

# Trans Atlantic

Introducing the Transatlantic  
Super Region



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# The Super Region

Dear Friends

Welcome to this special edition newsletter celebrating the formation of the Transatlantic Super Region. As you read it, you will become aware of how it spans a tremendously wide variety of countries, cultures and traditions. In fact, you may wonder why such a collection of countries was put together in the first place. Partly this is because many super regions were established several years ago and relate to individual or contiguous countries, (e.g. Portugal or France/Luxembourg/Switzerland). In recent years, super regions have been formed that cover much wider areas, eg Francophone Africa and Oceania. These two super regions have similar challenges to our own, but with the added complication that the teams speak different languages or dialects.

In fact, we believe that there will be many benefits from joining together to form our super region. We shall forge new friendships, learn from each other and share our common problems. So this is a time for celebration and giving thanks to God that He has, through the efforts of Father Caffarel, given us the great gift of Teams of Our Lady. Not only do we have this wonderful movement in common but in the words of the hymn, we share “one Church, one Faith, one Lord”.

During the 5 years that we have responsibility for the Transatlantic Super Region, our “endeavour” will be to forge a cohesive unit in which all couples and chaplains have a strong sense of mission commensurate with the charisms of Teams.

Please pray for us as we will pray for you.

**Paul & Helena McCloskey**  
**Super Regional Couple**



# *The Super Region*

## *From our Super Regional Chaplain*

Becoming a “Super Region” seems to put all of us more “on the map” and, hopefully, ever more closely involved with Team members in other parts of our one world. Pope Benedict in his recent encyclical on the nature and expression of love in our lives enlarges our horizons when he reminds us that “*The Church is God’s family in the world. In this family no one ought to go without the necessities of life*”, and he goes on to say that this “agape”, love, must extend beyond the frontiers of the Church. So, as members of Teams, let us all follow the Lord by growing in love as couples and families, as chaplains and widowed, in supporting one another within our English-speaking Super Region, and, at the same time, being ever open to the needs of all, whoever they may be.

Finally, as the Super Regional chaplain, I hope I can be of help to Paul and Helena, our Super Regional couple, as well as anyone in Teams whenever or wherever there is a need. May we all grow as one for, to quote again Pope Benedict and in the words of 1John 4 v16

*God is love, and he who abides in love, abides in God, and God abides in him.*

With every good wish, In Him, Ken.

Rev Kenneth John PAYNE has been Parish Priest at St Aidan’s, Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire, England since 1999. He started a career as Education Officer in the RAF, before training for the priesthood at Seminaire St Sulpice. He has served in a number of parishes in the Northampton diocese, including Dean of Northampton Cathedral. He has been involved with Teams of Our Lady for a number of years, serving as Sector, Regional, and now Super Regional Chaplain. He has published three books *Stretch Out Your Hand* in 1998 (aimed at adults joining the church); *Shades of Welcome* in 2002; *What Shall I Say?* in 2005, and is now working on his first fictional novel.

# The Super Region

## The Regional Candles

Each of the member regions of the new 'Transatlantic Super Region' has been presented with a Regional Candle. This short article gives a little background into the origins of the candles.



Up to 1995 the GB Regional candle had no permanent holder and each time it was used for a function such as a conference a suitable holder had to be found. For the 1995 annual conference in Southampton I turned a wooden base to become the permanent holder of the candle. The wood used had come from a cherry tree removed from our garden some years earlier. When I turned the wood, instead of the perfectly symmetrical form that was planned, I discovered that the holder had a flaw forming a sort of cleft in one side. My first instinct was to scrap the piece and start again. However, I cleaned up the material and found that although the shape was imperfect it had its own form of beauty. Certainly the flaw made the item unique – even if the shape were to be reproduced the appearance could never be truly duplicated.

When it was decided to look to creating a 'Super Region' and the three GB 'Pre-regions' were launched, it was suggested that each of the pre-regions should have a candle in a similar style, but smaller size, to the original candle. I searched through the stocks of timber and discovered that there were some usable pieces of the cherry tree that could be used to make suitable holders. So, each of the GB pre-regions had a candle and holder presented that was in a similar style and produced from the same tree as the GB regional one. Again, given the nature of the material, each of the holders has some sort of flaw or imperfection making each one unique.



# *The Super Region*

For the launch of the 'Transatlantic Super Region' I decided once again to rummage through my stocks of timber and was able to locate a few more pieces of the original cherry. These were then used to produce two more holders for the candles for Ireland and for Trinidad & Tobago. The original GB Regional candle is now the Super Regional candle.

In the same way that each of our regions has grown from the teams first established in England, we have the symbolism of candle holders that have also come from the same stock. Just as our regions share the same 'Teams' spirit and ethos, the candles and holders share the same basic form. However, each of our regions has its own distinct character and this is reflected in the variations and flaws in the turned candle holders.

