is just celebrating its 5th anniversary, but they have all the core documents translated into Polish and are very keen to help us in any way they can with our expansion efforts with the new arrivals from Poland.

Along with Fr Ignatio, we also had discussions with the Portuguese super-regional couple who look after Portuguese speaking teams in South Africa and Mozambique and discovered that Chichewa, the language spoken in Malawi is also spoken in parts of Mozambique and Zambia. We will see what links can be made with teams in Mozambique. As yet there are no teams in Zambia, but Chichewa-speaking seminarians from Zambia attend the St Peter Major seminary in Fr Ignatio's parish in Zomba.



Durham, with its now Anglican cathedral completed in 1090AD, was a wonderful setting to explain the history of Christianity in these islands and everyone left knowing a lot more about St Bede, St Cuthbert and the place of Lindisfarne in the spread of Christianity across Europe. They also realised that England is not a Catholic country. Just 1 in 5 Catholics now marries another Catholic.

We continue to be amazed at the talent in Teams. Mike Duffy (pictured here with Fr Ignatio), one of

# The Super Region

## The International College

the college animating team, is a guide at the Cathedral and so managed to lay on English, French, Italian and Spanish guides.

Next year the college will be in Fatima (Portugal) and in January 2009 all regional couples from around the world will be invited to Rome to participate in the development of the orientation of the Movement for the six years starting 2012. The 2009 college will follow on from this large meeting and will use the results from the regional couples' deliberations.



**Paul & Helena McCloskey**  
Super Regional Couple

“ It is a tiring journey both for Jesus and for us. We need frequent pauses by the well to draw water. Pauses for personal prayer, for prayer as a couple, for ecclesiastical prayer; the pauses of silence and listening, the pauses of the meeting with God's grace. Perhaps this is just the problem of mankind today: man doesn't reject God, but doesn't look for Him. ”

Father Angelo Epis, ERI Chaplain in his closing homily on 'Jesus and the Samaritan woman'. John: 4.

# *The Super Region*

## *Introducing The New Study Topic*

### **Jesus Christ - At The Heart Of Christian Life**

At the Lourdes International Gathering in 2006, the Teams movement launched an Orientation which set the tone for the movement for the following 6 years. The theme of this Orientation is "Teams of Our Lady, Communities of Couples, reflecting the love of God." To support this theme, a series of study topics are being developed for use by individual teams.

In addition, Teams identified that deeper study of Jesus would be valuable, and this independent study topic was developed. It gives us the opportunity to consider the life and legacy of Jesus in some detail, to reflect on his humanity, his divinity, and to consider his messages, and finally to reflect on the message of Easter, and Jesus' continuing presence in his Church. The topic takes up the words of the Samaritan Woman quoted in Father Ken's article earlier in this newsletter - "Lord, I see that you are a prophet"

As with previous study topics, this study is in 8 sections, with suggestions for discussion and reflection by individuals and couples between team meetings, and for discussion at team meetings. Each section has a choice of related bible readings that can be used in Team meetings as part of the Team meeting.

The topic is now being distributed around our Regions, and each Region will distribute it in its own way. Ireland is planning to print the topic as a booklet, which will be sent to each team, whilst the GB Regions will place the full document on the website, and also present the topics in the GB Newsletter as material for the monthly meetings over the period December 2007 to July 2008.

# The Super Region

## 60 Years Of The Charter

In 2007 Equipes Notre Dame is celebrating the 60th anniversary of our Charter. This document was originally drawn up because the Movement was beginning to expand and the need for unity and a common structure was becoming ever more important. It is a living document that continues to present the essential objectives of team members: the wish to live their Christian marriage and to deepen their faith with the help of the team. Each year we are called upon to recommit to the Charter and the International Movement is asking us to make this a part of the 8th December celebrations in regions, sectors and individual teams. In this way, team members around the world will be united in a common rededication to the founding charisms of our Movement. One way to recommit to the charter was used at the Swanwick Gathering, and we reproduce the text below :-