Isn't this true of each one of us? We may be of a similar physical structure, but we each have our own characters that make us unique. No matter what flaws we exhibit, in God's eyes we are each a thing of beauty!

**Chris Lane**



# *The Super Region*

## *Putting Out Into The Deep*

### **the formation of the Transatlantic Super Region**

John Paul II asked us all to “Put out Into The Deep” in his Encyclical *Novo Millennio Ineunte*. And putting out into the deep is just how we feel as we start our period as super regional couple. But how big a leap of faith is the creation of a super region? Is it a radical change or just a natural continuation of what has been happening for the last 60 years?

### **The Early Years**

In the beginning there was one couple - Harry & Clotilde Meigh - who brought Teams to Cheltenham, England, in 1959. And it seems entirely appropriate that the super region should have been announced first in Cheltenham some 46 years after the original team started. And symbolically, Harry & Clotilde are pictured giving us what has become the Super Regional Candle. It will travel with us as a permanent reminder of the light of Christ in the life of the Movement.



The first team became two, and then there were more. Those early teams (Cheltenham 1 & 2, Woodchester, North Shields 1 & 2, and Barnet 1) formed the nuclei which have now become the regions of Central Britain, Northern Britain and Southern Britain.

By 1980 Great Britain had grown sufficiently to become an autonomous region. But the growth has not just been in Great Britain. Over the years GB Teams couples have supported the establishment of Teams in all these countries.

- 1964 Ireland
- 1969 India
- 1983 Trinidad & Tobago
- 1995 New Zealand
- c1995 South Africa
- 2000 The Philippines
- 2005 Malawi

# The Super Region

The Malawi team started following a letter from a teams couple from Southern Britain published in the Tablet, and is now supported by correspondence and email by teams in GB and Ireland. Australia should perhaps also be in the list, as an Australian couple were part of the original team in Cheltenham. They returned to Australia to establish Sydney 2, the second team in Australia. And an Australian couple piloted Barnet 1.

Harry & Clotilde also piloted the first Irish team. From the mid 1960's Ireland was a sector within the region of Great Britain and couples from Great Britain attended events in Ireland during this period. By 1988 Ireland had grown sufficiently to become an autonomous region, but at the International Gathering at Santiago de Compostela in 2000, the Irish and British walked together along the Camino Way, illustrating the continuing close relationship.



Trinidad & Tobago were also piloted from Great Britain; and grew to be a sector and subsequently a region in 1999. Couples from Great Britain joined them at several events over the years.

The wider Movement has similarly expanded over the years

- 1947 - Launch of The Charter
- 1950 - Brazil and Luxembourg
- 1953 - Mauritius and Senegal
- 1955 - Spain and Canada
- 1957 - Portugal
- 1958 - Germany and USA
- 1959 - Great Britain, Austria and Italy
- 1961 - Australia and Columbia
- 1962 - Madagascar and Vietnam

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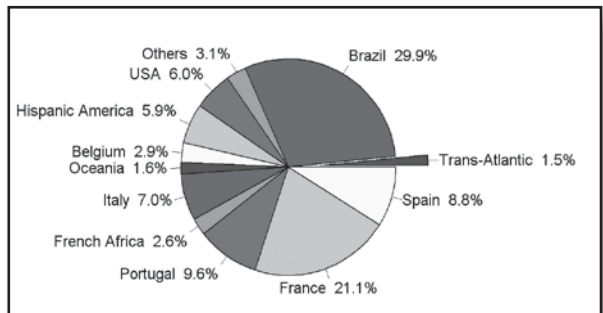
## Development of Structure and Organisation

The rapid and unplanned expansion of Teams to remote corners of the globe confronted the early Movement with its first challenge: how should it respond to the expansion to other non-French-speaking parts of the world? Consideration was given to the creation of independent movements in each country, but this idea was rejected in favour of maintaining one universal Movement as we are all part of the one body of Christ. Teams is now an *Association of the Faithful* (as defined in Canon Law) and received its formal Decree Of Recognition from the Vatican in 1992.

By 1970 there were 20,000 couples in 36 countries, and expansion continued so that by 2005 there were 55,000 couples in 75 countries. In 2005 alone, Teams started in Korea, Greece, Ivory Coast, Djibouti, Tanzania and of course Malawi. As the Movement grew, more structure was needed to provide support, hence the development of first regions, and then super-regions.

## The International College

This pie chart shows the spread of Teams around the world. Brazil and France are fully 50% of the Movement and if you add in Portugal, Spain and Italy that is more than 75% of the Movement from only five countries. Each of the pieces of the pie actually represents one super region, and in the spirit of collegiality all super regions have an equal responsibility for the guidance of the Movement. The Transatlantic Super Region is just 1.5% of the Movement.

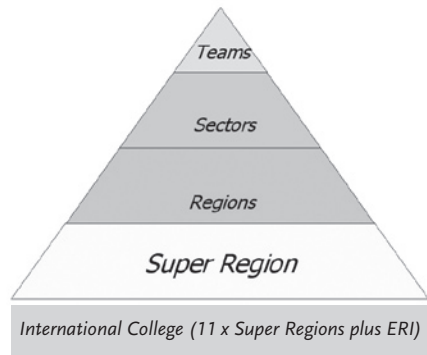


20 years ago the whole Movement was run from France and the leading team (the ERI - the Equipe Responsable International) was entirely French. They realized that with the spread of the Movement, there had to be changes and as couples rotated off the leading team, couples from other language groups were brought in.

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An International College was also created, consisting of super regional couples and the Leading Team. The College has developed over the last 20 years with more super regions being created and it is a measure of the progress of Teams in GB, Ireland and Trinidad that we have been invited to take our seat as a full partner in the College. Our super region is the 11th to be formed. The College meets once a year, usually in July, but it meets in September in International Gathering years for the five days just prior to the Gathering. Lourdes will be the first opportunity for the Transatlantic Super Region to attend the College.

This figure illustrates the current structure of the Movement. It is deliberately shown this way up as the most important element of the Movement is the base teams, which receive support and encouragement from the wider Movement. But this is not just an organisational structure - it is above all a communication network.



Revelation comes to us in three main ways: the Word of God; the Teaching and Tradition of the Church; and the world we live in - God's creation. If the Movement is to read the signs of the times, it is vital that all the members of the International College are in touch with the grass root team members. This can only happen if this organisational structure works to channel issues to members of the College. That way the College can help to determine the right priorities for the Movement.

## The New Transatlantic Super Region

The Transatlantic Super Region consists of 5 Regions

- Central Britain
- Ireland
- Northern Britain
- Southern Britain
- Trinidad & Tobago

# The Super Region

The sector of South Africa, with 7 teams;  
(there are another 5 Portuguese speaking  
teams in South Africa.)  
4 English-speaking teams in Austria  
The team in Malawi

So, what will it mean for Teams in the new Transatlantic Super Region?

It is our aim to build a sense of community and cohesion across the super region. We all need to respond to the question 'Who is my neighbour?' The reality is that the situation of couples across the super region varies considerably.

■ **A Full Voice in the College.** The super region can help to shape the future direction of the Movement and the understanding of married spirituality. The International Teams Movement also looks outwards to the Church and has influence at the highest level.

■ **Representing our Situation.** Although our super region has many common elements, there are also a number of unique features and situations in each country. As well as being an advocate for the super region, it will be our mission to emphasise and build on what unites us whilst celebrating each region's individuality. There are also clear benefits to be gained from working closer together, sharing ideas about innovative ways to promote Teams and piloting new teams, working together on translations - rather than reinventing the wheel all the time - and animating the Movement as a whole.

■ **Mission.** As Christians we are all called to Worship, to Witness and to Serve. The Mission of the Movement is to be ambassadors for married spirituality. Teams is not just something that happens in our own homes or at team meetings - we need to be visible Christian couples in the Church and the World. None of us should be hiding our light - however dim we may think it may be - under a bushel. Each region and super-region is asked to identify areas where they could focus their missionary effort. The Movement can and does make a difference.

## Current Plans

As Super Regional couple we will be working with our Super Regional Team to

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determine the priorities for the super region and to develop a relaxed yet efficient way of working collaboratively.

The full Super Regional Team is 5 regional couples

Central Britain, Mike & Kay Vadon

Ireland, Brendan & Moyra Bunting

Northern Britain, Peter & Di Wordsworth

Southern Britain, Chris & Frankie Lane

Trinidad & Tobago, Jeff & Pasqui Hoford

Super Regional Chaplain, Fr Ken Payne, parish priest at Little Chalfont, UK and previously GB Regional Chaplain.

Newsletter Couple, Antony & Janet Denman, who currently edit the GB newsletter, will be working with regional couples' correspondents to determine how best to approach the subject of communication and newsletters now that we are a super region.

Treasurer Couple, Jimmy & Colette Lambe from Ireland, will be in charge of the super regional budget and managing the super regional multi-currency finances.

For us it has been a time to refocus our lives and to determine our personal response to Pope John Paul II's call:

“Duc in Altum! These words ring out for us today, and they invite us to remember the past with gratitude, to live the present with enthusiasm and to look forward to the future with confidence: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever”....

“Now is the time for each local Church to assess its fervour and find fresh enthusiasm for its spiritual and pastoral responsibilities.”

Novo Millennio Ineunte, Pope John Paul II, 6th January 2001

For 'local church' we would also say Teams of Our Lady, each team and each couple.