*We have entered into the promise, the Covenant, of marriage. The strength and steadfastness of our marriage is a mirror of God's strong and faithful love. The Lord is our God and we are to be a sign of His faithfulness to those around us.*

*In Teams we find an expression of this great reality. Just as we mark the seasons, the anniversaries, our moments of joy and of sorrow, our moments of transition and our moments of growth, it is good for us to celebrate this 60th anniversary year of the Charter.*

*Here in this place, in union and communion with our brothers and sisters from around the world, we publicly reaffirm and solemnly renew our commitment to The Charter and our rootedness in Christ, source of our love.*

**All: We (names) wish, to renew our commitment to the Teams Charter and will continue to strive to fulfil the Endeavours laid down in the Charter, through the intercession of Our Blessed Lady, Mother of God.**

# *The Super Region*

## *Beatification Of Father Caffarel*

On the 25th April 2006, Monsignor André Vingt-Trois, Archbishop of Paris, gave a warm welcome to the proposal by Equipes Notre Dame to promote the cause for canonisation of their founder, Father Henri Caffarel. The first step was to appoint a promoter of the cause, “the Friends of Father Caffarel”, who would like him to be canonised because:

- His holiness is the holiness of a “prophet of the 20th century”
- His holiness is seen clearly in his life, wholly animated by the Lord.
- His holiness is apparent in the faithfulness of his love for the Church.

### **The Process of Beatification**

Beatification, and its final stage, canonisation, are decided at the end of a procedure initiated by the Bishop when he is convinced of the holiness and influence for good of the person who is the subject of the process. The promoter nominates a postulator, in this case, Pere Paul-Dominique Marcovits, chaplain to the France/ Luxembourg/ Switzerland super region. The Bishop sets up a commission, charged with the task of conducting the diocesan enquiry in his name and he appoints theologians and historians to verify the correctness of the subject’s biographical details, the theological quality of his writings, and to place the cause in its historical context.

Then the findings of the diocesan enquiry are sent to Rome to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints which directs the drafting of the “Positio super virtutibus”. This document enables a judgement to be made and the cause to be presented for the decision of the Holy Father. The final step in the cause is the recognition of a miracle, such as a cure which cannot be explained scientifically, obtained by the intercession of Father Caffarel.

In order to bring the cause to a successful conclusion, funds are needed to meet the expenses involved in building up the file. These are being raised by annual subscriptions to the Friends of Father Caffarel. If you would like to contribute, please send your name and address together with the appropriate amount to Paul and Helena.

Single members : 10€ / £7

Couples: 15€ / £10

# *The Super Region*

## **Prayer for the Beatification of the Servant of God, Henri Caffarel**

God, our Father,

You planted deep in the heart of your servant, Henri Caffarel,  
a fountain of love which bound him totally to your Son  
and inspired him with a wonderful capacity to speak of Him.

A prophet for our time,

he revealed the dignity and beauty of the vocation of every person  
in the words Jesus addresses to each of us: “Come follow me”.

He made couples enthusiastic about the greatness of the sacrament of marriage,  
the sign of Christ’s fruitful love for the Church and of His union with her.

He showed that priests and couples are called to live a vocation of love.

He was a guide to widows: love is stronger than death.

Prompted by the Holy Spirit, he accompanied many Christians on the path of prayer.

Seized by a devouring fire, he was a dwelling place for you, Lord.

God, our Father,

through the intercession of Our Lady,

we ask you to hasten the day when the Church will proclaim the holiness of his life,  
so that people everywhere will discover the joy of following your Son

in accordance with their particular vocations in the Holy Spirit.

God our Father, we invoke the intercession of Father Caffarel for.....

(indicate the particular favour being sought)

Prayer approved by Monsignor Andre Vingt-Trois – Archbishop of Paris.

“Nihil obstat”: 4th January 2006 – “Imprimatur”: 5th January 2006.

In the case of a particular favour obtained through the intercession of Father Caffarel,  
contact:

The Postulator,

Association of “The Friends of Father Caffarel”

49 rue de la Glaciere

F 75013 Paris

FRANCE

# *The Super Region*

## *Finance & Administration*

The Transatlantic super region is one of eleven super regions around the world. There are also seven isolated regions. Together with the ERI these super regions and isolated regions make up the college that was held this year in Durham.