**Paul & Helena McCloskey**

# *The Super Region*

## *Northern Britain Region*

Our region is home to 32 Teams in the top half of England and in Scotland, and encompasses 5 sectors; Teesside and Yorkshire, Scotland, North Tyne, North East and North West sectors. The geographical area it covers is huge, with 340 miles between the Harrogate Team in the south east of the region and Aberdeen, which is the location of our most northerly Teams. Consequently it is extremely difficult for sector couples to meet together regularly. We were delighted that all sectors were represented at the Northern Teams Gathering in autumn 2005 and enjoyed a rare opportunity for couples in the region to come together.

The Northern region comprises the typical full spectrum of Teams both in terms of couples' ages and length of time in Teams. Some of the Teams around the Newcastle area were among the first batch of Teams to start in the UK in the 1950's, comprising of some of our couples who, shall we say, have much wisdom among them!!

Wetherby, in the Teesside and Yorkshire Sector, is home to 4 Teams of which 2 are our newest Teams, having just finished piloting. It surely must hold the record not just for the largest number of young Teams couples in one area but also for the most school children. At the last count there were 47 children of school age or under in the 4 Wetherby Teams! Can anyone beat this?

Of the other sectors, the North East (the area south of Newcastle), is the largest of the sectors and consequently is quite active. Scotland (the smallest of the sectors) has unfortunately suffered most in recent years from a reduction in Teams, a trend we hope to help reverse. The North West sector (in the area near to Liverpool) was the northern part of the West Sector when GB was a single Region.

As is often the case in Great Britain, there is a mix of faiths among Teams in the region, with mixed marriages providing an extra dimension and depth in quite a few Teams.

As for ourselves, we live in Middlesbrough in the North East of England and have 2 children, Patrick (19) studying Maths at York University and Monica (almost 18), hoping to go to university in October. We started in Teams in Guildford, Surrey in 1991 and then moved north in 1997 and began Teams in Middlesbrough. Peter is very busy running his own hardware shop and Di works with people who have had a stroke. Our highlight of Teams life was attending a holiday session in Tobago in 1997 and we still carry dreams of returning to the Caribbean one day.

**Peter & Di Wordsworth**  
**Northern Regional Couple**

# *The Super Region*

## *Central Britain Region*

The Region of Central Britain extends from the Thames northwards to - roughly – a line drawn west from the River Mersey. It therefore includes Wales and most of the larger towns of England, including the half of London which is north of the Thames. There are 34 Teams in four sectors, London West, North Thames, South Midlands and West.

We are proud to have Cheltenham in our region – birthplace of the Teams in Britain and home of Harry and Clotilde Meigh, who brought teams here from France in 1959.

Because the Teams movement has spread mostly by personal contact, our Teams are in clusters with large areas and large cities in our Region still without teams.

One interesting development has taken place in our West London Sector. There has been a large Polish community in this area ever since the Polish Army stayed here at the end of the Second World War. Now we have a steady growth of teams of second and third generation Poles, augmented by new arrivals since Poland joined the E.U.

We have been in Teams 21 years. We have been married 39 years and have 2 children and 5 grandchildren.

**Michael & Kay Vadon**  
**Central Regional Couple**



# *The Super Region*

## *Southern Britain Region*

Greetings from warm and sunny Southern Britain – well occasionally anyway!

The southern Britain region is the largest region in the GB 'province' in terms of numbers. However, geographically we are the smallest of our regions. We currently have just over 230 couples or widow(er)s in 52 teams together with 39 chaplains. The region is made up of six sectors and is quite compact with not much more than about three hours drive between the furthest teams.

We have a wonderful spread of experience across the region with teams ranging from those in piloting to some that have been established almost 30 years. Historically there has been great support for neighbouring sectors – child minding during sector retreats, etc. This is becoming less apparent in recent years as we aim to provide more formalised crèche facilities for events. However, the old friendships and bonds are still very apparent when we meet together for our annual gathering each autumn.

Each of our sectors organises a range of activities throughout the year – both spiritual and social and often a combination of the two. Teams birthday Mass followed by a party is always popular or a summer ramble with a 'prayer stop' en-route at a local church. Lenten/Advent meditations or weekend retreats are a wonderful experience of being able to spend time in prayer and reflection with like minded couples.

Our own three children (now grown up and producing children of their own) have very fond memories of spending time with other Teams children. We have been blessed to spend 24 years as members of our own team, Fareham 2, which was established about 18 months before we joined. During our time in Teams we have held a few positions of responsibility - Sector Couple as well as present Regional Couple. We have also been involved in the animation of annual conferences and training sessions. We were fortunate to be able to participate in the International Gathering at Fatima in 1994.

All of our involvement in Teams has been blessed by the Lord - we have always received so much more than we have ever put in. The greatest gift has been the friendship and fellowship that we experience whenever we are in the company of other Teams couples. Teams is a real gift from God and we hope and pray that we may be able to play our own small part in bringing that gift to others.

With our love and prayers for you and your teams.

**Chris & Frankie Lane**  
**Southern Regional Couple**

# *The Super Region*

## *Ireland Region*

Teams of Our Lady started in Ireland on 29th February 1964 in Dublin. It then spread in the Republic of Ireland and eventually came over the border to Northern Ireland to Belfast in October 1979, during the troubles.

There are now 32 teams in the whole of the island of Ireland, with 143 couples, 6 widows and 1 widower, and 27 spiritual counsellors (or chaplains as we prefer to call them). We are even lucky enough to have one bishop in the teams – Bishop Michael Smith, in Mullingar! We are also fortunate to have a couple from Ireland on the International Leading Team – John and Elaine Cogavin (Dublin).

Teams seem to grow in clusters, in and around cities or large towns in Ireland. At present there are 5 sectors

Dublin – 12 teams

Mullingar – 7 teams

Belfast – 6 teams

Cork – 4 teams (including one in Limerick)

Galway – 3 teams.

If you look at a map of Ireland you will see that these sectors are roughly in the north, south, east, west, and centre of Ireland.

Recent events have included the usual gatherings such as the Responsible Couples Weekend, which took place in Mullingar in October 2005, and December 8th Masses; and we had a very special celebration for the 40th Anniversary of Teams coming to Ireland in 2004, complete with the couple who started the Teams of Our Lady here, John and Bernadette Blayney.

Fr. Gerry Cassidy CSSR. is our Regional Spiritual Counsellor/Chaplain. He has previously been Sector Chaplain for Belfast, and was the very first Team Chaplain in Belfast, back in 1979.

We, Moyra and Brendan Bunting, have been the Regional Couple for Ireland since October 2005, when we took over from Paddy and Jacinta Quigley. We have been in Teams 26 years; and served as Sector Couple in the late 80's and then more recently as part of the Satellite Team for Communication, which started in 2002. We are delighted to be part of the new Transatlantic Super Region.

**Moyra & Brendan Bunting**

**Ireland Regional Couple**

# *The Super Region*

## *How The Teams Came To Ireland*

It all began when Bernadette organised a retreat for the French community at the Convent of the Cenacle in Killiney in the summer of 1962. The priest who conducted the retreat was a French Jesuit, Father de Lavalette S.J. and during his few days in Dublin he stayed with us.

In the course of talking about the Church in France he asked us if we had heard of Equipes Notre-Dame. We just about knew of their existence. We had heard of the movement through references to it in a Dominican Review *L'Anneau d'Or* (the Wedding Ring) to which we subscribed, but that was the extent of our knowledge. He explained the movement to us and suggested that we should try to find some couples and start a team.

Bernadette spoke to a few couples in the hope of interesting them. This she did without success. Most people at that time regarded their religion as a very personal matter, not something to be shared with one's spouse ! They also had difficulty accepting the idea of a husband and wife praying together.

Father de Lavalette came back for another retreat for the French community in the summer of 1963 and he asked us how we had fared in getting a team started. We told him that our efforts had not met with any success. He said that was a great pity as he had a chaplain for us, Father Jack Kelly S.J. So there we were with a chaplain and no couples!

This made us renew our efforts and Bernadette managed to bring on board another Irish-French couple, and through them another two couples agreed to join us. A fifth couple, who had actually called into the headquarters of the Teams in Paris during their honeymoon, completed the team.

We had our first meeting on the 29th February 1964. The couples lived quite far from each other, on opposite sides of Dublin Bay, two in Howth, one each from Glenageary and Foxrock, and ourselves in Donnybrook. Father Kelly had been to a number of team meetings in France so he was able to pilot us, but England also supplied us with a pilot couple, Harry and Clotilde Meigh (see Central Britain !), and they very kindly paid us a visit.

What was of great assistance to the fledgling team was that, in 1965, France provided us with a liaison couple. The practice at the time was for the responsible couple, after each meeting, to send a report of the meeting to the liaison couple and at the same time ask them for any advice that they might want. The team file, which was kept by the liaison couple, but which was given to us when the team folded, contains lengthy correspondence between the respective responsible

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couples and the liaison couple. We still exchange Christmas cards with one of our liaison couples, Daniel and Magdeleine Flach.

The team flourished for five years and during that time two new teams were started, Dublin 2 in 1968, and Dublin 3 in 1969.

At the end of the team year in 1969 three couples decided to leave our team. We were very sorry to see them go. We had become very close through journeying together for five years seeking to deepen our faith, but at least their leaving did not affect the friendship that had developed between us. And it was sad to see the team disintegrate. But it had served its purpose by giving the Movement a foothold in Ireland through setting up teams 2 and 3 in Dublin.