The total annual budget for the international movement in 2007 is 225,000 Euros. At the time the budget was set there were 53,519 couples worldwide so it amounts to about 4 Euros per couple. Each super region and isolated region pays in proportion to the number of couples but weighted by a figure from the World Bank that takes account of relative Gross Domestic Product. This annual payment is known as 'cotisation'. As an example, the USA pays 11.0% of the budget, but is just 5.2% of the couples and Brazil, which is 30.9% of the membership, pays in 12.7%. Transatlantic is 1.6% of the membership and our averaged out contribution is 2.5% indicating that overall we are quite well off relative to some parts of the world. Should the relative number of African teams increase in Transatlantic, then over time our contribution would tend to move more in line with our membership.

2006 was an International Gathering year (Lourdes) and a separate organisation was established in the host country (France) with the sole purpose of organising the Gathering. Once all the accounts for the Gathering are finalised the closing balance is transferred into the accounts of the international Movement. So the 2007 accounts will show the surplus from Lourdes. This surplus came largely as a result of sponsorship and a better deal with SNCF for the two complete TGV trains that were needed to take people from Paris to Lourdes. (As an example all the rucksack/stools were donated, something that was not anticipated at the time the initial budget was established.) One consequence of this good fortune (and hard work and prudent financial management!) is that the budget contributions each super region and isolated region makes to the international Movement will be frozen until 2009. So the Transatlantic cotisation for 2007-2009 will be 5,571 Euros annually.

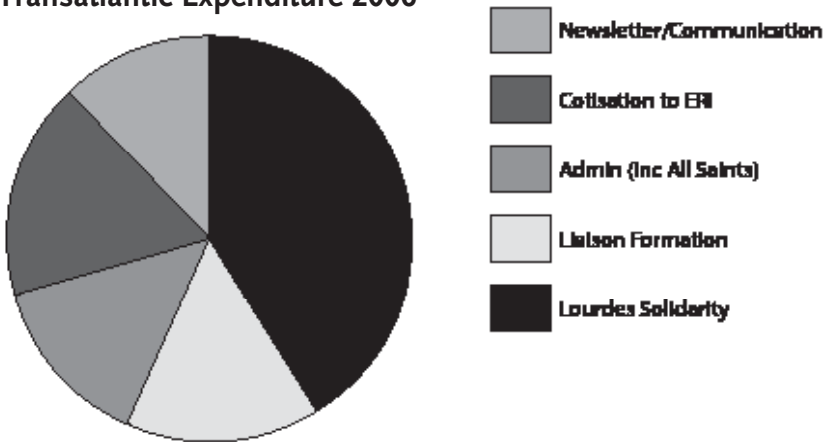
When the Transatlantic super region was established in January 2006, the regional couples agreed an initial annual budget of 20,000 Euros, to be split 75% GB (£10,000) and 25% Ireland (€5,000). This split reflects the balance of numbers of couples across the two countries. In 2006 after paying the cotisation of 4,821 Euros this meant the super region had 15,179 Euros to support the expansion and development of the Movement. But 2006 was the Lourdes Gathering year and so we had all the Lourdes

# The Super Region

payments passing through the Transatlantic accounts and the solidarity money that had been collected. Similarly in 2007 all the Swanwick bookings went through the accounts as have the costs of the international college in Durham for which we are reimbursed by the ERI. In 2007 Trinidad also made a contribution to the super region, so the income for 2007 is slightly more than 20,000 Euros.

The total collected in Solidarity during 2006 was almost 18,200 Euros, including a contribution of 7,000 Euros from the international Movement to help with the travel cost for Lourdes. This enabled us to support one couple from Malawi and South Africa and five couples, one wife and a priest from Trinidad to go to Lourdes. Similarly in 2007 we have supported one couple and a priest from Malawi and two couples from each of South Africa and Trinidad to attend Swanwick.