As for ourselves, Team 2 took us in and there we have been, ever since, immensely grateful to Father de Lavalette for having introduced us to the Teams, and to the Movement for having continued to carry us.

**John & Bernadette Blayney**

## *Teams In Austria*

Rod and Anne-Marie Isaacs were the Responsible Couple for the Little Chalfont team until 2004 when they left for Austria where Rod began a two-year course at the International Theological Institute (ITI) for studies on marriage and the family at Gaming in Austria. This Institute caters for about 60 students from a number of different countries but all of whom follow courses in English.

After their first year there Rod and Anne-Marie invited me to help them start up a Team. They arranged an “information evening” to which ten couples. Shortly before the meeting Anne-Marie went into labour with her third child who was born that evening — a little girl, Grace. I was therefore left to “give birth” to three possible teams. They would be of mixed nationality but all English speaking and including two married priests of the Eastern Uniate rite.

There was considerable enthusiasm amongst those who came to the meeting. Although it may not be the ideal way of starting a team, since the couples are only at the Institute for a few years, important seeds were nevertheless sown, and with encouragement, will grow and spread. It was clear that whilst the courses at ITI were centred on marriage and the family, there was a great need for the families involved to grow together in their spiritual lives, and this is a vacuum that Teams could fill.

We pray that Teams continue to flourish in Austria, and is taken back to the couples’ home countries.

**Father Ken Payne**

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## South Africa Sector

The first Team in Durban was started by Fr Emanuel de Passos in the early 90's. That Portuguese-speaking team is still holding meetings. An English-speaking team (Durban 1) was then started and over the years there has been a flow of couples joining and leaving the movement.

In January 2004, we were delighted to add the Chatsworth teams to our growing numbers. Currently there are 7 teams in the area of Durban and suburbs, with couples from various parishes meeting regularly with their Priest, Sister or Deacon.

Teams of our Lady play a vital role in the lives of married couples living in a fast-changing, multi-cultural society. They offer a strong support system when couples have to face hardships and difficulties in their relationships.



We are particularly fortunate to have the opportunity of deepening our Christian faith by sharing our experiences and discussing issues which so often challenge it.

All the teams gather together for their Annual Retreat. Every year in August, the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady is celebrated by the teams in Chatsworth by holding a special mass.



We would like to congratulate our new Sector Couple Kogie and David Boulton and may they be blessed in all their endeavours.

Yours sincerely

**Gilda & Eddie de Freitas**  
South Africa Sector Couple

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## *South Africa Sector*

### **Chatsworth 4 - Our lady Queen of Peace**

This marriage group was formed in May 2002 with six married couples. During the first six months couples were finding their way in the group in terms of marriage and spiritual issues and married life in general.

After six months, the group became a closed group and couples began to talk about issues more freely and openly. During each group meeting, we were fortunate to have Father EJ de Passos as our spiritual leader when discussing various issues.

From 2003, the group decided to be involved in charity work, visiting the sick, praying with bereaved families and expanding their spirituality with the Rosary Prayer and being part of the “Follow Me” group.

The marriage group gave a whole new meaning to married life and helped each couple to understand the challenges of married life. Every group meeting we have gives us new insight into married life.

The group’s motto is

**“A marriage group committed to FAMILY LIFE”**

**Jerome & Ashika Narrandes**  
**Responsible Couple - 2006**

# *The Super Region*

## *South Africa Sector*

### **Chatsworth 5 - The Holy Family**

The Holy Family marriage group was formed in November 2003 with five couples. In March 2004, the sixth Clint and Michelle Nunn joined the group. Clint and Michelle were blessed with their second child a healthy baby girl on the 31st March 2006.

With the assistance of our Parish priest, Father EJ de Passos and a pilot couple from the Queen of Peace our group got off the ground. The death of 2-week-old Baby Ekiel of Terrance and Gaithree Naidoo on the 16th April 2005 was a very sad moment for the members of the group. Assistance and support from the couples in the group showed that the marriage group had come a long way from its inception. All in the group felt the loss of Baby Ekiel.

The Holy Family is involved in charity fund raisings. Funds collected were given to the Missionaries of Charity, S.V.D.P, and towards the improvement of the Parish.

The Holy Family group members have found that the meetings were meaningful. It helped understand the handling of their spouses and the challenges of marriage.

The Holy Family's mission is a group committed to **“Marriage & Family”**



# The Super Region

## Malawi Team

When Teams of Our Lady started in Malawi it brought a lot of questions from the members and those in the general public who saw the birth of the movement.

Firstly, on religious grounds, many Christians who were contacted and requested to form TOL had a negative attitude; fearing that this movement may contradict and bring confusions in the church – especially to other existing movements (such as Ward Meetings and Family Movement Group). This was even the fear of the clergy who were contacted. Secondly, those who were ready to join also had many unanswered questions, some people thought that it was an initiative by the founder to enrich himself by forming a Non-Governmental Organisation as happened in some organisations such as those serving the needs of those affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

After the movement was started by those couples who read and understood the rules, regulations, aims and objectives of TOL, things proved to work the other way round – not as people expected.

As we write, TOL in Malawi is now well known by many Christians in Zomba. Currently, the Parish Priest of Lwanga, Rev. Fr. I. Bokosi, is working tooth and nail together with our Chaplain, Rev. Fr. C. Baluwa, so that the movement should be recognized at parish level as well as diocese level. As this is in progress, there are a lot of families who are interested in joining the movement – but we are just waiting for the results of the discussions between the clergy and the bishop.



Since TOL was established, those families who joined Teams have benefited a lot both spiritually and personally. The movement has deepened the practice of praying in families as well as in a team. This has encouraged the families to be dedicated to church services and other activities at the church or within the community. Secondly, TOL has supported and helped to prepare couples who were married under tribal rites, who have now been brought to Christ. Socially, Team couples have met and corresponded with Team couples in Ireland. This

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is indeed an encouragement for the families who are able to share experiences both spiritually and socially.

As we are talking of couples married spiritually, it was a marvellous Easter in Lwanga Parish in Zomba. During this period, TOL members participated fully in all Easter activities though it was unfortunate that we couldn't be specially identified as TOL. The season came to its climax when the Roman Catholic Church in conjunction with the Anglican Church joined together in the procession of the way of the cross. This was the fifth year since these churches started praying together on this day. The procession went from the Lwanga Parish to St. George's Anglican Church through the town of the old capital city of Malawi. It was attended by over two thousand participants. After celebrating the resurrection of Christ, Easter was glorified when the priest married many couples, most of whom had been married under tribal rites and were already in families but had not yet been blessed at the church. It was ululation and joy as we witnessed the marriage vows which continued until 11 pm. Teams couples then concluded the Easter celebrations with their own special prayers.

We appeal to the concerned countries to keep on praying for us as we are on our way to the full establishment of the movement. We are hoping that shortly – before the International Gathering – all shall be said and done and that we are going to have three or four teams in Zomba and then proceeding to the other parishes and dioceses. Malawi is divided into three regions (North, Central and South) and we are praying that there shall be three regions of TOL once established countrywide.

## **Mavuto & Christina Mandala** Responsible Couple



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## The Story of Teams in Trinidad and Tobago

*"I have a charge to give... I, who am a presbyter like yourselves, I, who bear witness to Christ's sufferings, I, who have my part in that glory which will one day be revealed (1 Pet 5:1).*

*"Do not hesitate to give the best of your ability, your strength, your pastoral zeal to this privileged apostolic field. You will find in it a part of the Church of which you are pastors.*

*"Do not yield to the temptation of thinking that your pastoral work is limited to a small group of Christians.*

*"Your action will be multiplied by the influence of so many married couples. You will help them to deepen their Christian life: may yours be deepened to an equal extent."*

- Pope Paul VI - to the priests, chaplains of the Teams at an international gathering of couples and their chaplains in Rome in September 22, 1976.

After reading these words in L'Osservatore Romano that year, Fr Neil Rodriguez, CSSp, then parish priest of Rio Claro in South Trinidad, wrote to the French international couple whose names were given as the contact for more information on Teams.

That letter was referred to the regional couple for the United Kingdom, Jim and Teresa Pratt, who in turn replied to Fr Neil and began sending copies of the regional newsletter of the UK regularly to him.

Fr Neil described their actions as an act of faith and charity because he had no further contact with them after that time.

### The Holy Spirit determines the time

When asked why he took so long to get Teams started in Trinidad, Fr Neil replied, "You have to wait on the right time." And again when asked how he knew when the time was right, he responded, "The Holy Spirit determines the time." The right time came about when Fr Neil approached Allyson and Maldon Pantin.

Allyson and Maldon had started a Charismatic prayer group with five other married couples in 1981. Fr Neil approached them in 1983 about starting a Team in Trinidad and passed on all the newsletters he had received.

The Pantins then contacted the Pratts in England. By this time Jim and Teresa

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were no longer regional couple but rather Sheila and Don Gallagher. The Pratts, however, were quite willing to pilot this new team by mail and sent literature on how to start and continue.

After every meeting, Allyson and Maldon wrote to the Pratts informing them of what had transpired. The first team - Trinidad 1 - started in October 1983 with Fr Neil as chaplain. Of these original six married couples, the three remaining are Allyson and Maldon, Vicky and Franklyn Pollidore and Sharon and Carl Mungroo.