**Transatlantic Expenditure 2006**



# *The Super Region*

## *Meditation On The Lord's Prayer*

I cannot say **OUR**, if my religion has no room for others and their needs.

I cannot say **FATHER**, if I do not demonstrate this relationship in my daily living.

I cannot say **WHO ART IN HEAVEN**, if all my interest and pursuits are in earthly things.

I cannot say **HALLOWED BE THY NAME**, if I, who am called by His name, am not holy.

I cannot say, **THY KINGDOM COME**, if I am unwilling to give up my own sovereignty and accept the righteous reign of God.

I cannot say **THY WILL BE DONE**, if I am unwilling or resentful of having it in my life.

I cannot say **ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN**, unless I am truly ready to give myself to His service here and now.

I cannot say **GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD**, without expending honest effort for it or by ignoring the genuine needs of my fellow man.

I cannot say **FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US**, if I continue to harbour a grudge against anyone.

I cannot say **LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION**, if I deliberately choose to remain in a situation where I am likely to be tempted.

I cannot say **DELIVER US FROM EVIL**, if I am not prepared to fight in the spiritual realm with the weapon of Word and prayer.

I cannot say **THINE IS THE KINGDOM**, if I do not give the King the disciplined obedience of a loyal subject.

I cannot say **THINE IS THE POWER**, if I fear what my neighbours or friends may say or do.

I cannot say **THINE IS THE GLORY**, if I am seeking my own glory and recognition first.

I cannot say **FOREVER**, if I am too anxious about each day's affairs.

I cannot say **AMEN**, unless I honestly say, "Cost what it may, this is my prayer."

*Used during a service by Julian Sanders, lay preacher,  
London Road URC, Kettering*

# The Super Region

## The Super Regional Gathering



*Couples From Ireland Region*



*Couples From Northern Region*



# The Super Region

## The Transatlantic Website



[Home](#) | [Our Teams](#) | [International Organisation](#) | [Contact Us](#)

- ▶ [About Us](#)
- ▶ [Events](#)
- ▶ [Literature](#)

### Transatlantic Super Region [Equipes Notre Dame \(Teams\)](#)

The Transatlantic Super Region comprises the English speaking teams in Europe, Africa and the Caribbean. It is one of eleven super regions and is the newest, being established in 2006. Currently, there are teams in Great Britain (North, Central and South regions), Ireland, Austria, South Africa, Trinidad & Antigua.

Find out more about the teams in our super region by clicking on the flags below  
(For information on the other ten Super Regions, click on the main international link)



[Antigua](#)



[Austria](#)



[Ireland](#)



[Malawi](#)



[South Africa](#)



[Trinidad](#)



[Great Britain](#)



[International Organisation](#)

As the screen grab above indicates, the main purpose of the Transatlantic website [www.teams-transatlantic.org](http://www.teams-transatlantic.org) is to provide a bridge between the international Teams website and the websites of individual regions. Each of the other ten super regions has its own website; those of USA and Oceania are well worth a look. Another very interesting site is the Polish Region [www.end.win.pl](http://www.end.win.pl) which could be very useful when explaining about Teams to our Polish community in GB and Ireland.

The main organising principle is that all the official documents of the Movement, its history etc appear on the international website [www.equipes-notre-dame.com](http://www.equipes-notre-dame.com) – country specific information appears on individual country websites. The Transatlantic website will be developed to include study topics and other resources which could be of use across the super-region. The guiding principle is that information should only appear once; and this should be at the appropriate level in the Movement. As and when other regions develop their own websites, the Transatlantic website will link directly to them.

## *The Super Regional Prayer*

Father, we give thanks for the loving care, which you lavish upon our families. We offer to you all of these acts of loving service which we have made with our blessed hands. Help us to be more aware of your presence in the everyday life of our home and to reflect your love in the witness we give to the world.

**Amen.**



Equipes Notre-Dame  
**Teams**

Teams of Our Lady is an international Christian movement for married couples of all ages.  
Equipes Notre-Dame • Teams of Our Lady • Equipos de Nuestra Señora • Equipas de Nossa Senhora • Ehegruppen E.N.D