## **Recognition by the Archbishop**

In 1984, Allyson and Maldon, together with their children, went to England to meet with their Teams counterparts. They described the visit as tremendous, and the warmth and hospitality extended to them as unforgettable. They were finally able to put names and faces together.

It was in that same year that Teams as a movement in Trinidad and Tobago, a country of approximately 1.3 million people, received recognition from Archbishop Anthony Pantin. His Grace had some initial reservations about granting recognition as he felt there were already too many groups for married couples and there could be some conflict. Eventually he granted recognition as an act of faith since Teams come under the patronage of Our Lady, and due to his own deep devotion to the Blessed Mother.

In 1985, Trinidad 2 was formed in St Joseph under the chaplaincy of Fr Austin Milner, a Grenadian-born Dominican priest.

The year 1986 was one of great joy for the movement in Trinidad. Jim and Teresa Pratt were given airline tickets to visit Trinidad. Teams Trinidad was very happy to welcome them and extended our own brand of warmth and hospitality to them. During that year, the movement in Trinidad was told to form a sector by the international leading team in France but we would be an isolated or remote sector (due to our distance from the UK), and the first English-speaking teams in the Caribbean. There were changes in responsibilities as Allyson and Maldon Pantin were officially named sector couple of Trinidad in 1988.

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## **Experience of the International Movement**

In the same year, the Pantins with a young baby, Stephen and Wendy Johnston and Fr Neil journeyed to Lourdes, France, for the international gathering. This would be the first of three international gatherings that Teams Trinidad attended.

In 1994 at Fatima in Portugal, we were represented by three couples - Vicky and Franklyn Pollidore, Michael and Jacinta Milne, Neil and Maria Clapperton - and Fr Urban Hudlin.

In 2000 at Santiago de Compostela in Spain, we were represented by Wendy and Stephen Johnston, Gregory and Shamagne Bertrand, Michael and Ann Marie White and Deborah and Jameel Boos.

## **Teams Trinidad Hosts International Session**

Teams continued to grow in Trinidad and in August 1993 we hosted the first of three international holiday sessions at Emmaus Centre, Arima. The others were in August 1997 in Tobago and in August 2001 in Trinidad once again.



Allyson and Maldon noted that one couple — Mike and Kay Vadon from the UK — came to all three sessions without fail. They had first met Mike and Kay in 1984 on their first trip to England and had attended a meeting of a Team that had started at the same time as Trinidad 1 in 1983.

Mike and Kay were one of the couples in that Team and so felt a special kinship with Trinidad. The year 1993 also saw a change in responsibilities as Franklyn and Vicky Pollidore accepted the duties of sector couple from the Pantins.

After this, Allyson and Maldon were asked to give seminars and workshops on different aspects of the Catholic faith and after one particular Confirmation retreat

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in Tobago, they were asked to do something for married couples in Tobago.

As it was the Year of the Family in 1994, the Pantins, together with Michael and Jacinta Milne and Fr Neil, held a weekend retreat in Tobago with the Sunday devoted exclusively to information on Teams. The result was that Tobago 1 and 2 were formed in April-May 1994.

By 1995, there were 10 Teams in Trinidad and these were divided into three sectors with the result that Trinidad was now called a pre-region and Allyson and Maldon became the first pre-regional couple. This with the proviso from the UK that we acculturate Teams in Trinidad, which included being able to have our children present at meetings.

Teams have grown since that time with 18 Teams in Trinidad and three in Tobago. We once again had our status changed from that of pre-region to that of region in August 2001 at our third International Holiday Session with Wendy and Stephen Johnston as our first regional couple, and Abbot Francis Alleyne as regional chaplain. By this time there were four sectors and the quarterly newsletter was being regularly published to keep all Teams informed. Abbot Alleyne has since become Bishop of Guyana.

The years since becoming a region have seen Teams couples continue to seek growth in their own personal relationships and a renewed understanding of both their identity as Christian married couples and their mission as Teams couples and practitioners of married spirituality. A structure of expansion was put in place with parish visitation and publishing in the newsletter of guidelines for giving information. The Sectors were strengthened with the formation of the Sector Teams. Annual retreats are held to assist couples in fulfilling this special obligation.

Teams of Our Lady T&T is grateful to the many couples and priests who have journeyed with us over the past 23 years. We say thanks to each of them and hold them close in our heart and in our prayer.

**Jeff & Pasqui Hoford**

**Regional Couple**

## *The Super Regional Prayer*

### **A Pilgrim's Prayer**

O God,

We thank you that you have brought us from different parts of our world to journey together and to grow in our loving relationships of marriage. We pray that we may always, wherever we are, be a living and loving sign to all of the joy and the unity, the sharing and the selflessness to be found in Christian marriage under the inspiration of Mary, Our Mother.

**Amen.**

